2026

Work Programme

European Schoolnet

Our mission is to inspire and support our ministries of education's members, as well as schools, teachers and relevant education stakeholders in Europe, in the transformation of education processes for 21st century digitalised societies. We do this by identifying and testing promising innovative practices, sharing evidence about their impact, and supporting the mainstreaming of teaching and learning practices aligned with 21st century standards for inclusive education.

The European Schoolnet's Work Programme 2026 was published in January 2026.

Publisher:
European Schoolnet (EUN Partnership AIBSL)
Rue de Trèves, 61
1040 Brussels, Belgium

Editor: Laura Lindberg

Design: Mattia Gentile

2026 ROADMAP

Introduction

Mission

At European Schoolnet, our mission is to support ministries of education, schools, teachers and any stakeholder involved in the transformation of education processes in Europe to improve the quality of education for all.

European Schoolnet represents the voice and interests of its members – a network of ministries of education and national agencies from more than 30 European countries – and offers them a space to debate, exchange best practices, learn from each other, and collaborate to find common solutions to key societal challenges impacting education.

Key priorities

The 2026 Work Programme of European Schoolnet focuses on the priorities defined by its members and pays special attention to the European Commission priorities set for the period 2024-2029.

2026 Objectives

In 2026, the goals of the organisation are:

- Providing usable **evidence and reliable data and encouraging exchange** in the area of innovation in education; acting as a policy learning lab in the field in educational technology and innovation to inform policy recommendations and promote policy learning across Europe.
- **Support schools and teachers' development** by strengthening school cooperation in Europe, testing and promoting innovative teaching approaches and methods, encouraging teachers' lifelong learning and continuous professional development, and offering them pedagogical resources and training. At the same, this year we will help primary and secondary teaching professionals learn more about their digital competencies through awareness raising and community building.
- **Support EU agenda** : European Schoolnet will actively support the European Commission in achieving some of the objectives set in its Political Guidelines, such as protecting the mental health of children and young people online, developing an EU teacher's agenda, the launch of a European Schools Alliance to encourage better cross-border cooperation and mobility between schools across Europe, and helping the action plan against cyberbullying, among other key priorities.

European Schoolnet will continue supporting the EU in its vision to set up a European Education Area, by closely monitoring the review of the Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027) (DEAP). European Schoolnet will pay special attention to the **European Commission 2030 Roadmap on the future of digital education and skills 2030** to promote equal access to digital education, support AI literacy, and build long-term partnerships with EU-based EdTech providers. Further to the Communication on the Action Plan on Basic Skills and the Union of Skills, which sets out key actions to boost digital skills across Europe in 2025, European Schoolnet will follow very closely the update of the **Digital Competence Framework**. In parallel, it will support the European Commission in the implementation of **a European STEM Education Strategic Plan** to encourage more students - especially girls and women - to pursue STEM studies and careers through the Erasmus and the Digital Europe Programme. To this end, the organisation will continue to foster the strategic dialogue between the European Commission and the Member States, with more peer learning and policy exchange. Moreover, it will share and promote across Europe the actionable resources and lessons learned from key EU funded education projects, while continuously strengthening synergies with related EU initiatives in digital education. These include the **Better Internet for Kids (BIK) platform (2025-2027)**, the **Digital Skills and Jobs Platform (DSJP),** the **European School Education Platform,** and the **European Digital Education Hub**.

Focus areas

Particular attention will be given to support Europe's education community in the following areas:

1. **Artificial intelligence (AI) and data use in education:** Encouraging the responsible use of AI tools to enhance teaching and learning processes and support the development of AI competences and skills among educators and learners. Supporting schools, teachers and policymakers in making better use of education data, thus promoting data literacy strategies. In this context, the organisation will work closely with its member ministries of education to support them in their respective strategic developments and national educational priorities, offering them the opportunity to exchange and cooperate at European level, while also contributing to the realisation of the European Union's objectives.

2. **Digital well-being and online safety:** Promoting children rights in a digital world. The organisation will focus on how to foster digital well-being in schools, while more broadly supporting media literacy and online safety education, in connection with the wider range of online risks (such as excessive use, cyberbullying, gender-based violence, and potentially harmful content) and opportunities (for learning, play and participation) for children and young people.

3. **Digital skills and competences:** Contributing to the skills and competences of all citizens and supporting its members and the European Commission to achieve the goals set for the Europe's Digital Decade, whose targets should be reviewed by the Commission by 2026.

4. **STEM challenges in education:** Responding to challenges by contributing to the European Commission's STEM Education Strategic Plan, presented as part of the Union of Skills, and the European Green Deal, which requires pedagogy transformations to prepare citizens for the job market of tomorrow. Additionally, supporting the green and digital transitions by addressing the worrying decline in performance and the lack of qualified teachers in areas linked to science, technology, engineering and mathematics, as well as making STEM more attractive for all students, especially girls.

