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Teacher education: a European perspective

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What the Treaty says...

Main objective

Article 165 TFEU (Treaty on the functioning of the European Union)

- 1. The Union shall contribute to the development of **quality education** by **encouraging cooperation** between Member States and, if necessary, by **supporting and supplementing their action**, while fully respecting the **responsibility of the Member States** for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity.
-(sport).

Specific objectives and actions

2. The Union action shall be aimed at:

- developing the **European dimension in education**, particularly through the teaching and dissemination of the languages of the Member States,
- encouraging **mobility of students and teachers**, by encouraging inter alia, the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study,
- promoting **cooperation between educational establishments**,
- developing **exchanges of information and experience** on issues common to the education systems of the Member States,
- (....)
- encouraging the development of **distance education**,

What means ? (*legal acts*)

3. (*international cooperation*)

4. In order to contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this Article:

- the **European Parliament and the Council**, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, after consulting the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, shall adopt **incentive measures**, excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States, [*ex: Erasmus+ Programme*]
- the **Council**, on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt **recommendations**.

Political guidelines for education



Europe needs a radical step change in ambition and action – for all skill levels and for all types of training and education. This is as important for people’s careers and prospects as it is for our competitiveness.

*Central to this will be **embedding lifelong learning into education and careers** and **supporting the training and the career prospects of teachers**. We will focus on improving **basic skills** and propose a **STEM** Education Strategic Plan.*

*Political Guidelines
for the European Commission 2024-2029*

The mission for school education



Roxana Mînzatu

*Executive Vice-President for
People, Skills and Preparedness*

You will work on the **European Education Area** to drive a common approach to skills development, learning mobility, quality and inclusiveness. You will make the most of the tools at our disposal, including by **strengthening Erasmus+**.

You will develop an **Action Plan on Basic Skills** and a **STEM Education Strategic Plan** to address two of the most striking shortfalls.

I would like you to develop an **EU Teachers Agenda** to help improve their working conditions, **training and career prospects**. As part of this, you will look into launching a **European Schools Alliance** to encourage better cross-border cooperation and mobility between schools across Europe.

