European Education Area

Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the EEA and beyond (2021-2030)

Working Groups (2021 – 2025)
Periodic Report: November 2021 – March 2023

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1. Introduction

This Periodic Report provides an overview of the activities of the Working Groups (WGs) under the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030) from the beginning of the current mandates in November 2021 until end of March 2023 and presents tentative activities and outputs foreseen up until the end of 2023. It also sets out key features of some of the WGs interim deliverables and main outputs so far, provides information on the synergies as well as on the WG activities as part of the EU Education Solidarity Group for Ukraine, followed by some first observations on the functioning of the WGs during this first phase of their mandates.

The WGs are embedded in the broader governance structure of the strategic framework (2021-2030) and 2023 marks the midterm of the first cycle (2021-2025). This Report feeds into a midterm review of the European Education Area (EEA) which is unfolding this year, as a reflection process that involves all strategic framework governance levels including the WGs, to take stock of the progress made.

Building on the results of the ET 2020 working groups, in line with the Commission communication of 30 September 2020 on achieving the European Education Area by 2025[1] (EEA communication), the Council resolution of 26 February 2021 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030)[2] and the Council Resolution on the governance structure of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030)[3], in November 2021 the Commission continued with tried and tested mutual learning arrangements by launching seven new WGs (2021-2025) as part of the new cycle of strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training:

1. Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

2. Working Group on Schools, including

    i. Sub-group on Pathways to School Success

    ii. Sub-group on Education for Environmental Sustainability

3. Working Group on Higher Education (HE)

4. Working Group on Vocational Education and Training and the Green Transition (VET)

5. Working Group on Adult Learning: Opening Up Opportunities for All (AL)

6. Working Group on Digital Education: Learning, Teaching and Assessment (DELTA)

7. Working Group on Equality and Values in Education and Training.

The overall objective of the WGs is to promote voluntary European cooperation in education and training by enabling mutual learning on policy reform of national education and training systems and to exchange, assess and disseminate good practices on ways to address some of the common challenges, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity and the diversity of Member States.

To help meet the EU-level ambition of achieving the EEA by 2025, the WGs contribute to the implementation of the relevant EEA EU-level actions, while reinforcing synergies with other EU policies related initiatives, including the Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027), the European Skills Agenda, the Green Deal, the European Research Area, the European Semester, the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, different EU equality strategies, etc.

Established as informal Commission expert groups, WGs bring together – on a voluntary basis – experts from EU Member States' authorities and other participating countries (EU candidate countries and EEA/EFTA countries), EU level stakeholder organisations, as well as international organisations,

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[1] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0625
[2] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32021G0226(01)
[3] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021G1210(01)

EU bodies, offices, and agencies. Table 1 below provides an overview of the membership of each of the WGs[4].

Table 1: Working Groups (2021-2025) membership composition

WG	EU Member States	Other countries[5]	Stake-holders[6]	International organisations EU bodies, offices and agencies[7]
ECEC	27	7	8	4
Schools - Pathways	27	7	7	6
Schools - Environmental sustainability	27	6	3	4
HE	27	7	7	6
VET	27	7	10	3
AL	27	6	11	4
DELTA	27	7	8	7
Equality and Values	26	7	8	7

WGs are embedded in the broader governance structure of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the EEA and beyond (2021-2030). Their contributions to policy development and the discussions of specific initiatives are technical and informal in nature, and as such they do not pre-empt any formal decisions to be taken within the governance structure.

2. Main developments

This section presents the key focus and activities undertaken by each WG from November 2021 until end of March 2023.

2.1. WG on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

The ECEC WG supports the implementation of the Council Recommendation on High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems.[8] Under the first part of the present mandate the main thematic focus of the ECEC WG is **the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of quality in ECEC,** with inclusion, staff, and the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic featuring as auxiliary sub-topics. More specifically, three topics have been identified as focus points for the WG:

1. **Purposes and values** – examining the values that should underpin the design of M&E processes, as well as the purposes of the M&E of ECEC;

2. **Coordinating efforts across levels** – considering how best to ensure that M&E processes are streamlined across local, regional, and national levels;

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[4] The full list of working group members (and observers) is published in the Register of Commission Expert Groups and Other Similar Entities

[5] Candidate countries and EEA/EFTA countries. Following the granting of the candidate status by the European Council the invitation has been extended to the new EU candidate countries Moldova, Ukraine and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

[6] Stakeholders were selected through public calls for applications (29 July and 6 September 2021), open to formally recognised European cross-sectoral bodies and education/training-specific social partner organisations and European civil society/ stakeholder associations whose main activities are in education and training.

[7] UNESCO, OECD, EACEA, FRA, ETF, CEDEFOP, Eurofund, CoE and UNICEF.

[8] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32019H0605%2801%29&qid=1638446515934

3. **The involvement of stakeholders** – exploring the benefits of involving children, parents, and other stakeholders in M&E processes, as well as the most effective ways of doing so.

The main activities undertaken over the period are set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Main activities and focus of the ECEC WG (November 2021-March 2023)

Activity type	Date	Topic and main focus
WG meeting (online)	17.01.2022	The first WG meeting served to **formally establish the WG** and allowed members to get to know each other.
WG meeting (online)	17-18.02.2022	This meeting took place across two half-day sessions, with the purpose of **finalising the Key Questions** that would guide the activities of the WG.
WG meeting (online)	31.03.2022-01.04.2022	This meeting was held in two half-day sessions, focusing on the **values that should underpin the M&E of quality in ECEC**, and how they can be included in M&E processes. The meeting included presentations on the **Nordic approaches** to M&E and an example by **Finland.**
WG meeting (online)	12-13.05.2022	This meeting discussed the structure of the **first ECEC WG report,** included a presentation by **Ireland** on their M&E system and introduced the key question of how **M&E processes can make ECEC systems more inclusive** for all children.
WG meeting (online)	20-21.06.2022	The fifth WG meeting continued exploring purposes, principles and values of M&E processes, with presentations by Belgium (nl) and ISSA. The meeting also included a presentation and discussion of the results of the **ECEC WG survey on the indicators of inclusiveness** in the M&E of ECEC.
WG meeting (online)	13-14.09.2022	The sixth meeting finalised discussions on the first ECEC WG report on M&E purposes, values and principles, including presentations by **Portugal and Lithuania**. It also discussed the work programme for Topic 2, on **coordinating M&E efforts across levels,** completed by a presentation from **Germany.** Finally, next steps on the M&E of system's inclusiveness were agreed.
WG meeting (online)	24-25.10.2022	The seventh meeting discussed how to ensure that the **results of M&E lead to improvements in the quality of ECEC,** with country examples from the **Czech Republic** and the **German Land of Berlin. Bulgaria** presented its M&E system, and **Serbia** explained how it collects data to support system's inclusiveness.
PLA (in person)	12-14.12.2022	The first Peer Learning Activity (PLA) was hosted jointly by the European Commission and the Office of Birth and Childhood in the French-speaking community of **Belgium (fr)**. Topic: How to collect data and information to achieve a balance between monitoring of structural quality and evaluating process quality?
WG meeting (online)	24-25.01.2023	At its eighth WG meeting the WG discussed and formally adopted the 2023 Work Programme and continued with exploring Topic 2 by focusing specifically on the coordination of M&E efforts across different governance levels, with an example from **Denmark**. The group also discussed the results of the first PLA, and inclusion aspects of the M&E within the European Child Guarantee.
WG meeting (online)	13-14.03.2023	The **ninth WG meeting** continued exploring how M&E processes can make ECEC systems more inclusive for all children, with a presentation by **Hungary**. A new case study on inspiring practices related to the use of M&E results was presented by **Estonia**, to be included in the final version