Policy Learning

As part of its policy learning lab activities, European Schoolnet will offer usable evidence in the area of innovation in education, as well as foster policy exchanges and learning among policymakers and other key stakeholders, with the aim to inform policy recommendations and promote policy learning across Europe.

Evidence and data

The organisation will continue to provide its members and key stakeholders with a platform for peer exchange and dialogue, conduct policy experimentations, produce case studies and identify best practices, and conduct surveys and publish reports on issues high on the policy agenda that provide new data; thus, contributing to evidence informed policymaking.

- Through its series of Agile Collection of Information (ACI) reports, European Schoolnet will continue to address emerging digital education policy issues at national and European level. Since its launch in 2021, the ACI series has provided relevant information about developments and initiatives on artificial intelligence; national resilience and recovery strategies; use of data in student learning, regulation and governance of data eco-systems; the regulation of the use of digital technologies and screens in schools. The 6th issue of ACI was presented at the 2025 Eminent conference and addressed Artificial Intelligence in School Education, after conducting a survey to collect up-to-date information from European Schoolnet's members on the current state of play regarding this subject. New topics for 2026 will be discussed and selected by the European Schoolnet Steering Committee.
- After the successful experience with Portugal's case study on its Digital Education Transition Plan (published in June 2024), a new case study will be published in 2026 addressing system changes in the Italian education system. The aim of this case study is to broker research findings developed through projects and activities to national policymakers. In 2026 European Schoolnet will re-introduce the **study visit scheme** with country level delegates that was interrupted in 2021-22 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The topic and the hosting country will be discussed and decided by the European Schoolnet Steering Committee.
- To disseminate educational research findings, European Schoolnet will continue to produce its Perspectives Series (two issues a year) on relevant educational topics identified throughout the year.
- **Technical support** continues to be provided to the Ministry of Education in Greece to develop a framework and process for monitoring the digitisation of its education system. This technical assistance is funded by the European Union's Structural Reform Support Programme, requested by the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, and will run from autumn 2024 to September 2027 under the project SMART SCHOOLS in Greece.

Policy exchange and recommendations

European Schoolnet activities related to **policy learning** will pay more attention to encouraging policy exchange and dialogue across countries, targeting mainly its members, through the following initiatives:

- **Annual collection of members' policy priorities:** Since 2024, European Schoolnet systematically compiles the most important policy priorities of its members and shares with them a brief report, making connections and linkages between the priorities and actions of the countries. In 2026, the organisation will continue to gather information about priorities of the members at policy level to better inform and align its activities with their needs and to support exchange among them.

- **Podcasts series and ad-hoc meetings on policy developments:** European Schoolnet regularly delves into and highlights new policy initiatives, developments, insights and expert opinions in its podcast series. With this initiative, launched in 2024, the organisation offers a unique platform for policymakers and other stakeholders to learn from peers and, at the same time, gain visibility and explain their national, regional or local initiatives to Europe's education community. Additionally, European Schoolnet will continue organising policy exchanges focusing on the impact of innovation in education whenever a topic of interest comes up, such as the meeting on the results of the ICILS 2023 on students' digital competences held in 2025.

- **Cross-field exchange of European Schoolnet's working groups and outcomes:** European Schoolnet will continue supporting policy learning and exchange of its members through the work of its standing working and interest groups. To bolster the impact of these exchanges, the organisation will put together appropriate processes to more efficiently communicate and share the results and outcomes of the different discussions in the groups among its members, as well as find ways to connect the work between the groups to promote cross-field exchange and dialogue.

- **Project outcomes:** European Schoolnet will collect and share key lessons learnt from its wide range of projects with its members, highlighting the most important policy recommendations and guidelines provided. A new members dashboard will offer members of the organisation the opportunity to extract information about their country's participation in EU projects and other European initiatives shaping the future of education. It will also house a repository of projects resources.

Schools & teachers' development

European Schoolnet will continue supporting both schools and teachers with different initiatives:

Supporting schools in Europe

As a leading organisation in providing services to schools in Europe, European Schoolnet is active in supporting school partnerships and networks. It has operated the European Commission initiative eTwinning since its creation in 2005 and the connected platform, School Education Gateway. European Schoolnet is currently coordinating the European Commission's initiative European School Education Platform, a meeting place for teachers and stakeholders in Europe, under a contract with the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Contrary to the previous contracts, the technical development is not managed by European Schoolnet.

The platform offers a wide range of options for professional development, Erasmus+ tools for networking and partner finding, and information on European policy and practice to schools - including all education levels from early childhood education and care to primary and secondary schools, and initial vocational education and training. The platform is also home to eTwinning, keeping and strengthening its community and networking elements, while building on the content and services provided by the platform. Throughout 2026, European Schoolnet will continue leading the content creation, professional development offers, and community and communication activities, as well as guiding the development of the existing functionalities and adding new ones.

