



## Commission calls for environmental sustainability to be at the core of EU education and training systems

Brussels, 14 January 2022

The Commission published today a proposal for a [Council Recommendation on learning for environmental sustainability](#). The aim of the proposal is to support Member States, schools, higher education institutions, non-governmental organisations and all education providers in equipping learners with understanding and skills on sustainability, climate change and the environment. A [new European competence framework on sustainability](#) published by the [Joint Research Centre](#), also available today, maps out the competences needed for the green transition, including critical thinking, initiative-taking, respecting nature and understanding the impact everyday actions and decisions have on the environment and the global climate.

Vice-President for the Promoting European Way of Life, Margaritis **Schinias**, said: *"Youth participation has been revolutionising the way we look at climate and the environment. Through our youth programmes, European Solidarity Corps and DiscoverEU, we promote the sustainability drive involving our youth. This is a step further in the work towards a better integration of sustainability in education."*

Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Mariya **Gabriel** said: *"There is tremendous work being done right across Europe to help children, young people and adults learn about and engage with climate change, biodiversity loss and sustainability. Our goal is to build on these efforts and to work closely with Member States to place sustainability at the heart of education and training systems. All learners, from an early age need opportunities to understand and take action for environmental sustainability, to protect our planet and our future."*

The Commission's proposal calls on Member States to:

- Provide learners of all ages access to high-quality and inclusive education and training on climate change, biodiversity and sustainability;
- Establish learning for environmental sustainability as a priority area in education and training policies and programmes in order to support and enable the sector to contribute to the green transition;
- Encourage and support whole-institution approaches to sustainability which encompass teaching and learning; developing visions, planning and governance; active involvement of students and staff; management of buildings and resources and partnerships with local and wider communities;
- Mobilise national and EU funds for investment in sustainable and green infrastructure, training, tools and resources to increase resilience and preparedness of education and training for the green transition.

When asked in a Eurobarometer survey, what should be the top priorities for the EU in the years to come [young people's first reply](#) was the protection of the environment and the fight against climate change (67%) followed by the improvement of education and training (56%). This shows how important it is to act.

The [2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme](#) also places a strong focus on **the green transition in education and training**. For the 2022 annual work programme, priority will be given to projects developing green competences and skills, future-oriented curricula and planned approaches to sustainability by education providers. A [specific call for large-scale projects](#) will provide funding to identify, develop and test innovative approaches to education for environmental sustainability. The Commission will also provide training opportunities and communities of practice for educators through [School Education Gateway](#) and [eTwinning](#). The new [European Education Area Portal](#) of the Commission allows for easy access to information on education and training in the EU, including specific information on green education.

### Next Steps

The Commission's proposal will be discussed by Member States and then adopted by EU education Ministers. The Commission will support the implementation of the Recommendation through learning and exchanges between Member States, stakeholders and partner countries.

## Background

To prepare the proposal, the Commission consulted widely on the current state of play regarding learning opportunities for environmental sustainability in the EU. A [public survey](#), which ran from June to September 2021, received over 1,300 responses as well as 95 position papers. Input was also gathered during a series of online consultation workshops with policy makers, teachers, youth organisations, social partners, researchers and other interested bodies and organisations. The consultations underlined the crucial role of education and training in helping people understand and take action on environmental sustainability.

In the public survey, 71% of respondents, ranked education and training as the most important sector in this regard, ahead of public bodies and governments (56%), and media (34%). Providing teachers, trainers, youth leaders and academic staff with quality professional development opportunities on the environment and sustainability was considered a main priority for action, along with making sustainability a cross-cutting issue in curricula and study programmes.

## For More Information

[Proposal for a Council Recommendation on learning for sustainability](#)

[European sustainability competence framework](#)

[European Education Area](#)

[GreenComp](#) – The European sustainability competence framework on the Science Hub

[Learning Corner](#)

[School Education Gateway](#)

[eTwinning](#)

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