

EUROPEAN EDUCATION AREA 2025

The European Education Area initiative should help European Union Member States to work together to build more resilient and inclusive education and training systems.

Why do we need to create the European Education Area?

Education is the foundation for personal fulfilment, employability and active, responsible citizenship. Education is essential also to the vitality of European societies and economies. Access to high-quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning is a right for all citizens, as enshrined within the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The COVID-19 pandemic has particularly highlighted how essential it is to prevent structural barriers to learning and skills development from impacting citizens' employment prospects and participation in society.

The European Education Area works in synergy with the European Skills Agenda and the European Research Area to harness knowledge, making it the foundation of Europe's recovery and prosperity.

Focus areas for collaboration

The European Commission and European Union (EU) Member States are working to achieve their collective vision for a European Education Area by focusing their efforts on the following themes:

- improving quality and equity in education and training
- teachers, trainers and school leaders
- digital education
- green education
- the European Education Area in the world

EU is planning activities in the following fields of education:

- early childhood education and care
- school education
- higher education
- adult learning
- vocational education and training

Initiatives for the creation of the European Education Area

The idea to create a European Education Area was first endorsed by European leaders at the 2017 Social Summit in Gothenburg, Sweden. The first packages of measures were adopted in 2018 and 2019.

As a result of decades of close cooperation, significant progress has already been made with:

- almost 95% of children attending early childhood education from the age of 4
- more than 40% of young adults acquiring a higher education qualification
- almost 90% of young people leaving education with either an upper secondary diploma or enrolment in training
- 80% of recent Erasmus+ graduates gaining employment in less than 3 months after graduating

These results represent strong progress, but further work is still required, in particular concerning the following problems:

- the share of 15-year-olds with low ability in reading, maths and science
- the participation of adults in lifelong learning

Additional information about the European Education Area progress monitoring

In September 2020, the Commission outlined its renewed vision for the European Education Area and the concrete actions to achieve it in a Commission Communication.

The Council of the EU responded with the February 2021 Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training for the period 2021-2030.

In November 2022, the Commission published its Progress Report towards the achievement of the European Education Area. The report highlights the work done so far, and the challenges still to be addressed.

2023 was devoted to the European Education Area midterm review process.

The EU institutions, Member States and relevant stakeholders reflected on the current progress, the challenges ahead and how to address them.⁷

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The undersigned received an e-mail on 24.04.2025 (sent to the e-mail address: matti.raudjarv@ut.ee) in which a very important problem was pointed out – **what will happen after acquiring high education?**⁸

⁷ [<https://education.ec.europa.eu/et/about-eea/the-eea-explained>] 06/04/2025

⁸ Sender: Social Science Space info@email.sagepub.com;

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Sage invited to submit articles on the subject "After university?", focusing on the crisis in higher education and its reorganisation with comparisons both on national and international scale. The volume of the articles was to be 700–1,000 words and in total 7 to 10 postings would be ordered. They had to be written in colloquial language to address readers both from

Administration of higher education, academic work and reorganisation of higher education in turbulent times

Universities are in crisis globally as the administration of higher education, academic staff and meaning of scholarship are radically changing.

In the U.S.A., progressive understandings of higher education are questioned and may be cancelled.

In the UK, financing and marketing of higher education has been reduced for decades and ended in a financial crisis which has existential consequences for many universities.

In Argentina, the attempts of the far-right populist government to reduce financing of public education has had potentially permanent consequences on the basic functioning of universities.

In other countries, authoritarian governments have made great efforts to restrict academic freedom in research environment where it was already insecure.

At the same time, an increase in technocapitalism and artificial intelligence raises profound questions about the possible meaning of acquiring a degree or having a scholarship, maybe most urgently in the field of humanities and social sciences.

Conclusion⁹

The European Commission contributed ideas to the European Union (EU) leaders' meeting at the Social Summit in November 2017 in Gothenburg, to stimulate discussion on the future of education and culture. As part of the ongoing debate on the future of Europe, the Commission sets out its vision of a **European education area by 2025**, building on initiatives such as:

- the new European skills agenda;
- investing in Europe's youth;
- improving and modernising education;
- school development and excellent teaching for a great start in life; and
- a renewed EU agenda for higher education initiatives.

It is in the interest of all EU Member States to make use of the full potential of education and culture to drive job creation, social fairness, active citizenship and economic growth and as a means to experience European identity in all its diversity.

The Commission calls for an ambitious European agenda on education and culture to address:

- challenges facing the EU, such as:

academic disciplines and from outside academic communities. The deadline of the articles was set to 31 July 2025.

⁹ Euroopa haridusruum aastaks 2025. [<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/ET/legal-content/summary/a-european-education-area-by-2025.html>] 13/09/2025

- digitalisation;
- increasing inequalities;
- an ageing workforce;
- the need to enhance:
 - skills and competences; and
 - critical thinking and media literacy, in particular to address 'fake' news and counter populism and xenophobia.

It proposes to work jointly with the Member States towards a European education area based on trust, mutual recognition, cooperation and the sharing of best practices, mobility and growth.

The European education area has three main strands:

- Boosting mobility across borders.
- Investing in people and their education.
- Strengthening people's sense of European identity and awareness of cultural heritage.

The proposed steps towards a European education area include the following:

- making mobility a reality for all and creating an EU Student Card;
- initiating a new process to prepare the ground for the mutual recognition of higher education and school diplomas;
- greater cooperation on curricula development;
- improving language learning by aiming to ensure that by 2025 all young Europeans finishing secondary education have a good knowledge of two languages besides their native one;
- promoting lifelong learning and raising the share of people engaging in lifelong learning to 25% by 2025;
- mainstreaming innovation and digital skills in education and preparing a new digital education action plan;
- supporting teachers and offering policy guidance on their professional development;
- creating a network to enable world-class European universities to work together across borders;
- investing in education by using the European semester and setting a benchmark for investment in education to 5% of GDP;
- developing a new European agenda for culture using the momentum of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage and preparing Council of the European Union recommendations;
- strengthening the European dimension of Euronews in order to have a news channel offering independent, high-quality information with a European-wide perspective.

Thus a part of the planned activities has probably been achieved and some of them are achievable in the near future.