		of the second WG report on coordinating M&E processes to improve the quality of ECEC, which structure was approved by the WG. Finally, **Norway** presented its M&E system and a tool to involve children in the M&E of quality in ECEC.

In addition, throughout 2022, the WG held six online meetings to discuss the specific needs of Ukrainian refugees in age of attending ECEC (further information is provided in section 5 below).

2.2. WG on Schools

As noted above, the WG on Schools consists of two sub-groups working on the topics of (i) Pathways to School Success (PPS) and (ii) Education for Environmental Sustainability (EfES).

2.2.1. Schools WG: Pathways to School Success (PSS) sub-group

Under the current mandate, the ***sub-group on Pathways to School Success*** was set up to support the preparation, implementation and follow-up of the [Pathways to School Success](#)[9] initiative by promoting mutual learning and exchange of practices. It was decided that the WG would focus on three main themes:

1. **Blended learning for inclusion;**
2. **Competence-based approaches;**
3. **Approaches to assessment.**

Over the period November 2021-December 2022, the WG on Schools (PSS sub-group) addressed the theme of blended learning through several meetings, a seminar and a Peer Learning Activity (PLA), culminating in the production of a [Thematic report 'Blended learning for inclusion: exploring challenges and enabling factors'](#) [10] and a [factsheet](#)[11] with key policy messages. In 2023 this sub-group decided to look jointly at the second two topics and started working on approaches to learners' assessment policies and practices to support inclusion and school success. The main activities undertaken over the period are set out in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Main activities and focus of the Pathways to School Success sub-group (November 2021-March 2023)

Activity type	Date	Topic and main focus
WG meeting (online)	03.12.2021 13.12.2021	[The first meeting](#) took place across two half-day sessions. It served to present the **'Pathways to School Success' initiative,** and to identify the main themes to work on within the group.
WG meeting (online)	01-02.02.2022	[The second meeting](#) kick-started the work on the first theme '**blended learning for inclusion'.**
Seminar (online)	08.03.2022	[This seminar](#) followed the previous WG meeting, exploring and discussing the **role of teachers within blended learning**, and exploring the **enabling factors** for teachers to fully take advantage of this pedagogic approach for inclusion.

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[9] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32022H1209(01)
[10] https://op.europa.eu/fr/publication-detail/-/publication/166bebc7-96e2-11ed-b508-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-279000746
[11] https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/442323d2-8fcb-11ed-b508-01aa75ed71a1

WG meeting (online)	19-20.09.2022	The third meeting further discussed the topic of **blended learning on inclusion**, as well as the Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success and how the group will ensure follow-up of its implementation.
PLA (in person)	05-07.10.2022	The first PLA entitled 'Blended learning for inclusion: exploring challenges and enabling factors' took place in Dubrovnik, **Croatia**.
WG meeting (online)	12.12.2022	The fourth meeting recapped the work done so far and the WG finalised the Thematic report on the blended learning for inclusion.
WG meeting (in person)	23-24.01.2023	At its fifth meeting the WG focused on the topic of approaches to learners' assessment policies and practices to support inclusion and school success.
Seminar (online)	07-08.03.2023	Seminar focused on learners' involvement and dialogic approaches, as well as on building teachers' assessment capacity.

In addition, throughout 2022, numerous online focus sessions took place as part of implementing the EU Education Solidarity Group for Ukraine in the field of school education (further information is provided in section 5 below).

2.2.2. Schools WG: Education for Environmental Sustainability (EfES) sub-group

The overall focus of the ***sub-group on Education for Environmental Sustainability (EfES)*** is on effectively embedding learning for sustainability in school education. It aims to provide inspiration for policymakers and practitioners to improve how sustainability is embedded in education and training systems across the EU and contribute to assessing and improving policies for this area through mutual learning. This sub-group supports the follow-up to the Council recommendation on learning for the green transition and sustainable development[12], foreseen under the EEA communication as well as the EU's Biodiversity Strategy[13]. Key themes covered include**:**

1. **Whole school approaches to sustainability;**

2. **Effective policies for education for environmental sustainability;**

3. **Teacher professional development;**

4. **Teaching, learning and assessing sustainability competences;**

5. **Supporting school leadership for sustainability.**

The main activities undertaken over the period are set out in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Main activities and focus of the Education for Environmental Sustainability sub-group (November 2021-March 2023)

Activity type	Date	Topic and main focus
WG meeting (online)	31.01.2022-01.02.2022	In the first meeting of the WG, members were informed of recent Commission policy initiatives and discussed the upcoming work of the group. Priority topics for 2022 and 2023 were identified by the group. The group began working on the theme of **Whole School Approaches (WSA) to sustainability**.

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[12] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2022:11:FIN
[13] https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030_en#:~:text=The%20EU's%20biodiversity%20strategy%20for,contains%20specific%20actions%20and%20commitments.