As part of the project, European Schoolnet aims to reinforce the visibility of the platform as a key source of information on school education, professional development for teachers, and inspiration among educators and related stakeholders. The platform will help reach larger goals of making education more inclusive and help teachers find creative solutions for their classrooms.

Since November 2025, the European Commission has also entrusted European Schoolnet with the **strategic promotion of the SELFIE Toolkit** (Self-reflection on Effective Learning by Fostering the Use of Innovative Educational Technologies). Through a comprehensive work plan, European Schoolnet will aim to raise awareness of the toolkit's components (SELFIE for Schools, Teachers, and Work-Based Learning), improve website usability, strengthen translations, tailor messaging for diverse educational audiences, and build strategic connections with platforms like eTwinning and the European Digital Education Hub. Those connections will be planned and implemented upon approval by the respective European Commissions' Steering Committees of those projects.

The Future Classroom Lab

European Schoolnet will continue to position itself as the key organisation in Europe concerned with **innovative practices for teaching and learning,** and as a major hub for reflecting on new and innovative school models for the future of learning. In this area, the Future Classroom Lab (FCL) initiative has since 2012 been encouraging countless public authorities, school leaders and teachers to embark in a journey of transformation and constant innovation.

Most importantly, the FCL is the pinnacle of the ecosystem which has been growing around it, represented by its group of 26 Lead and Co-Lead Ambassadors present in 16 countries, more than 270 innovative learning lab network members, 35 supporting companies, and finally 600+ individuals who visit the lab annually.

The strategic development of the Future Classroom Lab (FCL) will further expand and strengthen the following dimensions:

- The FCL will capitalise on the Future Classroom Lead Ambassadors initiative with the support of the involved ministries of education and expand its reach in other countries. European Schoolnet and the Future Classroom Lead Ambassadors will work together to provide support to local teacher and school communities while creating value internationally. On the one hand, the group will better support the development of new innovative learning labs and spaces across Europe. On the other, it will collectively help European Schoolnet develop more impactful training and exchange opportunities to explore and promote innovative teaching and learning practices by organising thematic task forces.
- The FCL will continue to encourage the creation of Innovative Learning Labs and support capacity building and networking activities among them, building on the results of previous projects, and connect them with the outputs and activities of current European Schoolnet activities.
- The FCL will enter a process of revision and improvement of its face-to-face training programme to respond to evolving educational needs and funding mechanisms. In 2026 some key courses will be provided in continuation of the efforts devoted in the area until now, while a more ambitious strategy to re-design and adapt the content and the format of the courses will be piloted.
- The FCL will continue to work with leading and emerging private actors, active in the field of education (i.e. EdTech, classroom equipment and furniture, school design, and sound), to support the sustainability of- and technology offered in- the FCL. Additionally, it will continue providing seminars and workshops for policymakers and teachers on new technologies, services, and trends. In 2026, this effort will also aim to involve more active Innovative Learning Labs and Lead Ambassadors in these trainings and exchange opportunities.
- The FCL continues to offer the Future Classroom Validation Service to support ICT companies, start-ups and research projects interested in evaluating ICT solutions by carrying out school pilots. This FCL fee-based service is based on European Schoolnet's extensive experience in running small- and large-scale school pilots in EC-funded projects, and research conducted in the Living Schools Lab project.
- The FCL will support the exchange mechanism within the EdReNe network. The next face-to-face seminar will be organised in May 2026 in Vienna, focusing on "AI in Education: Ethical Pathways and System Readiness". The seminar will be another opportunity for the network members to continue the fruitful discussion initiated in 2025 on how to ethically harness the potential offered by AI for the creation and organisation of digital education content.
- The FCL will organise the 2026 edition of the School Innovation Forum in Brussels, building on the lessons learned from the six previous successful editions (four face to face, one online and one hybrid). The Forum 2026 will aim to reflect and shape a shared vision for a future-ready teaching profession by exploring innovative practices and policies in teacher education.

- The FCL will continue its communication strategy with targeted and timely messages and information directed to the target audiences: ministries of education, other education organisations, EdTech companies, ITE organisations, teachers and school leaders. Additionally, it will explore other formats, e.g. by showing the 'faces' of the people enabling the FCL activities to take place.

The European Schoolnet Academy

Since 2014, the European Schoolnet Academy has been scaling up professional development opportunities for teachers, engaging more than 104.595 learners and awarding 48.480 certificates. In 2026, it will continue offering training opportunities with a brand-new catalogue of free massive open online courses (MOOCs), for anyone to join with no limit to the number of participants. The course topics will include transforming informatics education through authentic, inclusive and engaging learning experiences; practical approaches to integrating STE(A)M education in early childhood and primary classrooms; digital wellbeing and mindful technology use for teachers and students; and online safety.