The Union of Skills

March 2025
#UnionOfSkills



Union of Skills Communication (5 March 2025) accompanied by

- an **Action Plan on Basic Skills**
- a **STEM Education Strategic Plan**

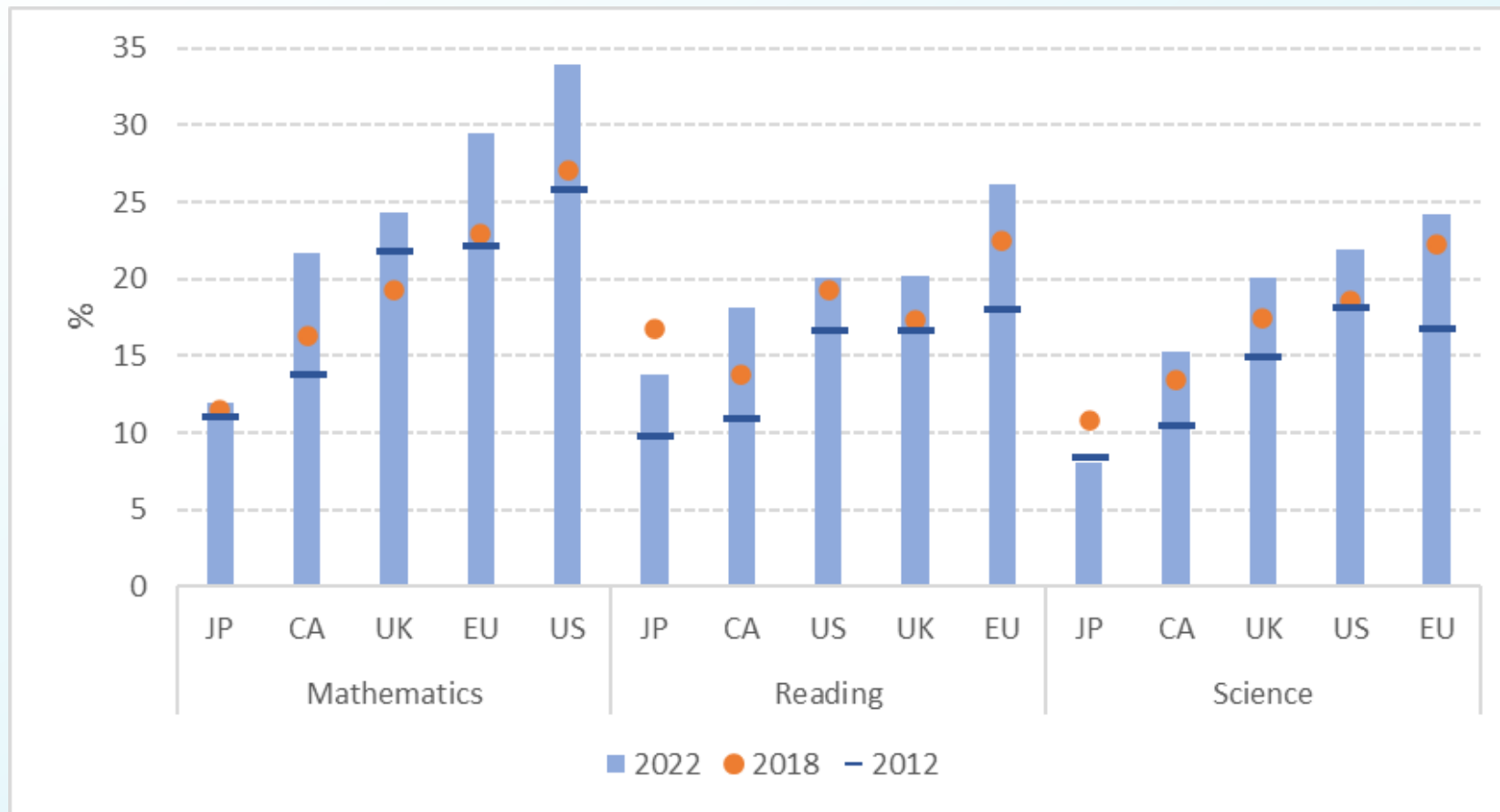
Basic skills and STEM education

Context:

- Increasing global competition, technological disruption, demographic and societal change
- Support for green and digital transition
- **Basic skills** (literacy, numeracy, science and digital) and **STEM competences** essential for people's careers and prospects and Europe's competitiveness
- Need to increase performance in basic skills for Europe to sustain and boost innovation capacity and ensure full participation in society
- Growing demand for skilled professionals in STEM fields

The EU position is weak compared to other large advanced economies

Percentage of underachievers



Basic skills and STEM education

- Effective **curricula** as well as **teaching, learning and assessment** practices, including challenges and opportunities of the digital age
- Building **capacity of school leaders, teachers and educators**
- **Equity** (ensuring that all learners, independent of their socio-economic, cultural background, and gender, including those with specific needs, can develop and strengthen basic skills and participate in STEM education and careers)
- Boosting **learners' motivation** and interest in their own learning and development, and **learners' wellbeing**
- The role of early years learning (**ECEC**) for basic skills development
- **Community** support (parents, families, non-formal education opportunities, e.g. libraries, STEM centres, etc.)
- **Partnerships and collaborations** with industry, research institutions, and other educational and labour market organisations

Basic Skills Action Plan: Initiatives supporting educators

1. Set out an EU Teachers and Trainers Agenda in 2026
2. Set up, in 2025, a new community of practice of Erasmus+ Teacher Academies
3. Pilot a mentoring system for early career teachers in all subjects by 2026 to effectively integrate basic skills development into their teaching practices
4. Promote job shadowing for education policymakers through Erasmus+ in 2026
5. Expand EU online communities for educators (European School Education Platform, including eTwinning)
6. Promote high-quality learning material on digital skills by practicing teachers through the EU Code Week activities.

STEM Education Strategic Plan

to tackle critical challenges in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and unlock opportunities across the EU.

3 key objectives: lead, level up and lift barriers.