WG meeting (online)	05-06.05.2022	The second meeting covered the topics of **school self-evaluation**, with a particular focus on collaboration and partnerships.
WG meeting (in person)	15-16.09.2022	This meeting was held in-person in Brussels and centred around the topics of **designing curricula and developing competences for sustainability**. The group looked at how competences can be embedded in school curricula and listened to speakers working on an innovative climate education programme.
PLA (in person)	16-18.11.2022	The second PLA took place in Budapest, **Hungary**, on the topic of **teacher education**. The meeting was held at two schools in Budapest which provided the opportunity to interact with staff and students. Discussions at the PLA also contributed to a forthcoming European Commission research report on teacher education.
WG meeting (online)	08-09.12.2022	The fourth meeting was dedicated to **school leadership for sustainability**. Panels speakers included a Deputy School Principal, a representative from higher education and from an NGOs working on environmental education.
WG meeting (online)	09-10.03.2023	The fifth meeting focused on **assessing student sustainability competences** with guest speakers from research and practice.
PLA (hybrid)	14-18.03.2022	The first PLA of this WG took place at the 11th World Environmental Education Congress (WEEC) in Prague, **Czech Republic**, on the topic **of** 'Learning together – bridging policy and research'. The discussion centred around **how to move beyond the 'what' of learning for sustainability to the 'why' and 'how'**.

2.3. WG on Higher Education (HE)

The WG on HE focuses on the follow-up and implementation of the actions from its mandate, which include strategic objectives outlined in the European Strategy for Universities[14] and the Council Recommendation on building bridges for effective European higher education cooperation[15], as well as the Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials[16] and the Council Recommendation on learning for the green transition and sustainable development[17]. Key themes covered include:

1. **The roll-out of the European Universities initiative;**
2. **Joint European degree label;**
3. **Quality assurance and recognition;**
4. **Attractive and sustainable careers in higher education;**
5. **Micro-credentials;**
6. **The green transition.**

The main activities undertaken by the WG on HE over the period are set out in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Main activities and focus of the WG on HE (November 2021-March 2023)

Activity type	Date	Topic and main focus

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[14] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022DC0016&qid=1677855056989
[15] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022H0413%2801%29
[16] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022H0627%2802%29&qid=1677853156785
[17] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022H0627%2801%29&qid=1677853336361

WG meeting (online)	15.12.2021	At the first meeting the WG discussed the mandate and the draft work programme. An in-depth discussion focused on how to **strengthen synergies** between the European Higher Education Area, the higher education dimension of the European Education Area and the European Research Area.
WG meeting (online)	16.03.2022	The second meeting focused on the new higher education package – **the European Strategy on universities** and the **Council Recommendation on building bridges.** The WG engaged in its first technical discussion on the **joint European Degree label** and discussed how to show **solidarity with Ukraine.**
WG meeting (online)	27.04.2022	The third meeting covered the **progress towards the European Graduate Tracking system, joint European Degree label, and higher education support to Ukraine**.
PLA (in person)	08-09.06.2022	The PLA on **Micro-Credentials in Higher Education**, hosted by **Ireland**, focused on the first experiences with the implementation of the Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials.
WG meeting (hybrid)	13-14.09.2022	The WG convened in Brussels for an interactive fourth meeting to discuss three major topics that will pave the way towards the EEA**: the European Universities Initiative**, plans for a **European Quality Assurance and Recognition System**; and the development of the **European framework for attractive and sustainable careers in higher education**.
PLA (in person)	06-07.12.2022	This PLA in **Slovenia** focused on first experiences of the higher education sector with the Council Recommendation on learning for the **green transition and sustainable development**.
WG meeting (online)	28.02.2023	The fifth meeting discussed the implementation of the Council Recommendation on building bridges for effective European higher education cooperation, the European Universities initiative, outcomes of the report on automatic recognition, feedback from the recent PLA on learning for the green transition and sustainable development, the work programme, and Ukraine.

In addition, throughout 2022, several online focus sessions on higher education support to Ukraine took place as part of implementing the EU Education Solidarity Group for Ukraine (further information is provided in section 5 below).

2.4. WG on VET and the Green Transition

The main objective of the WG on VET is to enable exchanges and contributions to help countries implement the principles and objectives of:

1. The Council recommendation on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience[18];

2. The Osnabrück Declaration[19] on vocational education and training as an enabler of recovery and just transitions to digital and green economies.

The work is in line with the European Green Deal[20] and the European Pillar of Social Rights[21], as well as Action 6 of the European Skills Agenda.[22] The main activities undertaken over the period are set out in Table 6 below.

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[18] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32020H1202%2801%29
[19] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020.pdf

Table 6: Main activities and focus of the WG on VET (November 2021-March 2023)

Activity type	Date	Topic and main focus
WG Meeting (online)	15.12.2021	The first meeting allowed members to get to know each other, understand each other's expectations for the group, and agree in broad terms how the WG intends to implement its **mandate through a joint work programme**.
WG meeting (online)	23.02.2022	The second meeting discussed the meaning of **'skills for the green transition'**, including VET, updated the annual work plan for 2022, and discussed the launch of the collection of innovative tools and practices.
Seminar (online)	29.04.2022	The first webinar was on the topic of **skills intelligence for the green transition.**
Survey	April 2022	Prior to the third WG meeting, the WG launched a survey which aimed to gather some basic information to help build a picture of **the state of play of greening VET in Europe.**
WG meeting (online)	07-08.06.2022	The third meeting was about taking stock and discussing the results of the survey on state of play on greening VET and collecting additional **innovative tools and practices in view of the Compendium of innovative and inspiring practices.**
Seminar (online)	04.10.2022	The second webinar was held on the topic of Common Core Green Elements for VET Curricula.
PLA (in person)	24-25.10.2022	The first PLA took place in Bonn, **Germany**. The focus of the event was on the **'Green Transition: Sustainability in VET'** and centred around the following topics: adaptation of the curricula in VET on the way to the green economy; early identification of necessary skills and new jobs in the field of sustainability; and training and further education of training staff in companies and at vocational schools as multipliers in education for sustainable development.
WG meeting (online)	24-25.11.2022	At the fourth meeting the WG took stock of and discussed the Compendium of innovative and inspiring practices, as well as the work programme for 2023. It also provided topical updates on developments at international, EU and national level on sustainability in VET.
WG meeting (in person)	28.02.2023	At its fifth meeting, in Brussels, the WG discussed about the Compendium (content, lessons and dissemination), towards finalizing the first edition.
Seminar (online)	29.03.2023	The third webinar was on the role of teachers and trainers in VET for the green transition.

2.5. WG on Adult Learning

The main objective of the WG on Adult Learning is to support countries in implementing the actions of the European Skills Agenda[23], that has as its mission the re- and upskilling adults and empowering them to continue learning throughout their lives. The WG supports capacity building to achieve the implementation of the 2016 Council recommendation on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults[24] and contributes to the development and implementation of the priorities for action in the

[20] https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal
[21] https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights_en
[22] https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223&langId=en
[23] https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223&langId=en
[24] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ%3AJOC_2016_484_R_0001

[Council resolution on a new European agenda for adult learning 2021-2030](#)[25]. More specifically, three topics have been identified as focus points for the WG:

1. **Skills for Life** (opening up learning environments to reach everyone, including seniors and those most in need of access to learning, helping them develop skills for life);

2. **Financing of adult learning;**

3. **National skills strategies** ('whole-of-government' national skills strategies to ensure a holistic approach to adult learning, encompassing not only education and training and employment, but also aligning across relevant policy fields).

