

Second day of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting
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DECISION No. 5/18
HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE DIGITAL ERA

The Ministerial Council,

Recalling OSCE principles and commitments on which our economic co-operation is based and bearing in mind the comprehensive approach of the OSCE to security,

Recalling the commitments related to human capital development contained in the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension adopted at the Maastricht Meeting of the Ministerial Council in 2003, Ministerial Council Decision No. 10/11 on promoting equal opportunity for women in the economic sphere adopted in Vilnius in 2011, the Ministerial Council Declaration on Youth adopted in Basel in 2014, Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/16 on strengthening good governance and promoting connectivity adopted in Hamburg in 2016, and Ministerial Council Decision No. 8/17 on economic participation adopted in Vienna in 2017,

Considering that the needs of the individual should be at the centre of economic growth and sustainable development, and aware that investment in human capital and promotion of knowledge and skills promote economic participation, social inclusion and sustainable growth which are interdependent and contribute to prosperity, trust, stability, security and co-operation in the OSCE area,

Taking into account the emerging and fast-evolving implications of digital transformation, which is leading to progress and prosperity, but also to the emergence of potential new or enhanced threats and challenges,

Aware that changes in the labour markets caused by digital transformation have the potential to widen social and economic disparities, and that there is a need for a stronger focus on the development of human capital, particularly for women, youth and persons with disabilities, especially in labour-intensive, low-skilled economic sectors,

Acknowledging that human capital development, including in the digital context, through its positive impact on an informed and qualified workforce, sustainable development, jobs and wealth creation, can positively contribute to making economies and societies more resilient to corruption,

Determined to promote lifelong learning and vocational and professional training throughout the working life as essential tools for human capital development and for reducing existing digital divides, particularly for women and girls in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics,

Recognizing that there are opportunities and challenges associated with new forms of employment arising from the digital transformation of the economy, and that while these changes in the labour market may promote economic growth and job creation, some of the challenges may have an impact on job and social stability,

Building on the substantial discussions held in the framework of the 26th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum “Promoting economic progress and security in the OSCE area through innovation, human capital development, and good public and corporate governance”,

Acknowledging, in the context of the digitalization of the economy, the need to strengthen the resilience of the workforce and to adapt labour market policy frameworks to promote: the creation of jobs with full respect for human dignity and human rights; sustainable and inclusive economic growth; and equal opportunities for the participation of women and men in the labour market,

Recognizing the potential for human capital development to contribute to the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

1. Encourages participating States to support the development of human capital so as to manage the transition to increasingly automated and digital economies, including through public-private partnerships and multi-stakeholder collaboration;
2. Encourages participating States to promote lifelong learning, starting from early education and continuing throughout working life, as a key pillar for managing this transition;
3. Calls upon participating States to promote access to quality education, training, upskilling and reskilling opportunities in order to enhance employability – promoting non-discriminatory access for women, youth and persons with disabilities and with special attention to those working in labour-intensive industries;
4. Encourages the participating States, as appropriate, to promote education, vocational training and retraining, in particular for women and girls, and especially in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, as a key measure to reduce digital divides and to advance the empowerment of women by promoting opportunities, including in the economy;
5. Invites the participating States to strengthen policy and institutional frameworks to facilitate innovative business models and a positive investment climate, to promote job creation and sustainable, inclusive economic growth;
6. Encourages the participating States to involve the private sector, civil society, trade and labour unions, academia, and other relevant stakeholders to identify and address the needs in terms of human capital development and to work together to develop and implement relevant policies and regulations;

7. Calls upon participating States to further examine opportunities and challenges associated with new forms of employment arising from the digital transformation of the economy, also with a view to ensuring adequate social protection;
8. Encourages the participating States to promote efforts against corruption in the education and training sectors, as well as open, equal and corruption-free access to education, digital skills and training opportunities;
9. Encourages participating States to make use of the OSCE to foster the exchange of best practices and to promote capacity-building initiatives in line with the provisions of this decision;
10. Encourages participating States to increase co-operation on human capital development, including with relevant international organizations, in areas such as facilitating and widening access to educational, research and training institutions, with particular attention to fostering digital skills;
11. Tasks relevant OSCE executive structures, including field operations, within their mandates and available resources, to assist participating States upon their requests in implementing the provisions of this decision;
12. Encourages the OSCE Partners for Co-operation to voluntarily implement the provisions of this decision.