

The European Doctors (CPME) represents national medical associations across Europe. We are committed to contributing the medical profession's point of view to EU and European policy-making through pro-active cooperation on a wide range of health and healthcare related issues.

CPME Response to the Call for Evidence on Digital Skills in Education and Training

CPME welcomes the opportunity to respond to the call for evidence on the Commission's initiative for a "Proposal for a Council Recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills in education and training". The initiative is part of the Digital Education Action Plan (2021/2027) and intends to (...) "put forward a strategic outlook to digital skills development (from basic to advanced) and promote a quality, inclusive, coherent and coordinated approach to the provision of digital skills across all levels of education and training (e.g. primary, secondary and tertiary including VET and adult learning)". Pursuant to the call for evidence, the Proposal "will address the need for digital skills and contribute to the targets of the Digital Compass and to the one related to young people's digital skills."

CPME provided feedback to the 2030 Policy Programme "Path to the Digital Decade",¹ and believes it is necessary to still highlight the following for the current call:

1. Digital literacy of patients and healthcare professionals is a crucial component of efficient and effective digital transformation in healthcare.²
2. CPME recommends using the UNESCO's definition on 'digital skills'. These are defined as the ability to find, evaluate, use, share, and create content using digital devices (e.g., computers, smartphones, digital medical tools)³.
3. CPME further recommends recognising a **health dimension** within the definition of 'basic digital skills', where the user is aware and can understand risks related to health data sharing and when the digital use becomes an unhealthy behaviour (digital addiction). Sufficient links have been found between internet use and mental wellbeing, and concerns have been voiced that digital technologies and social media are exacerbating feelings of anxiety, depression,

¹ CPME Feedback on the Commission's Proposal for a Decision establishing the 2030 Policy Programme "Path to the Digital Decade", adopted in December 2021, <https://www.cpme.eu/api/documents/adopted/2021/12/CPME_AD_13122021_128_FINAL_CPME_Feedback.Path_Digital.Decade.2030.pdf>.

² CPME Policy on Digital Competencies for Doctors, adopted in November 2020, www.cpme.eu/api/documents/adopted/2020/11/CPME_AD_Board_21112020_100.FINAL_CPME_Policy.Digital.Competencies.for_Doctors.pdf.

³ UNESCO, Digital skills critical for jobs and social inclusion, <<https://en.unesco.org/news/digital-skills-critical-jobs-and-social-inclusion>>.

disturbing sleep patterns, leading to cyber-bullying, body image troubles, and disordered eating⁴. Screen time and online gaming are also a source of concern⁵.

4. European Doctors call for the **health dimension to be part of a key performance indicator for attaining the basic digital skills target**. Healthy living implies the physical, mental, spiritual and economic capacity to make healthy choices. It focuses on healthy eating, physical activity but also goes beyond to avoid addictive behaviours and being able to cope with life's stresses and other mental health issues. An appropriate balance between the (increasing intensive) use of digital technologies, and the practice of health enhancing behaviours is required.
5. CPME strongly recommends that **ICT professionals abide to ethically based codes of conduct** and be subject to regulatory oversight and disciplinary sanctions. This would ensure that these specialists have an up-to-date competence, relevant to their field, and that they comply with professional obligations, reflecting a win-win strategic policy approach.
6. Sufficient guarantees must be put in place to ensure that this new generation of professionals meets high ethical standards and complies with professional obligations (e.g., confidentiality, protection of personal data, privacy, maintain the integrity and security of IT systems).⁶

⁴ Please see OECD, [Children & Young People's Mental Health in the Digital Age – Shaping the Future](#), 2018.

⁵ Please see World Health Organization. "[Guidelines on physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep for children under 5 years of age](#)". (2019); Armitage, Richard. "[Gambling among adolescents: an emerging public health problem](#)." *The Lancet Public Health* 6, no. 3 (2021): e143.; Alan M Emond, Mark D Griffiths, [Gambling in children and adolescents](#), *British Medical Bulletin*, Vol. 136, Issue 1 (December 2020), p 21–29; Stavropoulos, Vasileios, Jeremy Vassallo, Tyrone Leonard Burleigh, Rapson Gomez, and Michelle Colder Carras., "The role of internet gaming in the association between anxiety and depression: A preliminary cross-sectional study." *Asia-Pacific Psychiatry* (2021): e12474.

⁶ Some examples: [Network Professional Association \(NPA\)](#), <https://www.npa.org/public/about_codeofethics.cfm>; and Harvard IT Professional Code of Conduct to Protect Electronic Information, July 2014, <<https://huit.harvard.edu/it-professional-code-conduct-protect-electronic-information>>.