The main activities undertaken over the period are set out in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Main activities and focus of the WG on Adult Learning (November 2021-March 2023)

Activity type	Date	Topic and main focus
WG meeting (online)	27.01.2022	During the first WG meeting, there was an update on the latest EU-level policy developments in adult learning, followed by a discussion **on lifelong learning in Europe**, highlighting challenges and opportunities brought about by **technological advances and Covid-19**.
PLA (online)	09-10.03.2022	The WG held its first PLA on three broad themes of **Skills for Life**: community learning; formal VET/HE education providers that also offer non-formal and informal learning; and broader enabling environments and success factors.
WG meeting (online)	31.03.2022	At the second meeting WG discussed **national level responses to the Ukrainian crisis**. The meeting also included presentations on the **financial competency framework** for adults, **LifeComp: the European Framework for Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Key Competence**, and consultations on digital education and skills.
PLA (online)	12-13.05.2022	The second PLA was on the topic of the **Financing of Adult Education**, featuring presentations on four innovative practices: from **France** (individual learning accounts; **Denmark** (competence funds); **the Netherlands** (collective bargaining over training entitlements); and **Finland** (adult education allowance).
WG meeting (in person)	20.09.2022	The third meeting took place in Brussels, focusing on the **European Year of Skills**, the **Pact for Skills initiative**, and a progress update on three evaluations currently underway of EU programmes: evaluation of the **Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways**, evaluation of the **European Qualifications Framework**, and the evaluation of the **Europass Decision**.
PLA (in person)	20-21.10.2022	The third PLA in Brussels was on the topic of **National Skills Strategies (NSS)**. Attendees consolidated their discussions around three sets of building blocks for NSS-related actions: setting the ecosystem for designing a skills strategy (process considerations); the NSS as a national document; and implementation (making it work for adults).
WG meeting (online)	28.03.2023	At the fourth meeting the WG discussed WG members' contribution to the European Year of Skills, initiatives on skills and migration, with special focus on measures supporting persons displaced from Ukraine. There was a specific session on the implementation of the Council Recommendation on micro-credentials, in the area of adult skills. The outcomes of the PLA on National Skills Strategies were presented and discussed with the WG, including a few further national examples.

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[25] https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14485-2021-INIT/en/pdf

2.6. WG on Digital Education: Learning, Teaching and Assessment (DELTA)

The mandate of the DELTA WG is to support the development of EU initiatives in digital education, aiming at supporting countries in the implementation of policy reforms in line with the ***Digital Education Action Plan (DEAP) 2021-2027***[26]. In particular, the WG has a key role in exchanging ideas around the two DEAP priorities:

1. **Fostering the development of a high-performing digital education ecosystem;**

2. **Enhancing digital skills and competences for the digital transformation.**

In this respect, to date, the WG discussions fed into the preparation of the two forthcoming Commission's proposals for Council Recommendations: on the key enabling factors for successful digital education and training, and on improving the provision of digital skills in education and training.

The main activities undertaken over the period are set out in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Main activities and focus of the DELTA WG (November 2021-March 2023)

Activity type	Date	Topic and main focus
WG meeting (online)	18.11.2021	The initial kick-off meeting set the scene for the new WG and, in collaboration with the members, agreed the working protocols for this mandate. The meeting discussed the **Council Recommendation on blended learning for high-quality and inclusive primary and secondary education**.
WG meeting (online)	26.01.2022	The second meeting focused on DEAP Priority 1: **Fostering the development of a high-performing digital education ecosystem** and specifically the **Enabling Factors for effective digital education**.
WG meeting (online)	10.05.2022	The third meeting featured DEAP Priority 2: **Exploring how to improve the provision of digital skills in education and training**, and specifically sought the input of the WG into the Proposal for a **Council Recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills in education and training.**
PLA (online)	28-29.06.2022	The first PLA focused exclusively on the **Proposal for a Council Recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills in education and training**. The WG considered a number of key issues that would be included in the text of the Recommendation. The WG strongly supported the Council Recommendation and concluded that it is imperative to support teachers with the requisite digital skills to work and live in a digital society.
PLA (online)	26-27.10.2022	The second PLA considered the issues that would be addressed in the Proposal for a **Council Recommendation on the key enabling factors for digital education and training**, including a whole-government approach to digital education and training; involvement of stakeholders; impact focused investment in digital education and training; support to education and training institutions and education and training staff to digitise in an inclusive manner; and monitoring and evaluation of digital education policies.

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[26] https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan

Seminar (online)	30.11.2022	Presentation of the [Guidelines for teachers and educators on tackling disinformation and promoting digital literacy through education and training](#)[27].
Seminar (online)	31.01.2023	Presentation of the [Ethical Guidelines on the use of AI and data in teaching and learning for educators](#)[28].
WG meeting (in person)	01-02.03.2023	The WGs [fourth meeting](#) focused on two key issues within the DEAP: digital pedagogy and developing digital capacity of educational institutions.

In addition, throughout 2022, the WG has also taken part in three ad hoc consultations; a) [around AI and data use for Education](#); b) [tackling Disinformation and promoting Digital Literacy](#); and c) [Digital Education provisions for Ukrainian refugees](#).

2.7. WG on Equality and Values in Education and Training

The WG on Equality and Values is contributing to the implementation of the [Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching](#)[29], and supporting reforms to promote equality in education and training. The WG focuses both on inclusive education for all and on specific population groups' equal access to quality education. To date, the WG has focused on three main overarching themes:

1. **Promoting gender equality;**
2. **Tackling discrimination in and through education and training;**
3. *Citizenship education, EU values and European dimension of teaching.*

The main activities undertaken over the period are set out in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Main activities and focus of the Equality and Values WG (November 2021-March 2023)

Activity type	Date	Topic and main focus
WG meeting (online)	29.11.2021	[The first introductory WG meeting](#) featured a presentation and discussion of the WG's mandate and an orientation discussion on the WG's work programme for the period 2021-2022.
WG meeting (online)	20.01.2022	[The second WG meeting](#) addressed **gender behaviour in education**, the **educational performance of boys, gender stereotypes and gender segregation** in education.
WG meeting (online)	10.02.2022	[The third WG meeting](#) focused on **gender differences in learning experiences and learning outcomes during the Covid-19 lockdowns**, sex-disaggregated data as a precondition of **gender mainstreaming**, and **gender-based violence** in an educational setting.
WG meeting (online)	28.04.2022	[The fourth WG meeting](#) focused on confronting some of the **educational challenges presented by the invasion of Ukraine.** The discussion centred around four main topics: talking to children about (the) war, addressing disinformation in wartime, a Ukrainian perspective on history teaching about Ukraine (an analysis of some European history textbooks), preventing segregation of refugees (and migrants) inside and outside the classroom.

