

CALL FOR EVIDENCE FOR AN INITIATIVE (without an impact assessment)

This document aims to inform the public and stakeholders about the Commission's work, so they can provide feedback and participate effectively in consultation activities.

We ask these groups to provide views on the Commission's understanding of the problem and possible solutions, and to give us any relevant information they may have.

TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE	Education Package 2040 Roadmap: Quality Education for All, Basic Skills, Teachers and Digital Education.
LEAD DG – RESPONSIBLE UNIT	EAC.B1 and B.2
LIKELY TYPE OF INITIATIVE	Communication
INDICATIVE TIMING	Q4-2026
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	Early Childhood Education and Care - European Education Area School education - European Education Area Vocational education and training

This document is for information purposes only. It does not prejudice the final decision of the Commission on whether this initiative will be pursued or on its final content. All elements of the initiative described by this document, including its timing, are subject to change.

A. Political context, problem definition and subsidiarity check

Political context

The 2025 [Communication on the Union of Skills](#) reinforced the role of education as a means of bolstering the competitiveness and preparedness of the EU. It was accompanied by the [Action Plan on Basic Skills](#) that addresses the urgent need to improve literacy, numeracy, science, digital and citizenship skills for all, and by the [STEM Education Strategic Plan](#) that stresses how school education can foster talent and interest in mathematics, science and digital skills from an early age.

The Education Package aims to improve school education by proposing impactful actions. It is intended to tackle the following three interconnected structural challenges and to complement Member State efforts in these areas: (i) the decline in basic skills; (ii) growing teacher shortages; (iii) the need for sovereign digital education infrastructure. All initiatives will feed into the European Education Area (EEA) strategic framework ([Council Resolution on the second cycle of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European education area \(2026-2030\)](#)), the achievements of the [Digital Decade Policy Programme 2030](#) skills targets, and the Tech Sovereignty package priorities, and will be in line with the [Council Recommendation of 9 March 2026 on human capital in the European Union](#). The Education Package is due to be adopted in Q4 2026.

Problem the initiative aims to tackle

The provision of high-quality and inclusive education lies at the heart of Europe's long-term economic competitiveness, social fabric, and democratic stability. However, the following three inter-connected challenges are putting this at risk:

Decline in basic skills: International surveys (OECD/PISA, IEA/ICILS, IEA/ICCS) have shown falling attainment over the past 10-15 years in reading, mathematics, science and digital skills among lower secondary school students, and inadequate civic knowledge among 13-year-olds. Children's socio-economic background and

territorial disparities contribute disproportionately to this trend, reinforcing educational disadvantages and undermining Europe's capacity to innovate, compete and ensure social mobility and cohesion. Measures remain fragmented, with limited evidence of what works, while schools need sustained support to implement them. Cohesive action through stronger links between policy, research and practice (including through digital innovation) can enable personalised learning and help all learners, especially disadvantaged groups (e.g. migrants, those facing ethnic or racial discrimination, LGBTIQ+ people, Roma, learners in disadvantaged areas, and persons with disabilities), acquire basic skills.

Teacher shortages: Teachers are central to education. However, teacher shortages (especially in STEM subjects, in vocational education and training, and in disadvantaged regions) are undermining the performance and equity of education systems. The diversity of the teaching workforce is also failing to match increasingly diverse classrooms, and with 40% of Europe's teachers now aged 50+, effective action is needed to renew the workforce. High early-career attrition and growing difficulties in ensuring that enrolment and graduation rates in initial teacher education (ITE) meet workforce demands are worsening the situation. Teachers have reported feeling better prepared for teaching traditional subject content than for handling contemporary challenges, notably multicultural/multilingual settings, pupils' social-emotional development, and recognising and addressing racism, racial bias and discrimination to foster inclusive classrooms. High workloads and long hours are common reasons for leaving the profession. Across the EU, teachers spend just half their working time on teaching, with a quarter being spent on lesson preparation and assessment, and the remaining quarter on relations with colleagues, pupils, parents, school management, professional learning and administration.