1 . **Lead**: anchor STEM as a strategic pillar in EU's education and skills policy

- Propose 2030 EU-level STEM targets, supported by national or regional STEM strategies
- Set up a European STEM Executive Panel at top business, political or administrative level to advise on strategic issues
- Improve STEM skills intelligence by measuring graduate outcomes and better anticipating sector-specific needs

STEM Education Strategic Plan

2. **Level up:** build a stronger and more inclusive EU STEM talent pipeline

- Develop a STEM competence framework
- Work towards a European degree for Engineers
- Launch the "STEM Tech Talent Induction" to attract more young people to STEM careers
- Pilot the development of "STEM skills foundries" in strategic sectors for mentoring young student entrepreneurs

2. **Lift barriers:** advance women in STEM and inspire future innovators

- Launch "Girls go STEM" to train 1 million young women by 2028
- Launch "STEM Futures" to identify and disseminate successful STEM education practices
- Showcase and exchange good practices and foster mutual learning on attracting and supporting girls and women in STEM apprenticeships
- Pilot "STEM Specialists Fellowship" to attract top international STEM experts

An EU Teachers and Trainers Agenda for 2026



Union of Skills Communication (5 March 2025):

*“an **EU Teachers and Trainers Agenda**, helping Member States tackle **teaching shortages**, improving teachers’ **working conditions**, and improving **career prospects**”.*

The challenges

Shortages present in nearly all EU countries related to:

- **demographic trends:**
 - **ageing** workforce: almost 40% of lower secondary teachers are aged 50 or above, significant numbers to retire in coming years
 - **male teachers underrepresented**, especially in pre-primary and primary education
- **specific subjects:** STEM, informatics, foreign languages
- certain **geographic areas/ types of schools/ specific needs of pupils:** schools in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas, pupils in special needs education, students with disabilities, or in multicultural or multilingual settings

The attractiveness of the teaching profession is a main factor shaping teachers arriving, staying and leaving the profession

- Only 17.7% of teachers report that their profession is valued by society
- Need for more Continuous Professional Development: 21% working with students with special needs; 16% of ICT for teaching; and 13% training in teaching in multilingual and multicultural environments.

Achieving the EUROPEAN EDUCATION AREA by 2025



1



Quality in education and training

- Boost basic and transversal skills
- More mobility and cooperation opportunities
- Support lifelong acquisition of language competences
- Develop a European perspective in education



2



Inclusion and gender equality

- Pathways to School Success
- 50 centres of excellence for VET
- European Approach to micro-credentials
- Gender-sensitive teaching



3



Green and digital transitions

- Education for Climate Coalition
- Greening of education infrastructure
- Council Recommendation on education for environmental sustainability
- Digital Education Action Plan



4



Teachers and trainers

- 25 Erasmus Teacher Academies
- European guidance for national career frameworks
- European Innovative Teaching Award



5



Higher education

- European Universities full roll-out
- Development of a European Degree
- Legal statute for alliances of universities
- Erasmus+ Mobile App



6



Geopolitical dimension

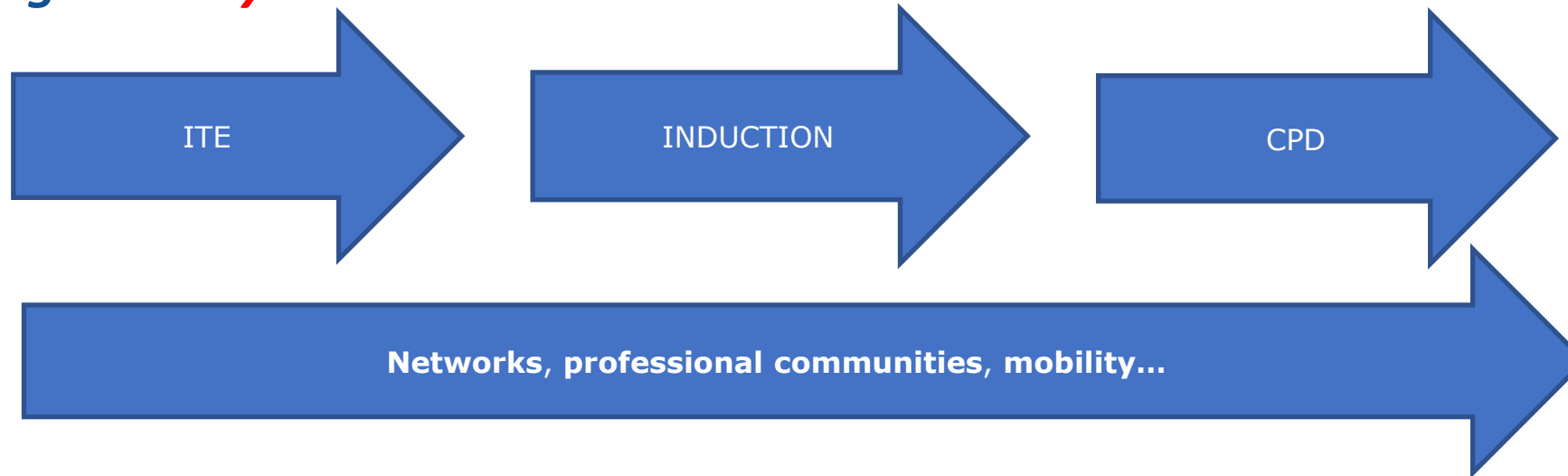
- Team Europe approach
- Strengthen cooperation with strategic global partners
- Expand international dimension of Erasmus+