[27] https://education.ec.europa.eu/news/guidelines-for-teachers-and-educators-on-tackling-disinformation-and-promoting-digital-literacy-through-education-and-training

[28] https://education.ec.europa.eu/news/ethical-guidelines-on-the-use-of-artificial-intelligence-and-data-in-teaching-and-learning-for-educators

[29] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018H0607%2801%29

WG meeting (online)	09.06.2022	The fifth WG meeting involved presentations of the EU non-discrimination policy instruments, and a focus **on tackling discrimination linked to religion and beliefs, and racial or ethnic origin** in education and training.
WG meeting (in-person)	22-23.09.2022	The sixth WG meeting took place in Brussels and continued the focus on **tackling discrimination on the basis of ethnic and racial origin**. It also included thematic sessions dedicated to addressing **discrimination on the basis of disability and sexual orientation**.
PLA (online)	21.04.2022	The first PLA, entitled **'Connecting gender equality to non-traditional career choices and confronting bias in learning materials'**, was hosted by the **Czech Republic**. The first part of the PLA focused on non-traditional gender-related career choices and involved presentations from the **Czech Republic, Sweden, Portugal, Germany and Austria**, as well as breakout sessions to formulate joint recommendations.
PLA (in-person)	12-13.12.2022	The second PLA, entitled '**Addressing social and territorial inequalities in and through education',** took place in Paris, **France**. The first part focused on addressing territorial inequalities, while the second part focused specifically on strengthening social diversity in schools. It involved presentations from **France, Portugal** and **Romania.**
WG meeting (online)	08-09.02.2023	The first part of the seventh WG meeting focused on finalising the draft Issue paper on tackling all forms of **discrimination** in and through education and training, reviewing the work carried out in 2022, and planning the **work programme** for 2023. The second part focused on the new thematic area of **citizenship education and promoting EU values**.
PLA (in person)	29-30.03.2023	The third PLA entitled '**Citizenship education and EU values'**, took place in Madrid, **Spain**. The discussion centred around designing citizenship education (changes and challenges), including teachers' training and professional development. It involved presentations from **Spain, Portugal** and **Finland**.

On WG activities as part of implementing the EU Education Solidarity Group for Ukraine further information is provided in section 5 below.

3. Activities foreseen until end of 2023

Table 10 below presents an overview of the activities foreseen until the end of 2023 for each WG.

Table 10: Main activities foreseen for each WG until end of 2023

WG	Confirmed and Tentative Activities
ECEC	A **second PLA** will take place on **24-26 April 2023** in Vilnius, hosted by the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and the National Agency for Education. The **tenth WG meeting** will be held online on **13-14 June 2023**. Further activities will be confirmed at a later date.
Schools	For the **Pathways to School Success sub-group, a PLA** on the approaches to learners' assessment policies and practices to support inclusion and school success is planned for the end of **May 2023**, to take place in Portugal, followed by an **online meeting in June**. A final thematic report and relevant factsheet will be produced. For the second half 2023-early 2024, the WG is expected to focus on support for learners' success, and explore themes such as targeted and individualised support, collaborative and multidisciplinary approaches in and around schools, etc. A meeting and a webinar are foreseen in the autumn.

	For the **Education for Environmental Sustainability sub-group** three PLAs are foreseen (on **4-5 May** in Kinsale (Ireland) on the topic of collaboration and partnerships for sustainability; on **14-16 June** in Spain on green and sustainable learning environments; and one in France (**end of November** tbc) on youth engagement and sustainability). Two **webinars** on green skills and vocational education and tackling eco-anxiety in students are also foreseen in the autumn.
Higher Education	A **PLA** on quality assurance in higher education, hosted by Austria, is scheduled for later in **spring.** The next meeting is planned for **June**. Further activities may include **webinars** covering HE-related topics in Ukraine and other topics of relevance to the WG mandate. Further activities will be conformed at a later date.
VET and the Green Transition	The sixth **WG meeting** will be held in **June 2023** and will also be a physical meeting. The June meeting will coincide with the publication of the Compendium of Inspiring Practices. **WG meetings** will also be held in **September 2023** (seventh WG meeting, online), and **December 2023** (eighth WG meeting, online). Tentative activities include two more webinars will be held in 2023, likely in April (fourth webinar) and October (fifth webinar). Currently, no PLAs are foreseen in 2023.
Adult Learning	The announcement of 2023 as **the European Year of Skills** means that the WG's work is even more relevant and there will be an emphasis on communicating the WG's outputs to the widest possible audience. The WG members will be informed about the different key events of the European Year of Skills. The **fifth meeting of the WG** will take place **on 5-6 October in Brussels**, the second day jointly with the National Coordinators for Adult Learning, to share information about the results achieved in 2022-23 and to increase synergies.
DELTA	A PLA on the outcomes of the Structured Dialogue on digital education and skills and the role of emerging technologies incl. AI in the present and future of education is planned for **end of May 2023 in Spain**. Other planned activities include a **WG plenary meeting in June 2023** to consider findings from the Commission's ongoing study on the digital education content and the emerging digital education content framework, and a plenary meeting on the **midterm review of the DEAP 2021-2027** tentatively planned for **November 2023**.
Equality & Values	**The eighth WG meeting** is planned for **1-2 June 2023**, to conclude the work on the citizenship education and promotion of EU values. The finalisation of the Issue Paper on tackling all forms of discrimination is anticipated before summer, followed by another Issue Paper on citizenship education and EU values after summer 2023. One online and one physical meeting are foreseen in autumn 2023, **on inclusion of people with special educational needs / disabilities in education and training**, to be followed by a PLA at the beginning of 2024. The **compendium of inspiring practices** related to topics covered so far by the WG will be further developed.

4. Outputs, dissemination and synergies

This section shortly describes different types of WGs outputs, together with their dissemination approaches. It also presents an overview of some of the WGs interim outputs finalised to date (illustrated by some policy messages in boxes below) and provides an information on forthcoming deliverables currently in progress, followed by some examples of synergies in the WGs work.