Lack of digitally sovereign infrastructure in education: Europe's education systems rely heavily on non-EU digital providers for core services such as cloud hosting, learning platforms and AI tools. This weakens digital sovereignty, limits pedagogical autonomy, increases dependence on external data standards and vendor lock-in, and makes interoperable, responsible student data management more difficult. At the same time, the innovative European EdTech sector remains fragmented, with insufficient shared capacity for foundational services such as cloud and AI, limiting the development of high-quality European learning tools.

Basis for EU action (legal basis and subsidiarity check)

Legal basis

The Education Package is proposed on the basis of Article 165 and 166 of the TFEU and, as regards the teachers' strand, on the basis of Article 292 in conjunction with Article 153(1), points (b) and (i), TFEU.

Practical need for EU action

The Education Package will encourage, support and complement Member States' activities and contribute to addressing common challenges, with the EU respecting Member States' overall responsibility for their education systems in line with its role in the field of education policy as provided for in the TFEU and the strategic priorities for the second cycle of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European education area (2026-2030).

The Education Package will respect the proportionality principle and implement Articles 165 and 166 of the TFEU. The added value of EU-level action is that it can facilitate the sharing of practice between Member State authorities and educational organisations across the EU, remove barriers that hinder cross-border cooperation, and leverage all appropriate EU funding, including the European Social Fund Plus, in order to address major obstacles to the quality and equity of school education systems and the associated underachievement in basic skills and long-term issues affecting the teaching profession.

B. What does the initiative aim to achieve and how

The Education Package will set out a long-term vision supported by three targeted strands of action:

- 1) **Schools at the centre of reversing the decline in basic skills:** This pillar is aimed at reversing the long-term negative trend in basic skills attainment and at improving basic skills for all, with a particular focus on disadvantaged learners. The EU will provide support to Member States in implementing basic skills acceleration measures, such as tutoring, evidence-based teaching, teacher education and digital tools, including via targeted actions supported by Erasmus+.

- 2) **Excellence through a supported and valued teaching profession:** This pillar is intended to address teachers' and trainers' professional and career development, make their working conditions more attractive, and provide a supportive working environment to tackle shortages, restore the profession's attractiveness and ensure effective recruitment and retention. The EU will support the Member States in implementing relevant measures to make the teaching profession more attractive through a dedicated **EU Teachers Agenda**.
- 3) **Modernisation, including through sovereign Digital Education Infrastructure:** This pillar is aimed at promoting digital transformation in education with a focus on human agency, inclusion and digital sovereignty in the age of AI. It will encourage Member State-led cooperation to develop secure, safe, accessible and pedagogically sound digital education infrastructure aligned with European values. Building on the EU-OECD AI Literacy Framework, it will help roll out AI literacy and skills through capacity building and practical resources. It will also establish wellbeing, media literacy and online safety as core elements of modern education.

Given the specific nature of the measures proposed, the Education Package is likely to consist of a Communication, accompanied by a proposal for a Council Recommendation on basic skills: connecting schools and learning together, and a proposal for a Council Recommendation on attractive teaching careers (Teachers Agenda). The Education Package will also be accompanied by a Commission Decision establishing a European Digital Infrastructure Consortium (EDIC) for education.

Likely impacts

Positive impact: The Education Package is expected to **raise awareness** of the key inefficiencies in school education, to **elevate the political importance** of action and investment, and in response, increase the development and **exchange of good practice** within and between Member States.

In the medium term, the Education Package is therefore expected to contribute to stronger and more **evidence-based policies** for raising the quality and equity of education systems through better identification of needs and targeting of support. It is also expected to contribute to the mainstreaming of innovative solutions developed at school level, in particular through the involvement of school authorities at regional and local level.

In the longer term, the Education Package is expected to help raise basic skills levels among children and young people, in particular by lowering the proportion of low achievers and breaking the persistent link with socio-economic background and other forms of disadvantage. It is also expected to help improve the attractiveness of the teaching profession and reduce staff shortages.