[Achieving the European Education Area by 2025 - Communication COM\(2020\) 625 final](#); [Council Resolution of the European Education Area](#)

Teachers in the EEA

Vision:

*...builds on competent and motivated teachers and trainers who benefit from a seamless continuum of a high-quality **initial education**, effective **induction** and **continuous professional development** throughout their careers, including participation in professional **networks** and **communities** and benefitting from learning **mobility** abroad.*



Erasmus+ Teacher Academies

What?



Networks of initial teacher education, continuous professional development providers and other relevant stakeholders, including a training school

- to support teachers by enhancing cooperation in teacher training at all stages of their careers, from initial teacher education, to novice and in-service training, and continued professional development.
- to equip teachers in dealing with common challenges like inclusion and equity, well-being, digital education, STEM and STEAM, and sustainable development, citizenship and democracy, in response to their expressed needs.

*NB : Led by an **Teacher Education institution** = institution which, in accordance with national law or practice, offers **recognised degrees** or other recognised tertiary level qualifications specifically dedicated to the training and professional development of individuals preparing to become educators*

Teacher Academies : Objectives

1. Contribute to the improvement of teacher education policies and practices in Europe

=> Develop and test **strategies and programmes** for professional learning that is effective, accessible and transferable to other contexts.

=> **Inform policy** development at national and European levels

2. Enhance the **European dimension and internationalisation** of teacher education.

=> Develop and test models of **learning mobility** (virtual, physical and blended) as part of teacher learning.

=> Develop **sustainable cooperation** between teacher education providers

Teacher Academies : what activities ?

- **Networks & Communities of practice:** to develop innovative strategies for initial and continuous teacher development.
- **Joint Learning Modules:** on new pedagogical challenges, informed by thorough needs analyses and tested in practice.
- **Learning mobility:** including summer schools, study visits, and cross-campus collaboration (physical and virtual) ; addressing obstacles to mobility.
- **Experiment with Innovative Practices:** Involve training schools to trial and share new methods, including distance and blended learning approaches.
- **Conduct Research & Inform Policy:** Perform studies, surveys, and collections of best practices to produce recommendations and stimulate policy discussions on teacher education.
- **Use Erasmus+ Tools:** e.g. eTwinning (in European School Education Platform) for virtual mobility, collaboration; Online On-Line Language Support (OLS)

Work on one or more Erasmus+ priorities

To better equip teachers in addressing current (and future) challenges in the classroom , in relation to :

- 1. Inclusion and diversity*
- 2. Well-being*
- 3. Environment, climate change and sustainability*
- 4. Digital capacity building of teachers, learners and organisations*
- 5. STEM and STEAM*
- 6. Common values, civic engagement and participation*

1. Inclusion and diversity

Empower teachers with knowledge, skills, and attitudes to ensure **educational inclusion** for children/students facing barriers such as disabilities, socio-economic difficulties, migrant/refugee backgrounds, rural isolation, gender inequalities, or other forms of discrimination, through :

- **Inclusive Practices:** Teaching in multilingual/multicultural settings, gender-sensitive approaches, and education for special needs.
- **Supportive Environments:** Creating positive learning climates and addressing well-being for students and teachers.
- **Interdisciplinary Strategies:** Employing blended learning, interdisciplinary pedagogy, arts integration, and formative assessment methods.

Cont'd & references

Psycho-Social Support: Providing emotional and psychological assistance to address diverse learner needs.