The European Schoolnet Academy will also continue communicating with teachers through its blog.

Empowering teachers through EU funded projects

Teacher professional development needs will also be addressed through four Erasmus+ Teacher Academies projects - ContinueUP, the 21st century European Teachers, ACT-AI Academy and **AIDEA – AI-Driven Educators Academy**, as well as the Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership – **STTAIRS - Strengthening-teacher-training-with-AI**:

- The ContinueUP project addresses the question of how more - and more effective - training can be made available to teachers across the continuum of initial and continuous teacher training. Building on last year's co-construction and co-delivery of a university ITE module and a CPD MOOC, the project partners will develop guidelines in 2026 to support collaboration between ITE and CPD providers. Insights will also be drawn from a pilot accreditation process conducted during the project, aimed at informing future recognition of teachers' professional development. The project will conclude with a final event in 2026, designed to foster ongoing cooperation between ITE and CPD providers at the European level.
    - The overall objective of the 21st Century European Teacher project is to gain insight into how European teachers can approach and develop teaching in emerging subject areas such as technological empowerment, sustainable learning, entrepreneurship and playful learning. The partners join forces in a collaborative action to develop and innovatively improve the competencies and attractiveness of the teaching profession by establishing strong European partnerships between teacher education and training providers and by providing sustainable teaching practices across borders through mobility activities in a blended approach to teaching and learning.

Focus areas

1 Artificial intelligence (AI) and data use in education

The impact of artificial intelligence (AI) in education

Policymakers and education actors are seeking to understand, experiment and adapt to this new reality that has a real and long-term impact on school systems and processes.

The potential use and impact of AI in teaching, learning and schooling is high on the policy agenda of the EU and European Member States. An OECD TALIS report, published in 2025, revealed an increase of the use of AI by teachers across the world, but also an increasing demand to get more professional development and support.

To help ministries of education, schools, teachers and other key players involved in Europe's education better understand what the potential and challenges are to integrate this powerful technology in schools, European Schoolnet will continue offering evidence, peer learning and awareness raising on this topic. These activities will be carried out alongside the work developed by other key international organisations engaged in addressing the implications of artificial intelligence in education (such as UNESCO, the EU institutions, OECD and the Council of Europe).

European Schoolnet with furthermore disseminate the insights of its annual EMINENT conference, building on the insights already shared in its latest Agile Collection of Information publication, titled 'When does AI make sense in schools?'. The publication was released during the EMINENT event in December 2025. Additionally, the organisation will facilitate peer learning in 2026, animating the discussions of the new European Schoolnet Working Group on Artificial Intelligence and disseminating new web articles, podcasts, and video interviews on this topic.

Having actively participated in the High-Level Expert Group on AI (AI HLEG), established by the European Commission to provide guidance on the ethical and trustworthy development of artificial intelligence, European Schoolnet will raise awareness and review the new EC guidelines with its network.

At the same time, the organisation will address challenges faced by educators in introducing AI, with a specific focus on teacher learning. It will do so through the organisation of the European Schoolnet Academy Thematic Seminar and the publication of a report on 'Assessing Teacher Learning in the Time of AI' during the first half of 2026.

Moreover, the organisation will support the European Commission through its active participation in several EU funded educational initiatives, such as:

- **The** ACT-AI Academy (the European academy for the development of teachers' skills and competences for an effective AI Integration in education) aims to establish a pan European academy for student-teachers, in-service teachers and school leaders. Its focus is on equipping and/or upskilling them with the competences required to use AI effectively and ethically within the educational context, as well as for part of their professional engagement. Additionally, the project aims to raise awareness about the potential benefits of AI for enhancing educational outcomes and supporting the holistic development of students while addressing societal and ethical challenges.

- **STTAIRS, Strengthening-teacher-training-with-AI**, aims to create teacher training programs and systems enhanced with AI tools, leading to increased teacher satisfaction, well-being, professional development (both pedagogically and digitally), and promoting inclusion and sustainability.
- **The AI-Driven Educators Academy (AIDEA)** proposes a forward-thinking approach to teacher professional development, equipping educators with the tools and strategies necessary to navigate the AI in education landscape. Through hands-on training, ethical frameworks and inclusive methodologies, AIDEA aspires to prepare educators for a future where AI enhances, rather than replaces, the human elements of teaching and learning.