4.1. Outputs and dissemination

Information about the WGs, their meetings and working documents (e.g. meeting agendas, input/background papers prior to meetings/events, minutes/reports following meetings) are published in the Register of Commission Expert Groups and Other Similar Entities.

Main issues identified in different WGs discussion on a specific topic are often synthetized by the WG in a form of a specific output such as thematic report, key messages or policy conclusions, reflecting the main findings and conclusions from WGs plenary meetings, seminars and peer learning activities (PLA), including examples shared by members and invited speakers at these meetings.[30]

In view of keeping both targeted audiences and the general public better informed of how mutual learning helps strengthen education policies across Europe, information about the WGs and some outputs have been promoted on the European Education Area portal, on the European School Education Platform and on the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe.

To better target the information about the WGs, **dedicated webpages** serving as a single access point and repository for the dissemination of WGs outputs will be made available **on the EEA portal**.

The outputs are disseminated via Microsoft Teams platform and by email to the WG experts who can further share them within their organisations and among their own stakeholders. Restricted to WG members, dedicated WGs Teams channels provide collaborative functionalities allowing members online sharing and learning in between meetings.

The WG members play an important role in ensuring that the exchange of information and dissemination of the WG results contribute to capacity building and inform policy reforms in Member States and other participating countries and organisations.

Interim deliverables and main outputs to date:

4.1.1 WG on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

A key output of the ECEC WG has been the Background note on monitoring and evaluating quality in ECEC[31], including an exploration of the definitions of monitoring and evaluation (M&E), research into why the M&E of ECEC is important, and an overview of ECEC M&E processes across EU Member States. Another important output has been the Report on 'Monitoring and evaluating quality in ECEC: purposes, values and principles'[32], which provides an overview of possible objectives that M&E processes may be designed and implemented to achieve. It also includes an articulation of the values that should underpin ECEC quality provision and M&E processes and formulates guiding principles for designing and implementing M&E processes coherently with such intended goals and underlying values.

Box 1. Key messages from the Report on Monitoring and evaluating quality in ECEC – purposes, values and principles (illustrative extract)

Purposes of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in ECEC
Institutions in charge of organising, funding, and delivering ECEC may design M&E processes with the intention of fulfilling a broad range of purposes. Such purposes can largely be divided according to the priorities of quality control, quality improvement, and policy learning. These categories, however, should be seen as complementary rather than mutually exclusive, as in practice M&E systems are designed to fulfil several purposes simultaneously, albeit to varying degrees.

Values guiding M&E of ECEC quality
A consensus emerged in the WG that the underlying values of ECEC, as stated in the European Quality Framework, should guide all M&E activities extending from the European to the national/regional/local level, and down to the level of pedagogical practice. The following underlying values of ECEC quality M&E are drawing on the key values of ECEC expressed in the European Quality Framework:
- A clear image and voice of the child and childhood should be valued

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[30] The WGs outputs reflect the views only of the authors and should not be considered as representative of the European Commission's official position.
[31] https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/expert-groups/consult?lang=en&groupID=3811
[32] https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/expert-groups/consult?lang=en&groupID=3811

- Education and care as intertwined aspects of early childhood pedagogy
- ECEC quality lies in staff professionalism and wellbeing
- Parents are the most important partners and their participation is essential
- Inclusiveness
- A vision of ECEC as a public good.

The ECEC WG advises addressing the gap that may persist between the values underpinning ECEC practices and their presence in M&E processes.

Principles leading M&E of quality in ECEC

In light of the value framework reported in the previous section, the ECEC WG proposes six principles to guide the design and implementation of M&E processes:

- Democratic and participatory
- Accountable and transparent
- Impactful and supportive
- Holistic and inclusive
- Contextualized and responsive
- Equitable and consistent.

Finally, the first ECEC WG report on M&E purposes, values and principles explores potential unintended negative consequences of M&E quality in ECEC (e.g. excessive workload for staff, competition between ECEC settings, etc.) and ways to prevent these.

4.1.2. WG on Schools (Pathways to School Success sub-group)

In line with the first topic addressed by the WG on Schools (PSS sub-group), the key output produced by the WG to date has been the **Thematic report:** 'Blended learning for inclusion: exploring challenges and enabling factors'[33] and the relevant factsheet[34] with the key messages for better communication. They are accompanied by an **educational talk** 'How blended learning and school partnerships are supporting more inclusive schools' illustrating the main conclusions, which is available on the European School Education Platform, together with the numerous practices which have been highlighted by the WG.

Several other documents produced to date include, for example, a concept note on Learners' assessment policies and practices to support inclusive education and a bibliography on the same topic.

Box 2. Key messages from the Thematic report on Blended learning for inclusion (illustrative extract)

EU policy makers can support blended learning in formal school education by:
- communicating on how it can support quality and inclusive education
- supporting continued international peer learning and research on effective blended learning policy and practice.

National, regional and/or local policy makers can create conditions for effective blended learning by:
- ensuring that school leaders and teachers have the time and flexibility to innovate
- sharing research results, pilot projects and good practice examples
- ensuring that schools have enough money to support the design, implementation and evaluation of blended learning
- ensuring that school leader and teacher standards, competence frameworks and/or professional profiles reflect the range of skills needed to facilitate effective blended learning
- encouraging and creating incentives and opportunities for professional learning opportunities on blended learning for school leaders and teachers.

School leaders and their teams can help by:
- supporting a culture of collective engagement and responsibility within their school

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[33] https://op.europa.eu/fr/publication-detail/-/publication/166bebc7-96e2-11ed-b508-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-279000746

- mobilising resources within the school and community
- encouraging participation in networks.

4.1.3. WG on Schools (Education for Environmental Sustainability sub-group)

The WG on Schools (EfSS sub-group) has produced **six input papers** to date. The topics of these are respectively the following: Whole School Approaches to Sustainability[35]; Collaboration, partnership and whole-school approaches - Key questions and challenges[36]; Curricula and competences for sustainability[37]; Teacher Education for the Green Transition and Sustainable Development[38]; School leadership for sustainability and Assessment of Sustainability Competences. The WG has also produced **key messages papers** on Organising and Designing Curriculum and Building Core Competences[39], on Whole School Approaches to Sustainability[40] and on Learning for Sustainability: Good Practice in Teacher Education and Gaps in Provision[41] and on School leadership and sustainability.

