



Policy recommendations for Suitability, visibility, and accessibility of CCSI-relevant employment information in European statistics and in ESCO

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On the occasion of the European Year of Skills, several European projects, led by [Creative FLIP](#) in close cooperation with the [CHARTER](#) and the [CYANOTYPES](#) projects, and with the support from [Essence](#), [INCREAS](#) and [PACE-VET](#), as well as the [Creative FED](#) (former ECBN, the Pact for Skills for CCSI co-coordinator), joined forces to call for a clearer representation of the CCSI in labour market taxonomies and statistical frameworks, as well as suggest solutions for some of the identified challenges.

Following long-standing cooperation and exchange between the projects, including online meetings and workshops throughout 2022-2023, the group has met for an in-person full day joint workshop in Helsingborg, held in the framework of the European Creative Industries Summit (#ECIS23) in May 2023. The goal was to draft joint recommendations for improving the suitability, visibility, and accessibility of CCSI-relevant employment information in European statistics and in ESCO.

The recommendations presented below are the preliminary results of this ongoing process. They are shared with the goal to engage the European Commission and relevant bodies (Eurostat, ESCO, Cedefop, etc.) in the final framing of recommendations and project results that could lead to the improvement of the current situation of the CCSI professionals.

Justification

Despite the size, the economic, as well as societal importance of the Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI) these are currently inadequately represented in European employment statistics, among other reasons also due to their heterogeneous character, spanning across several categories of ISCO and NACE.

ESCO - designed to support the mobility of Europe's workforce - has the potential to serve also the highly mobile cultural and creative workers. However, this taxonomy currently does not represent the

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CCSI in a manner that is comprehensive and differentiated enough for the needs of their stakeholders, nor does it offer easy access to relevant content.

Consequently, also the European systems and services using ESCO to inform about (e.g. Cedefop's Skills OVATE), advertise (e.g. Europass) or mediate (e.g. EURES portal) skills and occupations, fail to highlight the labour market contribution of the CCSI, or at least make it easily accessible.

Assumptions

I. CHALLENGES IN GENERATING STATISTICAL EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION FOR THE CCSI

The cultural and creative sectors are difficult to capture by statistics: Relevant units are scattered all over ISCO and NACE; even at the most disaggregated level you cannot in all cases clearly distinguish cultural from non-cultural occupations or sectors; both the occupation as well as the sector need to be clearly identified to comprehensively capture cultural and creative employment.

A lack of interoperability between classifications: To date, only the UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics at least roughly identifies ISCO unit groups per cultural domain. For the Eurostat framework, relevant ISCO as well as NACE codes have only been identified for the CCSI as a whole. ESCO - although not designed for statistical purposes - in principle could provide the additional level of detail needed to clearly define the cultural component of partly cultural ISCO unit groups. But ESCO has not yet been mapped onto the Eurostat framework for cultural statistics and its domains, nor has ISCO. Therefore, it is impossible to disaggregate the CCSI into domains that are clearly defined in terms of ISCO unit groups or ESCO occupations.

Since the CCSI are not a unit of analysis in ISCO and NACE, **relevant information is also difficult to aggregate:** To date, information can be summed up at the different levels of ISCO and NACE, or for the CCSI as a whole, but not for individual cultural and creative domains.

II. CHALLENGES IN USING ESCO FOR STRUCTURING CCSI EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

Visibility and accessibility of CCSI-relevant information leaves room for improvement: Because international taxonomies currently present CCSI-relevant content only in a very fragmented manner (namely spread all over ISCO, ESCO, NACE), users have to know very well where to look for it: there is neither a sign-posted access to the CCSI as a whole, nor to any of its domains. Consequently, relevant information is difficult to access in European data collections (e.g. the EU-LFS), and impossible to present in a user-friendly way in European monitoring or forecasting tools (e.g. Skills OVATE, Cedefop Skills Forecasts), and difficult to identify and access in ESCO (occupations as well as skills/competence and knowledge concepts).

Mobility paths between ESCO occupations are nontransparent, sometimes even misleading:

(1) On the one hand, occupational skills profiles have not been compiled in view of a systematic representation of shared and distinguishing features, but rather with the goal of high descriptiveness. The resulting level of detail, and the peculiar presentation of skills profiles on the portal, make it difficult to gain an overview of requirements for occupations, and to see mobility paths between them. Common requirements expected to exist between specific ESCO occupations, e.g. between [tourist guide](#) and [arts education officer](#), or between [fashion designer](#) and [personal stylist](#), actually do not exist

when you evaluate shared knowledge or skills/competences (currently there is no overlap at all!). ISCO, serving as ESCO's hierarchical backbone for occupations, at times also rather hides than highlights overlap between profiles, e.g. when it places occupations sharing closely related skills specializations and equivalent skills level under different unit groups, as in the case of e.g. designers like in [performance lightning designer](#) (ISCO 2166), [production designer](#) (ISCO 2654), [set designer](#) (ISCO 3432), or [pyrotechnic designer](#) (ISCO 3435).