Data literacy strategies in schools

The EVIDALI policy experimentation project, funded by the Erasmus + programme, explores evidence from research and practice, and policy initiatives on data literacy - in particular for teachers. The project runs for a three-year period in a consortium covering several regions and territorial entities in Europe (Castilla y León, Provincia Autonoma di Trento and Madeira), also involving the ministry of education of Malta, two research oriented organisations (Fondazione Bruno Kessler/IRVAPP in Italy and EIESP in France – both core partners), the ministry of education of France, and the Fondazione per la Scuola in Italy (associated partners). So far, EVIDALI has undertaken a mapping of initiatives supporting the development of data literacy across EU countries, facilitated a Policy Learning Lab involving decision makers and researchers on the topic of data literacy including AI, and produced a literature review. In 2026, the Policy Learning Lab will continue to run and five case studies on data literacy strategies in schools will be finalised and published. The project will also run a survey targeting schools about teachers' and school heads' needs for support and training to develop further data practices.

European Schoolnet will disseminate the lessons learned and actionable resources from the AgileEDU project to a wider audience, including the policy recommendations with examples to improve strategies (at school, local and central levels) for a responsible, purposeful and inclusive use of data and guidance for practitioners.

2 *Supporting digital well-being and online safety*

Digital citizenship is an increasingly important knowledge domain for pupils, teachers, parents and carers, as digital technologies and online environments play a growing role in the lives of children and young people.

With new political priorities taking shape at European level, digital well-being and children's rights in the digital world continue to feature prominently on the European Commission's and Member States' policy agendas.

The European strategy for a better internet for kids (BIK+) provides a vision for age-appropriate digital services, with no one left behind and with every child in Europe protected, empowered and respected online. It aims for accessible, age-appropriate, and informative online content and services that are in children's best interests. The BIK+ strategy is built on three key pillars:

- **Safe digital experiences** to protect children from harmful and illegal content, conduct, contact and consumer risks, and to improve their well-being online through a safe, age-appropriate digital environment, created in a way that respects children's best interests.
- **Digital empowerment** for children to acquire the necessary skills and competencies to make sound choices and express themselves in the online environment safely and responsibly.
- **Active participation**, respecting children by giving them a say in the digital environment, with more child-led activities to foster innovative and creative safe digital experiences.

To support digital well-being, European Schoolnet is coordinating the Erasmus+ funded project digi.well – A whole-school approach to well-being in a digital world, with involvement from, among other partners, its Serbian, Slovenian and Portuguese network members. The main aim of digi.well is to:

- Provide a platform for exchange on well-being in a digital world between European Schoolnet, project partners and a wider set of ministries of education and education policy makers.
- Develop a self-assessment tool for schools on digital well-being so teachers and school leaders can measure and evaluate their current status, covering three distinct areas of online safety: infrastructure, policy, and practice.
- Offer training, guidance, and easy-to-use materials for schools so they can develop an action plan, helping them to understand their current status and key areas to be improved.
- Explore innovative models to involve a wider range of stakeholders in a whole-school approach to well-being in a digital world.

In addition, European Schoolnet will continue its involvement in two other Erasmus+ policy experimentation projects on well-being in digital education:

- PERMA-Digital aims to develop and implement an innovative whole-school systemic programme for well-being in digital education, assessing its impact through mixed methods and experimentations across European countries and validating its potential to be mainstreamed.
- WINDEE aims to reshape the digital education ecosystem through research, experimentation and stakeholder collaboration, with a view to embed digital well-being as a core component of educational policy and practice, so that technology empowers learners without compromising their mental, emotional, or physical health.

In 2026, European Schoolnet will also start running a new Erasmus+ project on cyberbullying, with involvement from partners from Lithuania, Italy and France. More specifically, ***Cyberkind: Empowering school communities through SEL education against cyberbullying*** will:

- Develop a SEL (social and emotional learning) learning programme for schools, including peer-to-peer tools and activities for school pupils.
- Offer training, guidance and supporting materials for teachers and schools so they can develop policies and actions against cyberbullying.
- Explore innovative models to involve a wider range of stakeholders in a whole-school approach to tackle cyberbullying and promote well-being in the digital world – this will specifically focus on the role of parents/caregivers and external organisations and

professionals providing training and counselling services to schools, including online safety helplines.

In the meantime, the European Commission's Better Internet for Kids (BIK) platform (2025-2027) will continue to constitute a major building block of the digital citizenship line of work. As part of this 24-month service contract, with funding from the Digital Europe Programme, European Schoolnet will continue to foster the exchange of knowledge, expertise, resources and best practices between key online safety stakeholders, including European Safer Internet Centres and youth, in order to increase access to high-quality content, step up awareness and empowerment, and create a safe environment for children and young people online.