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Box 3. Key messages on teacher education and whole school approaches to sustainability (illustrative extract)

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The key messages on teacher education highlight the importance of policy support, action and funding in improving teacher professional development on sustainability. It argues for more practical, task-centered and resource-based training. The three Erasmus+ Teacher Academies on sustainability are seen as promising examples. Adopting whole-school approaches and embedding sustainability in the culture of the school is highly effective, namely when supported by school leadership. The document includes examples of successful practices across countries, such as Hungary where green and sustainability competences are systematically included in teacher professional standards. Other examples of good practice include appointing a dedicated person or small committee responsible for sustainability at school-level; increasing opportunities for peer learning and collaboration with civil society and NGOs and exploring opportunities created by digital tools. A whole school approach to sustainability adopts a systemic view of education and aims to involve the entire institution in learning for environmental sustainability. Learners can connect what they learn through the curriculum with the school's practices in management, operations, procurement and outreach. A whole school approach seeks to take learning outside of the classroom, into the natural world and into the community. The key messages that emerged concern policy-making, student engagement, leadership and capacity building. The role of school self-evaluation is highlighted as well as collaborations and partnerships within schools and with external partners.

4.1.4. WG on Higher Education (HE)

The key outputs comprise the **policy conclusions** from the PLAs on Micro-Credentials and on the contribution of the HE sector to the green transition and sustainable development. Both provided recommendations for higher education authorities and institutions to make progress in these areas. The Policy conclusions on Micro-Credentials discussed the incentives that are crucial for higher education institutions to develop micro-credentials and for individuals to take up upskilling and reskilling; and that broad-based, system-level dialogue is necessary to ensure that the micro-credentials model is inclusive and flexible, and underpinned with information and guidance. The Policy conclusions on the green transition and sustainable development discussed systemic and institutional approaches to the green transition and sustainable development.

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Box 4. Key messages from the Policy conclusions on the HE sectors contribution to the green

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[35] https://education.ec.europa.eu/document/input-paper-a-whole-school-approach-to-learning-for-environmental-sustainability
[36]https://education.ec.europa.eu/document/working-group-on-schools-learning-for-sustainability-input-paper-collaboration-partnership-and-whole-school-approaches-key-questions-and-challenges
[37] https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/core/api/front/expertGroupAddtitionalInfo/45325/download
[38] https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/core/api/front/expertGroupAddtitionalInfo/46008/download
[39] https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/core/api/front/expertGroupAddtitionalInfo/45326/download
[40] https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/core/api/front/expertGroupAddtitionalInfo/45327/download
[41] https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/core/api/front/expertGroupAddtitionalInfo/46008/download

transition and sustainable development (illustrative extract)

Ten policies to enhance the contribution of the higher education sector to the green transition and sustainable development:

- Having a clearly articulated policy framework, along with the alignment of sector policies, can help develop effective approaches.
- Having adequate core funding and incentives.
- Spreading good practice and innovation in the green transition and sustainable development across the HE system is a challenge in many HE systems, which points to the need for knowledge sharing.
- Students and young people are the driving force for the green transition and sustainable development.
- All staff, academic and non-academic, will need support to embed the green transition and sustainable development in their activities and duties.
- HEIs can lead by example in enhancing sustainability and the green transition, starting with their own facilities and infrastructure.
- The natural setting for most HEIs to drive the green transition and sustainable development is their local and regional setting by building long-term partnerships.
- Investments in lifelong learning, including financial support for employees for study is important because many will need upskilling or retraining.
- Monitoring progress: embedding sustainability in performance management and quality assurance regulations and policies would enable monitoring whether institutions are making progress in this domain.
- Further European efforts could focus on the further development of data and monitoring and more evidence gathering and peer learning.

4.1.5. WG on VET and the Green Transition

The WG is currently preparing the **Compendium of innovative and inspiring practices**, a key WG output that should serve the WG members but also a wider audience of anyone with an interest in the policy and practice of greening VET. The Compendium covers all levels and types of practices, from national to local levels and from strategies and frameworks to practices at school/employer levels. The first edition will be published in June 2023. In 2022 the WG prepared the **Stocktake report**[42], an internal background document on the state of play concerning the green transition in VET, identifying the areas where the most and least progress has been made so far in policy and practice, and the challenges that might be faced in moving forwards.

4.1.6. WG on Adult Learning (AL)

Two PLA input documents, a **background report** on National Skills Strategies [43] and a **findings report** on financing of adult learning[44] have been **prepared, providing information on the legislative and policy context for each of the topics being considered and key questions to discuss. Three draft PLA reports** on the priority areas of the mandate (Skills for Life, financing of adult learning in Europe, and National Skills Strategies) are currently being finalised (summarising discussions and country examples delivered during the PLA events, identifying lessons learned, success factors and steps for stakeholders to take in supporting further developments).

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[42] This was an internal document, available for WG members only.
[43] https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/meetings/consult?lang=en&meetingId=45590&fromExpertGroups=true
[44] https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/meetings/consult?lang=en&meetingId=44377&fromExpertGroups=true

4.1.7. WG on Digital Education: Learning, Teaching and Assessment (DELTA)

An **input paper** entitled 'Digital skills in primary and secondary education'[45] as well as **three podcasts** (the Digital Inclusion Report[46], the Structured Dialogue on digital education and skills and the enabling factors for digital education[47] and one on the Proposal for a Council Recommendation on the key enabling factors for successful digital education and training[48]) were prepared to facilitate the WG discussions. The WG has actively contributed to the preparation of the two forthcoming Commission's proposals for the Council Recommendations on the key enabling factors for successful digital education and training, and on improving the provision of digital skills in education and training. As a result of the consultation on the Council Recommendation on the key enabling factors for successful digital education and training, a key policy messages[49] document has been produced stemming from the discussions that took place at the meeting. The DELTA WG was also consulted on the development of the Ethical Guidelines on the use of AI and data in teaching and learning for educators[50] and the Guidelines for teachers and educators on tackling disinformation and promoting digital literacy through education and training[51]. Based on a WG survey, a short report on the provision of education solutions (focusing on digital solutions) to support refugee Ukrainian pupils and students[52] was produced. For the plenary meeting on supporting the development of digital capacity of educational institutions and digital pedagogy, an input paper[53] on these two concepts was prepared to facilitate the WG discussion.

