Main Policy Lines in Education and Training

(May 2017 – October 2017)

1. **European Union**

# Institutional context

* 1. **Presidencies of the EU**
     1. **The Estonian Presidency of the EU**

July 2017 – December 2017

Estonia’s priorities during its six-month presidency are:

* An open and innovative European economy – developing a business environment that supports knowledge-based growth and competitiveness
* A safe and secure Europe – strengthening the fight against terrorism and crime, continuing the work on the migration crises and increasing defence expenditure
* A digital Europe and [the free movement of data](http://estonianworld.com/technology/road-free-movement-data-europe/) – ensuring modern and secure e-communications to be available across Europe
* An inclusive and sustainable Europe – supporting equal opportunities for high-quality education, employment and development of skills

In the field of education and training, the Presidency focuses on the implementation of the New Skills Agenda, the modernization of Higher Education, and the initiative of graduates’ tracking.

[www.eu2017.ee](http://www.eu2017.ee)

[The work programme](https://www.eu2017.ee/sites/default/files/2017-06/EU2017EE%20Programme_0.pdf)

# Education and Training: main policy lines

## New initiatives by the European Commission in the field of school and higher education

30 May 2017

The Commission published its new strategy to support high quality, inclusive and future-oriented school and higher education, following the initiative ‘Investing in Youth in Europe’.

**2.1.1 School development and excellent teaching for a great start in life**

Commission Communication

The Commission identifies areas where action is urgently needed and how EU support can help EU countries address the urgent challenges. The Communication highlights three priority areas:

* Raising the quality and inclusiveness of schools
* Supporting excellent teachers and school leaders
* Improving the governance of school education systems

The Communication presents a list of actions, for each priority, with a provisional timetable.

[The Communication](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1496304694958&uri=COM:2017:248:FIN) and supporting [staff working document](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1496303586570&uri=SWD:2017:165:FIN)

**2.1.2 A renewed higher education strategy**

The renewed EU agenda for higher education identifies four main goals for higher education in the EU:

* Make sure higher education equips graduates with the right skills for today’s economy;
* Building inclusive higher education systems;
* Bridging the innovation gap between higher education, research and business;
* Ensuring different parts of higher education systems work together effectively and efficiently.

[The Communication](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1496304694958&uri=COM:2017:247:FIN)

## Public consultation on the ‘Recommendation on promoting social inclusion and shared values through forma land non-formal learning’

19 May – 11 August 2017

This consultation aimed to gather input on the question how successful education and training are in helping young people acquire shared values and promoting social inclusion. It wants to identify the most effective policy approaches, tools and methods in formal and non-formal learning. It wants to investigate how EU-level cooperation can add value and support Member States.

The results of this consultation are used together with the results of the work undertaken by the ET 2020 Working Group on the follow-up of the Paris Declaration. The Recommendation will establish a policy framework, as a key reference document to support Member States in providing education and training that promotes social inclusion and ownership of shared values while also contributing to preventing radicalisation leading to violent extremism.

[Information on the consultation and reference documents](https://ec.europa.eu/info/consultations/public-consultation-recommendation-promoting-social-inclusion-and-shared-values-through-formal-and-non-formal-learning_en#contributions)

## Thematic Working Group

6 October 2017

The [ET2020 Working Group on Schools](https://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/expert-groups/schools_en) has just published the third in a series of reports on the governance of school education. In this new report the Group – made up of representatives from European ministries of education and other organisations – identifies examples of policies and initiatives from across Europe that are aimed at raising quality and equity in school education.

The report sets out nine broad 'Guiding Principles' for policy development in school education. These are illustrated with almost 60 policy examples from more than 30 European countries and networks and specifically aimed at supporting teachers and school leaders in their daily practice and professional careers.

The report is the result of knowledge-sharing and critical discussions by the Group, including a Peer Learning Activity hosted by the Flemish Ministry for Education and Training in May 2017.

The concept of the school as a learning organisation sets a clear vision for the context in which teachers and school leaders (should) work. Ideally, individual practice is linked with that of teams and organisation-wide approaches.

The report touches upon a wide range of policies to support this, for example:

* Boosting continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers and school leaders through school-based learning and large-scale initiatives
* Setting expectations through standards for the teaching profession
* Involving stakeholders to increase coherence of policies
* Recognising special expertise and competence within school teams
* Supporting teacher-led research projects
* Setting up national support structures and mentoring for school leaders
* Involving schools and their staff in broad partnerships for school reform

[The report](https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/teachers-school-leaders-wg-0917_en.pdf)

# Studies, conferences and tools

## Eurydice publications

### Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe 2017

Eurydice, 18 May 2017

The report covers EU Member States and some other European countries. It combines evidence from various sources with in-depth analysis on language learning and teaching.

Some important findings:

* Pupils in primary education have started learning their first foreign language at an earlier age and are continuing with it throughout the years of compulsory education.
* The numbers of lower secondary students learning two foreign languages is up compared with ten years ago.
* And most countries now have provisions to support migrant children who need to learn the language of their host country.

Less positive is the fact that the level of ambition for learning a second foreign language is still remarkably low. It is also worth noting that more than half of language teachers in Europe have travelled abroad for professional reasons, many of them with the support of funding from EU.

[The report](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Publications:Key_Data_on_Teaching_Languages_at_School_in_Europe_%E2%80%93_2017_Edition)

### Organisation of school time in Europe: Primary and general secondary education 2017-2018

Eurydice, 11 September 2017

This publication contains national data on the length of the school year, including start and end dates, school holidays and the number of school days in both primary and general secondary education, and key points are illustrated by comparative figures.

[The publication](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Publications:The_Organisation_of_School_Time_in_Europe._Primary_and_General_Secondary_Education_–_2017/18)

### The Organisation of the Academic Year in Europe 2017-18

Eurydice, 11 September 2017

The academic calendar contains national data on how the academic year is structured (beginning of the academic year, term times, holidays and examination periods). Differences between university and non-university study programmes are also highlighted. The information is available for 37 countries.

[The publication](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Publications:The_Organisation_of_the_Academic_Year_in_Europe_–_2017/18)

### National Student Fee and Support Systems in European Higher Education 2017-18

Eurydice, 19 October 2017

When students plan for higher education, one important element to consider is how much it will cost and whether they can receive any financial support. In a Europe where it is easier than ever to study in another country, reliable information on the costs and available student support in higher education is essential.

This report aims to provide both an overview of the main features of national fee and support systems and more detailed information on each individual country. In particular, the publication describes the range of fees charged to national, EU and international students and specifies the categories of students that are required to pay, and those that may be exempt. Similarly, it explains the types and amounts of public support available in the form of grants and loans, as well as tax benefits and family allowances where applicable.

[The report](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Publications:National_Student_Fee_and_Support_Systems_in_European_Higher_Education_%E2%80%93_2017/18)