The BIK platform activities will also help to raise awareness about several strategic EC initiatives, such as:

- In July 2024, the Commission published its guidelines on the protection of minors under the Digital Services Act (DSA) to ensure a safe online experience for children and young people. The guidelines set out a non-exhaustive list of proportionate and appropriate measures to protect children from online risks such as grooming, harmful content, problematic and addictive behaviours, as well as cyberbullying and harmful commercial practices.
- In July 2024, the Commission also made available the first version of an EU white-label age-verification blueprint, as a basis for a user-friendly and privacy-preserving age verification method across Member States.
- The upcoming Action plan against cyberbullying aims to address the growing trend of abusive behaviours online, by creating a comprehensive EU approach to tackling cyberbullying and support Member States in those efforts.

As such, European Schoolnet will contribute – directly or indirectly – to emerging political priorities and upcoming actions, protecting the mental health of children and young people online, combatting the growing trend of cyberbullying and abusive behaviour online, or unethical techniques used by online platforms and services.

3 Contributing to the development of digital skills and competences

The 2021-2027 Digital Education Action Plan[1] highlights two strategic priorities and activity lines; the development of a high-performing digital education ecosystem and the strengthening of citizens' digital skills and competences; which fit directly into European Schoolnet's digital citizenship remit, in particular the need to enhance digital skills and competences for the digital transformation, which requires:

- Basic digital skills and competences from an early age:
  - digital literacy, including fighting disinformation
  - computing education
  - good knowledge and understanding of data-intensive technologies, such as artificial intelligence

- Advanced digital skills which produce more digital specialists and ensure that girls and young women are equally represented in digital studies and careers.

As part of this strategic priority, the 2024 'Council recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills in education and training' articulates the steps needed to promote digital competence development from early on and at all stages of education and training, to empower Europeans to develop basic, intermediate and advanced digital skills.

Meanwhile, the European Commission's Communication 2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade puts the acquisition of basic and advanced digital skills of individuals in direct connection with European competitiveness at large. Some level of basic digital competence is needed for virtually all jobs today. As such, digital skills are broadly linked to employability and not exclusively required for tech jobs. The Digital Compass sets concrete targets for basic and advanced digital skills. By 2030, 80% of people in Europe should possess at least basic digital skills. In the advanced digital skills domain, Europe strives to have 20 million ICT specialists employed by 2030 while promoting access to women in this field to bridge the gender gap in the technology sector. Fast evolving technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, cloud computing, cybersecurity, industrial biotechnologies, robotics and micro-electronics present a challenge for business and society in general to constantly adapt to the changing skills needs landscape.

- Alongside its work on digital well-being and online safety, European Schoolnet will therefore continue to strengthen its activities on digital skills for jobs, in particular through the ***Digital Skills and Jobs Platform*** (DSJP) service contract, which is currently in its second phase, having been initiated in September 2024 in the format of a 48-month framework contract under the Digital Europe Programme. The DSJP aims to support the closing of the digital skills gap and the reaching of the Digital Decade targets. The Platform has succeeded in positioning itself as the go-to resource for the latest and most relevant information in digital skills, with an increasingly strong focus on training opportunities and learning content. Presently, it is home to a diverse and growing community of over 16.000 stakeholders from all around the EU Member States, working in close synergy with the 22+ connected National Coalition websites and a variety of Digital Europe Programme-funded projects producing short-term training courses and specialised education programmes in key digital areas. Online webinars and workshops have brought users' attention to relevant topics and initiatives at European and national level, while also supporting their collaboration via the partners for digital skills networking group (around 580 members) in the context of calls for funding. The Platform also hosts the Pledges for Digital Skills, the European Digital Skills Awards, the Cyber Skills Academy, and – since June 2025 – the Industry-Academia Network.

- To strengthen further synergies with and between Digital Skills and Jobs Coalitions at national level, European Schoolnet is also coordinating the **Champions for the Digital Decade** (C4DD) project, funded by Digital Europe Programme. C4DD aims to ensure easy access to relevant opportunities on basic and advanced digital skills at national level via the National Coalitions (NCs) and their websites. It also raises the profile of relevant national initiatives and opportunities to a wider European audience by making them available via the Digital Skills and Jobs Platform (DSJP).
  Via the network of already established NCs, the project aims to improve access to digital skills resources and training opportunities, enabling individuals and organisations to adapt to digital technologies and participate fully in the digital economy. By facilitating collaboration,

information sharing and synergy between stakeholders at national and EU level, the project will strengthen the digital ecosystem, promote inclusivity and advance the Digital Europe Programme's goals of increasing Europe's digital competitiveness and resilience.
For this purpose, European Schoolnet has brought together a large consortium of NCs from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain, with support from DIGITALEUROPE. One of the project's major objectives is to facilitate engagement of other/new NCs by offering financial incentives via an FSTP (Financial Support for Third Parties) mechanism.

