Youth Check Consultation on the Education Package

Context

Education is where Europe's democracy, cohesion, future competitiveness and innovation capacity are decided. In addition to supporting pupils to learn, develop a sense of belonging, build social and emotional skills, critical thinking and civic engagement, schools need to prepare pupils for the profound transformation driven by AI and digital technologies. Today however, too many children are falling behind too early.

Approximately one in three 15-year-olds struggles to apply mathematics in real-life situations, while one in four lacks basic reading or scientific knowledge. Compared to countries such as Canada, Japan, the UK and the US, the EU records higher rates of underachievement in reading and science. Some 43% of eighth graders underperform in basic digital skills, with little or no improvement across most countries and the EU is lagging behind leading Asian economies. Several Member States have seen declines in civic knowledge among eighth graders.

Moreover, as young Europeans aged 16–24 use Generative AI at twice the rate of the general population, AI literacy is becoming critical for informed citizenship, safe technology use, quality education and labour market competitiveness, largely expected to be influenced by the AI transformation. Developing strong AI literacy in schools and the teaching profession is therefore crucial to ensure learners become informed and critical users of AI.

At the same time, around 90% of European schools and training institutions rely on non-EU digital platforms and infrastructure. This raises concerns about data protection with sensitive information being stored outside the EU, but also about pedagogical utility as many of these platforms have not been designed for education purposes and may have negative potential for students' lives and education. Lock-in effects make it difficult to switch to alternatives.

Education Package

This autumn, the European Commission is stepping up its work with a new Education Package. This package is about acting where it matters most: in schools and classrooms. At the heart of the Package, the Commission envisages a simple delivery logic: support schools, empower teachers, scale what works, and build the digital foundations to do so all across Europe. The Education Package is expected to bring forward three interconnected key actions:

1. **Basic skills support**, learning from national basic skills support schemes while providing targeted and direct funding to primary and secondary schools committed to improving student performance when it comes to the five basic skills – literacy, mathematics, science, digital and citizenship – through proven interventions. The Commission is also planning to set up an EU network of national advisory and support services to raise basic skills through evidence-

informed approaches. Through this network the Commission will help Member States compare operating models, share 'what works', and strengthen the link between research, policy and classroom practice.

2. **European School Alliances** to leverage cross-border cooperation and mobility between schools across Europe for structural, sustainable and systemic impact, funded by the Erasmus+ programme. The Alliances will facilitate more strategic, long-term collaboration between schools and school authorities across countries, to embed the most efficient teaching and learning approaches into standard practices and lead to more open and higher quality school education systems in Europe.
3. An **EU Teachers Agenda** to support Member States in enhancing teacher working conditions, professional development and career prospects, assisting with improving the attractiveness of the profession and addressing critical teacher shortages across the EU. While the competence for these issues lies with national authorities or the social partners, the EU can support the efforts to make teacher careers more appealing, strengthening teacher preparation, and supportive learning ecosystems.

All these elements of the Education Package will be infused with a strong **digital dimension**, making sure that technology strengthens learning, supports wellbeing of pupils and reinforces democratic values. The Package will support Member States' efforts to offer access to digital education infrastructure for all learners by promoting interoperable tools aligned with EU standards and an ethical and human-centred EU approach to AI in education.

Next steps

The Commission is carrying out **stakeholder consultations.** The proposal's adoption is planned for **Q4 2026**.

Guiding question for the discussions – Youth Check (12 June 2026)

Group 1 – Question	**Group 1 - Reply**
What is one major challenge currently affecting students' learning and basic skills? And what kind of support from the EU would make the biggest difference for students, schools and teachers?	A major challenge is the combined effect of socio-economic disadvantage and unequal access to support, which is often reinforced by poverty, discrimination, low parental engagement, and poor student well-being. Support teachers and learners at foundational level and provide resources to boost basic skills and provide equal education.

Group 2 – Question What is one major challenge currently affecting students' learning and basic skills? And what kind of support from the EU would make the biggest difference for students, schools and teachers?	**Group 2 - Reply** Enhanced digital activities disturb development and learning. Schools are often underfunded and have outdated infrastructure. Overcrowded Classrooms become the norm and with a lack of teachers, there are often not well enough trained teachers teaching in schools. Teachers need support in learning about critical use of digital technologies, in order to pass on these capabilities to their students. Tailored support for students including parental, community and societal engagement for a more holistic support. Digital tools can be integrated to support teachers, but with strong regulations for a balances technology use.
Group 3 - Question What does a truly "European school experience" look like to you? How can schools learn from each other across borders more easily?	Group 3 - Reply Schools don't have the capacity to promote cross-border mobility themselves, they need school authorities. What pupils learn abroad is often not recognised and creates obstacles when they return. Lack of inclusion remains a main barrier: which schools and which pupils can participate in Erasmus+? As such, school authorities should be in the lead with adequate capacity building, support, planning, investment etc.
Group 4 - Question	Group 4 - Reply

What does a truly “European school experience” look like to you? How can schools learn from each other across borders more easily?	Mobility has the biggest impact on pupils and should become an essential element of school experience. Online exchange should be promoted to share good practises and enhance inclusion. Greater recognition needed as concerns the effort to integrate international students into the local class.European civic education should be part of every school life, either in curricula or through project work. School leaders need to be involved in developing internationalisation strategies for their schools. Civil society can help schools bring Europe into the classroom.
Group 5 – Question Think back to your time in school. What was one way the best teachers you knew supported the students?	Group 5 - Reply The profession should be recognised throughout Europe equally to promote mobility for teachers and attract the profession further. Questions also should be asked what teachers need to stay in the profession and keep their motivation and joy in teaching and have a healthy work-life balance. There is a need for a cohesive EU framework, to foster the EU perspective and EU knowledge in European schools. Digital platforms can be used to prepare teachers and students with the necessary information, especially to prepare them for Erasmus experiences and teach cultural sensitivity and European values as an addition to the school education and a Europe-wide tool.
Group 6 - Question Think back to your time in school. What was one way the best teachers you knew supported the students?	Group 6 - Reply The importance of the teacher and student connection based on trust is key for the socio-emotional development of learners.

	Teachers need to be supported with the infrastructure and resources that are necessary to provide the conditions to foster such connections. Enabling students to have new and formative experiences is how the teachers that the participants recalled best supported their students. This included, notably, learning more about democracy and values. Need to address how social media and AI shape the way young people access and process information and how the role of the teacher changes accordingly. This calls for anupdate of curricula and teaching methods to reflect and adequately adapt to these changes
Group 7 – Question Imagine it is 2030: Europe's schools use EU-made digital tools, and every student learns about using and understanding AI. What's one thing that *must* be part of this future – and one risk we should avoid?	Group 7 - Reply AI literacy should go beyond technical skills to foster creativity, empathy, and awareness of its ethical, social, and environmental impacts. Provision of AI tools for students and teachers is essential for training, EU digital sovereignty and data protection should be also addressed.
Group 8 – Question Imagine it is 2030: Europe's schools use EU-made digital tools, and every student learns about using and understanding AI. What's one thing that *must* be part of this future – and one risk we should avoid?	Group 8 - Reply Need to integrate AI literacy across the curriculum to ensure young people develop the skills to use it as a collaborative tool, not merely a shortcut. Digital technologies, including AI, should help reduce teachers' administrative burden, allowing them to focus on enhancing human interaction in learning.