Collaborative & Community Engagement:

- Build trust with students, parents, and carers.
- Work in multi-disciplinary teams to address barriers to education and promote equity.
- Foster inclusive environments that reflect community needs and values.
- [Council Recommendation on Common values, Inclusive Education, and the European Dimension of Teaching](#)
- [Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success](#)
- [Working Group Schools - Pathway to school success](#)

2. *Well-being*

1. To fully **integrate** well-being principles **into Initial Teacher Education programs** :

- Incorporate strategies to help future teachers take ownership of their personal well-being.
- Provide training in self-help intervention techniques and social-emotional learning (SEL). Equip teacher candidates with competences to establish warm, caring, and collaborative relationships with students, colleagues, and parents.
- Include training in constructive conflict resolution to foster positive interpersonal dynamics
- Implement mentorship programs where experienced educators guide student teachers.
- Design role-modeling initiatives to showcase effective well-being practices in professional settings.

Cont' d & references

2. To provide **continuous professional development** and support to teachers, educators and school leaders on well-being, "dual focused" :

- addressing teachers' professional and personal well-being.
- equipping them with tools and strategies to support their learners' mental health and emotional development.
- With clear guidelines and standards for integrating well-being principles into teaching practices.
- [Supporting wellbeing at school: new guidelines for policymakers and educators | European Education Area](#)

3. Environnement, climate change, sustainability

- **Embed sustainability** into teaching and learning.
- Develop **sustainability competences** in educators and education leaders.
- **Professional Development for Teachers:**
 - ❖ Train teachers on climate, environmental crises, and sustainability.
 - ❖ Promote reflective practices and self-evaluation.
 - ❖ Adopt innovative pedagogies, such as interdisciplinary and problem-based learning, addressing socio-emotional aspects like eco-anxiety.
- **Leverage digital tools** to enhance teaching about sustainability and synergize digital and green initiatives

Con't & references

- Foster whole-school approaches to sustainability.
- **Assess sustainability learning** and develop quality teaching resources and curricula.
- **Explore certification** via micro-credentials and establish evaluation guidelines for sustainability-focused teacher development programs
- [Council Recommendation on learning for the green transition and sustainable development](#)
- [GreenComp: the European sustainability competence framework](#)
- [Working Group Schools: Learning for Sustainability](#)

4. *Digital capacity building of teachers*

- **Engage Future Educators:**
Equip teachers with digital and AI skills, addressing ethical aspects.
- **Enhance Digital Skills:**
Build competencies, promote well-being, and ensure inclusivity.
- **Strategic Priorities of the Digital Education Action plan :**
 - Develop a high-performing digital education ecosystem.
 - Use *Guidelines on tackling disinformation* to enhance digital literacy.
- **Empower Professional Practice:**
Purposeful use of digital tools for engagement, teaching, and assessment.

Con'd & references

- **Promote Self-Reflection:**
Encourage teacher agency, self-efficacy, and action.
- **Advance Digital Pedagogy:**
Develop expertise in accessible and innovative digital tools, ensuring inclusivity and gender equality.
- [Digital Education Action Plan](#)
- [Council Recommendation on the key enabling factors for successful digital education and training](#)
- [Council Recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills and competences in education and training](#)
- [European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators \(DigCompEdu\)](#)
- [SELFIE - European Education Area](#)

5. *STEM and STEAM*

- to make **STEM teaching** and learning **more relevant and inclusive**. This includes innovative pedagogies and assessment methods, e.g. integrated/interdisciplinary STE(A)M learning in cultural, environmental, economic, and other contexts
- **raising student's STEM** competences, engagement, participation, and (career) aspirations;
- **building partnerships** within local community actors and parents to support STEM education opportunities within and outside school systems;
- **supporting girls interest** in STEM and overcoming gender stereotypes in education and educational careers (see
- also **Action 13 of the Digital Education Action Plan** , addressing the needs of students from diverse cultural and socio-economic background.

6. *Common values, civic engagement, and participation*

- promote **active citizenship and ethics** in their teaching, and foster the development of **social and intercultural competences, critical thinking and media literacy**;
- offer opportunities for children/students' **participation in democratic life, social and civic engagement**;
- raise awareness on and understanding of the **European Union context**, notably as regards the **common EU values**, the principles of **unity and diversity**, as well as their **cultural identity**, cultural awareness and their social and historical heritage.

[Council Recommendation on Common values, Inclusive Education, and the European Dimension of Teaching](#)