4 Responding to STEM challenges in education

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education challenges continue to be high on the political and industry agenda, owing to the declining interest and participation, especially among girls, in scientific and technical studies and careers. Furthermore, the European Commission's STEM Education Strategic Plan was presented as part of the Union of Skills and the European Green Deal, which require pedagogy transformations to prepare citizens for the job market of tomorrow while supporting the green and digital transitions. Therefore, in 2026, the STEM activities at European Schoolnet will continue to concentrate on addressing five strategic areas:

1. **Integrated STEM education (connecting STEM subjects):** Teaching STEM in general and in an integrated way. This will include projects where the focus is on either individual STEM subjects (i.e. specific subject, not the priority) or all of them working together.
    - **SLEs**: STE(A)M Learning Ecologies, focusing on open schooling-enabled science learning paths for all in learning continuums of formal and informal learning environments and enterprises (final report due February 2026)
    - **OUTSTE(A)M**: STEM in pre-primary education.
    - **ICSE STE(A)M Vision**: focusing on creating a sustainable interdisciplinary European partnership on integrated STE(A)M, offering clear European prospects for STE(A)M teacher education (New project starting in January 2026).
    - **Scientix Collections**: Technical development to display thematic collections of teaching materials for schools to implement following a whole school integrated STEM teaching approach.
2. **Emerging technologies (Supporting STEM):** through educational technologies and augmented reality in education, with projects such as:
    - **EmpowerED** follows up on the work done in IMPACT EdTech (where incubation and acceleration programmes for EdTech start-ups were organised), which will work on a European EdTech community for exchange, dialogue and collaboration, with the final report due in February 2026. After the completion of the project, European Schoolnet will explore ways to ensure the sustainability of the project embedding the final EmpowerED edTech actions as part of its dedicated industry partners' programme.
    - **Qualcomm Wireless Reach – Smart Classroom** project looks at the use of technology in classrooms in Spain (continuation in 2026 under negotiation).
3. Contextualising STEM (Environmental sustainability):

- **NBS Teachers Academy** is bringing nature-based solutions (NBS) to pre-service teachers.
- **BlueLights** is integrating ocean literacy in STEM education.
- **ProBleu** is offering cascading grants to integrate ocean literacy in education.
- **LOESS** aims to raise awareness on the importance of soil and its functions, and to increase soil literacy across Europe.
- **Buzzing Schools** will develop The Pollinator Discovery Toolkit, an educational toolkit for teachers and educators to engage young people in pollinator conservation.
- **BUSTIC Edu** (Building Sustainability Competences in Education) will develop a nature-positive programme for integrated teaching, with sustainability as the underlying topic.

4. **Contextualising STEM (culture and society)**: following up on different topics like citizen science, STEM and Arts (STE(A)M), etc. With projects such as:
    - **Europeana** which focuses on integrating cultural heritage in education, including encouraging teachers to share their experience in incorporating Europeana resources in their classrooms. Europeana is a web portal created by the European Union containing digitised cultural heritage collections of more than 3,000 institutions across Europe.
    - **STEAMBrace** will focus on connecting STEM with Arts.
5. Exploratory actions (beyond STEM)
    - **TINKER** is enhancing computer science education in Europe.
    - **CROPS** will inform and evolve the EU Research & Innovation system so that it can adequately support the transition of citizen science from small-scale to a Europe-wide level, moving it towards a modern, open-science approach.

European Schoolnet will continue developing activities in all these areas and will investigate additional opportunities offered by future initiatives and calls at the level of the various programmes of the European Commission and in collaboration with industry.

While addressing the four priorities set by the ministries of education STEM representatives working group:

- Making STEM teaching better
- Connecting STEM education with global challenges
- Expanding access to STEM careers for all students
- Facilitating exchanges and peer learning

Scientix®: the STEM Education Community in Europe

Scientix will continue to provide its core services:

- Information and support on all STEM actions in Europe through its portal, including the annual STEM Discovery Campaign and ScientixTV
- Professional development activities for teachers

- Coordinate the ministries of education, national contact points, and Scientix Ambassadors
- Support to schools through the STEM School Label.

Scientix through the STEM Alliance provides a key opportunity for industry members interested in shaping the future of education to shape the future of STEM education and promote the attractiveness and importance of STEM careers. The STEM Alliance is supported by major industry partners such as the Airbus Foundation, CISCO, Clarios, Cummins, Lenovo, Microsoft, Timken, Qualcomm and Tik Tok.

Working groups

European Schoolnet's standing working and interest groups offer valuable insights and input that inform and enrich the work of the organisation. Four working groups and one interest group of the organisation bring together relevant experts from member education authorities to discuss, exchange and address topics underlined as priorities in the Digital Education Action plan. In 2026, these groups will continue to play a significant role in the work programme of European Schoolnet.