In addition, the Education Package is also expected to contribute to strengthening Member States' capacity to harness the benefits of digital technologies in education and skills development and avoid duplication of investment and efforts.

Who will be affected and how? The primary beneficiaries are expected to be education policymakers at national, regional and local level through greater access to knowledge and exchange opportunities. Ultimately, learners as well as schools, teachers, school leaders and other education staff are expected to benefit through access to better support.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The package will contribute to SDG 4 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'.

Future monitoring

Future cooperation with Member States and stakeholders through the European education area strategic framework and the European Semester – the EU's annual process for coordinating socio-economic policies among Member States – will provide opportunities to monitor progress.

In this context, monitoring will draw on existing data sources, including recurrent data collected by, for example, Eurostat and through the Education and Training Monitor, including the teacher dashboard and the future citizenship education dashboard, the Eurydice network, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), and international large-scale surveys such as PISA (new data due in September 2026), the International Computer and Information Literacy Study (ICILS) and the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS).

Future monitoring will be guided by new and updated EU-level targets set in the 2026 Council Resolution on the second cycle of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European education area (2026-2030), including a more ambitious target on early school leaving and new EU-

level targets for excellence in reading, mathematics and science and for equity in school education (to address basic skills underachievement). Actions to be implemented through the Erasmus+ programme, including the European School Alliances and Teacher Academies, will be systematically monitored and assessed through the regular processes for evaluating and monitoring programme activities.
C. Better regulation
Impact assessment
No impact assessment is required for this package. The package reflects the supporting role of the EU and the voluntary approach to European cooperation in education and training. It does not propose any extension of EU regulatory power or binding commitments on the Member States. It sets out a general policy approach and recommended actions that are not legally binding. The degree of impact will therefore be determined by the Member States' actions.
Consultation strategy
The Commission invites stakeholders and the public to share their views – in any of the 24 official EU languages – via this call for evidence on the 'Have Your Say' page, to enable it to gather evidence, fine-tune the definition of the problem and test policy options for the forthcoming Education Package. Specifically, the Commission is interested in feedback which responds to the following questions: • Which forms of EU-level support would best complement national, regional and local actions to reverse the long-term decline in basic skills, including the persistent link between underachievement and socio-economic status, and to increase the attractiveness of the teaching profession? • How could cooperation between schools and national/regional/local authorities be strengthened to improve the implementation of evidence-based methods for raising proficiency in basic skills? • Which digital tools, infrastructure or practices currently support teaching and learning, and where do you see the greatest need and potential, as well as challenges, for European-scale, digitally sovereign and accessible solutions? • What evidence, data sources or best practice examples should the Commission consider when designing the monitoring and evaluation frameworks for the proposed actions? Contributions are invited from all interested parties, including members of the education sector and partners, such as trade unions and employers' organisations, as well as representatives of the EdTech sector, teacher education, research and innovation organisations, civil society, youth organisations, Member States (public authorities at local, regional and national level, including in cross-border contexts), and industry-education coordinators. We also invite scientific researchers, as well as academic organisations, learned societies and scientific associations with expertise in school education and particularly basic skills, teacher workforce policies and digital education, to submit relevant published and pre-print scientific research, analyses and data. We are particularly interested in submissions that synthesise the current state of knowledge in relevant field(s).
The Education Package will consist of a Communication and possibly two accompanying Council Recommendations and a Commission Decision. None of these require an impact assessment. A call for evidence without a public consultation is therefore envisaged.
Why we are consulting?
The Commission is seeking evidence, views and examples of good practice to further develop the Education Package and its accompanying initiatives. Feedback received through the call for evidence will help fine-tune the definition of the problem, identify priorities for EU action, gather evidence on existing practices and challenges, and inform the preparation of the Communication and accompanying initiatives.
Target audience
The Commission invites contributions from education stakeholders, including teachers, school leaders, learners and parents, education authorities at national, regional and local levels, social partners, civil society and youth organisations, researchers and academic institutions, teacher education providers, representatives of the EdTech sector, employers' organisations and other interested stakeholders.