(2) On the other hand, skills/competences of very specific content have been reused in inappropriate contexts resulting in misleading mobility paths between occupations, as in e.g. [teach writing](#) (the descriptions refers to creative writing, and not to eradicating illiteracy) as a skill/competence of [writer](#) and [literary scholar](#), but falsely also of [adult literacy teacher](#) and [learning support teacher](#).

Organisational barriers impede stakeholder's contribution to shaping ESCO's development: Currently there is no transparent strategy, no practical guidance and no suitable communication infrastructure encouraging CCSI practitioners and researchers (or any other sector representatives for that matter) to develop, discuss and submit amendment suggestions for cultural and creative occupations or knowledge, skills/competences. As a consequence, specialist knowledge, which is critical for validating and updating ESCO, is not sufficiently considered in ESCO development.

Recommendations

I. CHALLENGES IN GENERATING STATISTICAL EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION FOR THE CCSI

In consultation with the undersigned European projects, Creative FLIP has developed a draft structure identifying and linking fully and partially relevant ESCO occupations to the domains and functions of Eurostat's Framework for Cultural Statistics (see Annex: Occupational breakdown of the CCSI). This structure could be used to

- (1) add an additional layer of detail where needed to single out relevant content of partly cultural ISCO unit groups;
- (2) summarize fully and partly cultural ISCO unit groups and subordinated ESCO occupations under Eurostat domains of relevance;

This more fine-grained and better structured framework should enable a more comprehensive (also partly relevant ISCO unit groups can be considered) and more detailed representation of employment in the CCSI (employment data could be aggregated at the level of individual domains as well, not just as a whole).

The undersigned projects also cooperated to identify and group cultural-creative ESCO knowledge, skills/competences (see Annex: Draft identification of CCSI-relevant ESCO knowledge, skills/competences) which could be used to

- (3) identify cultural and creative employment information at an even more fine-grained level than that of ESCO occupations or ISCO unit groups.

This could be an asset when analysing CCSI's cross-sectoral contribution to the labour market, e.g. when used as a terminological resource for evaluating online job advertisements.

II. CHALLENGES IN USING ESCO FOR STRUCTURING CCSI EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

Visibility and accessibility of CCSI-relevant information

The drafted breakdown of Eurostat domains into fully and partly relevant ISCO unit groups and subordinated cultural and creative ESCO occupations (see Annex: Occupational breakdown of the CCSI) as well as the identification and grouping of cultural and creative ESCO knowledge, skills/competences (see Annex: Draft identification of CCSI-relevant ESCO knowledge, skills/competences) have the potential to improve visibility and accessibility of CCSI-relevant employment information in ESCO if implemented

- to highlight cultural and creative occupations or skills/competences and knowledge concepts (e.g. like STEM or “bright outlook” occupations¹ in O*NET, or like “thematic views”² in ISCO);
- as sector-specific access to ESCO occupations or skills/competences and knowledge concepts, guiding users towards cultural and creative content; this sector-specific access might be an asset for information systems like Skills OVATE as well;
- to aggregate cultural and creative employment information at the level of domains (or even functions).

Mobility paths between ESCO occupations

Furthermore, Creative FLIP has developed a way to make mobility paths between occupations better visible in ESCO. This methodology has been described already in the final report³ to phase 1, and tested with CCSI experts coming from the undersigned partner projects during the current project phase.

Once already defined mobility paths between ESCO occupations have been revealed, it is much easier to start a structured dialogue with sector experts (who might not be ESCO experts) on the adequacy of these occupational profiles.

Organisational barriers impede stakeholder’s contribution to shaping ESCO’s development

To lower the threshold for sector representatives without much ESCO experience to use and contribute to the improvement of the taxonomy, Creative FLIP drafted guidelines (see Annex: How to use ESCO for describing cultural-creative skills profiles) explaining basic principles like e.g. how to create new skills concepts or how to balance descriptiveness and comparability in occupational skills profiles.

¹ E.g. see <https://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/27-2011.00> (actors are labeled as one of the “bright outlook” occupations in O*NET)

² See https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_172572.pdf p. 17

³ Available under <http://oldflip.creativehubs.net/publications/ESCOs%20suitability%20for%20sector-specific%20data%20collection%20-%20CCS%20in%20European%20forecasting%20tools.pdf>

Annexes

All information contained in the Annexes are outcomes of Creative FLIP's Work Package 2 "Learning". They are meant to illustrate what a way forward to solve identified challenges could look like.

Occupational breakdown of the CCSI

ESCO occupations of full or partial relevance to the CCSI, their superordinated ISCO unit groups, and their allocation to Eurostat's cultural domains and functions.

Draft identification of CCSI-relevant ESCO knowledge, skills/competences

Preliminary identification of ESCO knowledge, skills/competences making a genuine cultural and creative contribution to the value chain, and their draft allocation to Eurostat's cultural domains and functions.

For these documents and other results of Work Package 2 please refer to Creative FLIP's web page under [publications](#).