- **The Artificial Intelligence in Education Working Group** was established in 2025 to address the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in K12 education, specifically concerning teaching, learning and assessment, by looking at policy initiatives, practices and evidence from research to support policy learning in a cross-country context. The working group consists of representatives from ministries of education, public education authorities, and related public organisations from 20 European countries: Belgium (Flanders), Belgium (Wallonia-Brussels), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovakia and Türkiye.
- **The Interactive Classroom WG (ICWG)** set up in 2013, enables education authorities to explore common areas of concern, share experiences and address policy challenges related to the integration of a wide range of technologies in the classroom and their impact on teaching and learning. Members decide on a work programme for a specific period where they explore different topics connected to their priorities and interests, regularly developing and publishing recommendations, guidelines, best practices and resources. There are currently 21 participating countries: Belgium (Flanders), Belgium (Wallonia-Brussels), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovakia and Türkiye. In 2026 the group will be working on the topic 'Inclusion in an increasingly diverse and technology driven society. Strategies to create inclusive learning environments with the support of (emerging) technology.' The topic will be addressing the question 'how do teachers harness digital technologies to support inclusive learning environments?' through a series of video case studies and a 'playbook' that will map the identified strategies for creating an inclusive learning environment with the support of technology and provide practical recommendations for their integration in the classroom. The outputs are expected to be published in spring 2026.
- **The Ministries of Education STEM WG** addresses STEM education strategies to be developed at the level of European Schoolnet, concentrating on the priorities provided by the ministries of education:
  - Priority 1: Improving STEM teaching in early childhood education, primary and secondary with a focus on the key challenge of each educational level.
  - Priority 2: Connecting STEM education with global challenges.
  - Priority 3: Expanding access to STEM careers, current scientific research results and innovative teaching practices and technological solutions

    - Priority 4: Supporting the exchange between ministries of education, teachers, industry actors, higher education and pre-service teacher training centres, and other STEM education stakeholders.

- **The ICT@school Indicators Working Group** will continue to share and discuss the recent large-scale surveys run in different countries and their findings, as well as international surveys such as ICILS (IEA), TALIS (OECD), TIMMS and PIRLS (IEA).
- **The Digital Citizenship Working Group** will continue to steer and advise the digital citizenship pillar of European Schoolnet's activities. In 2026, this group will engage in further discussions on how the organisation should approach and prioritise the different themes identified under the concept of digital citizenship, while exploring best practice examples on how education can foster digital skills, media literacy, critical thinking and civic participation.
- **The Small & Rural Interest Group** was set up to explore issues of mutual concern related to small schools at European level since many countries are concerned with this issue. After the launch of its MOOC during the second half of 2025, the group will work on the creation of a memorandum.

These groups will continue enabling ministries to share experiences and problems and to learn from each other. As part of its policy learning lab initiative, European Schoolnet will develop an effective approach, as requested by the Steering Committee, to more effectively communicate the results and outcomes for all members of the organisation.

Partnership development

Dialogue with different industry bodies will further enhance the current business model as well as new models for cooperation with individual companies. The cooperation with the industrial sector will continue to represent a key area of development in 2026. Major IT companies will continue to support European Schoolnet through a variety of activities or their engagement in projects. See information about industry partners engaged in the Scientix STEM Alliance and the Future Classroom Lab.

As part of our continuous partnership with Bett Global, the organisation and its network of ministries of education are invited to attend the Bett Ministerial Symposium, taking place in London on 20 – 21 January 2026, with the support of the UK Department for Education and the Department for Business and Trade. This event is designed to foster global dialogue on the strategic challenges and opportunities across the full education landscape. The Symposium will provide a unique platform for meaningful exchange among education leaders, spanning K-12, higher education, and lifelong learning including workforce upskilling. The Ministerial Symposium will be followed by Bett UK (21-23 January 2026), the world's foremost event for education technology, convening ministers, policymakers, educators, and innovators from 130 countries to shape the future of learning. European Schoolnet will be hosting one of the 'Challenge Roundtables' at the event.

During the year, European Schoolnet will work to reinforce its collaboration with other international organisations, such as the OECD, UNESCO and the Council of Europe.

Conclusion

The 2026 Work Programme of European Schoolnet is a new roadmap to continue consolidating the organisation as a key player in shaping the future of Europe's education. European Schoolnet will collaborate with the key players of the education community, to challenge current thinking and explore effective ways of mainstreaming innovation in education across Europe. To do that, the organisation will focus on:

- Supporting ministries of education to transform Europe's educational systems with innovative solutions that motivate, protect and empower the next generation of students and teachers.
- Facilitating synergies between practitioners, researchers, schools, policymakers and the industry at European and national levels, to foster new teaching and learning models; develop teachers' capacity building; facilitate schools' partnerships; attract talent to STEM careers; and promote safe and responsible use of data, new technologies, new environments and new teaching methods.
- Contributing to the successful implementation of the European Commission's agenda regarding education, digital skills and competences, and areas such as cybersecurity and digital well-being.

European Schoolnet®