4.1.8. WG on Equality & Values in education and training

The main WG output to date is the Issue paper on gender equality in and through education capturing the key learning points from the WG meetings and the PLA dedicated to this topic. It addresses issues such as gender gaps in education, non-traditional education and career pathways, textbooks and learning materials, gender-based violence. The Issue paper includes a definition of the key relevant concepts, contextual background, including references to related EU policy initiatives, key research insights, inspiring examples from national and stakeholders' practices and projects as well as relevant initiatives from international organisations*.*

Box 5. Key messages from the Issue paper on gender equality in and through education (illustrative extract)

- Gender gaps in education call for more awareness-raising among policymakers, practitioners, parents and wider society.
- More research is needed on the impact of dominant masculinity norms on the educational performance of boys and young men (these include attitudes such as boys being expected to be 'naturally intelligent' while it is okay for girls to be 'hardworking', as well as the belief that it not 'cool' for boys to study hard).
- Long-term career counselling focused on career choices free of gender bias, can help promote gender equality.
- Specific policies and measures could attract more men into the education field (for example, in early childhood education and care/primary education) and more women into STEM
- Making career/subject choices too early can lead to greater gender segregation in education and work spheres.
- When reviewing textbooks and learning materials it is relevant to consider issues such as: frequency of distribution of characters by gender; the roles that characters play/are entitled to; the activities that characters are engaged in; the tools they are using; etc.
- Publishers of learning materials are encouraged to use the expertise of gender equality specialists.

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[45] https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/core/api/front/expertGroupAddtitionalInfo/44923/download
[46] https://h2learning.ie/delta/podcasts/delta_podcast_2_inclusion_report.mp3
[47] https://www.h2learning.ie/delta/podcasts/delta_podcast_1_structured_dialogue.mp3
[48] https://h2learning.ie/delta/podcasts/delta_podcast_3_enabling_factors.mp3
[49] https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/core/api/front/expertGroupAddtitionalInfo/46833/download
[50] https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/meetings/consult?lang=en&meetingId=37894&fromExpertGroups=true
[51] https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/meetings/consult?lang=en&meetingId=42735&fromExpertGroups=true
[52] https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/core/api/front/expertGroupAddtitionalInfo/44924/download
[53] https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/core/api/front/expertGroupAddtitionalInfo/46832/download

- The impact of both blatant and subtle biases and stereotypes on student attitudes and behaviours is not yet well understood.
- Gender-based violence should be specifically and explicitly addressed in educational institutions, their procedures and enforcement mechanisms.
- Bystander intervention mechanisms should be implemented in schools, making witnesses confident to speak up ('defend those that defend').
- A whole-school approach would help address different gender equality issues.

Several other documents produced to date include the PLA reports on gender equality[54], on social and territorial inequalities in and through education[55], and a scoping paper on citizenship education[56]. Two other **issue papers**, on **tackling all forms of discrimination** in education and **on citizenship education** and promoting **EU values**, are under development.

4.2. Synergies

Since the beginning of the current mandate, there has been an increased attention to exploring and exploiting synergies between WGs. Experts are regularly informed of other WG ongoing activities. This includes mutual exchange of ideas, consultations on working documents of shared interest, sharing of results, or organising joint mutual learning and raising awareness events. In addition, information of mutual interest - about different events, projects, funding, etc. - is shared between WGs via Teams platform and email. Cooperation between WGs intensified especially in relation to mobilising support for EU Member States receiving Ukrainian children, pupils and students who have fled Ukraine.

Some examples of already held activities include the following:

- A joint WGs online information sharing event on the 'Guidelines for teachers and educators on tackling disinformation and promoting digital literacy through education and training' (December 2022);
- The webinar organised by the WG Schools on 'How to attract and retain teachers and school leaders. Guidance for developing career frameworks' was opened and promoted to the Equality and Values WG (January 2023);
- Throughout the 2022, as part of the EU Education Solidarity Group for Ukraine, many WGs meetings, webinars and focus sessions on educational were open to different sectoral ad horizontal WGs (specific information is provided in section 5).

Possible joint activities and cross-cutting topics being explored include the following:

- A joint WGs online event is planned to present the Ethical guidelines on the use of artificial intelligence and data in teaching and learning for educators (2023 Q2);
- A joint WG DELTA and WG Schools, Pathways to School Success sub-group, online event on AI systems in education (2023 Q2);
- Joint WG Schools and WG Equality and Values meeting on early identification of learning needs while avoiding labelling and stigmatisation (2023 Q3);
- Digital citizenship (WG DELTA and WG Equality and Values).

Beyond cooperation among the WGs, concerning synergies with other expert groups and fora, the WGs are open to cooperation with or are informed about the other Commission expert groups related to education and training, such as the expert groups on quality investment in education and training,

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[54]https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/meetings/consult?lang=en&meetingId=43616&fromExpertGroups=true
[55]https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/meetings/consult?lang=en&meetingId=47262&fromExpertGroups=true
[56]https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/meetings/consult?lang=en&meetingId=47261&fromExpertGroups=true

on artificial intelligence (AI) and data in education and training and on tackling disinformation and promoting digital literacy through education and training. For example, the DELTA WG was consulted on development of the [Ethical Guidelines on the use of AI and data in teaching and learning for educators"](#)[57] and the [Guidelines for teachers and educators on tackling disinformation and promoting digital literacy through education and training](#)[58]. Another example is the Expert Group on supportive learning environments and well-being at school, feeding into the WG on Equality and Values and the work of the Pathways to School Success sub-group on topics such as well-being, learning climate, mental health and fighting bullying and violence.

The cooperation with the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks (SGIB) is also important (e.g. concerning identification of evidence and data gaps, development of indicator domains and targets for measuring performance and progress). For example, WG Equality and Values in Education and Training was informed and consulted about the SGIB work in relation to the new indicator domain for inclusion and equity in education.

To increase synergies between their work, WG AL is planning a joint session (2023 Q3) with the National Coordinators for Adult Learning, to share information about the results achieved so far.

5. WGs activities as part of the EU Education Solidarity Group for Ukraine

Since March 2022, the WGs have been a core element of the EU Education Solidarity Group for Ukraine[59], through which the Commission supports EU countries that are hosting children and young people fleeing Ukraine. The Solidarity Group provides guidance, expertise and exchange of good practice.

The WGs have made a range of important contributions to the EU Education Solidarity Group for Ukraine, which in some cases entailed adjustment of the focus of their mandates (e.g. WG Schools (Pathways to School Success sub-group) to address the different educational challenges from the invasion of Ukraine from the specific thematic focus of a WG. Activities have included dedicated WG meetings, PLAs and webinars, identification and sharing of good practices, and focus sessions.

As a result of series of peer learning activities within the EU Education Solidarity Group for Ukraine, in particular within the WG Schools and the WG ECEC, the Commission published a [Staff Working document on Supporting the inclusion of displaced children from Ukraine in education: Considerations, key principles and practices for the school year 2022-2023](#). Table 11 below sets out some examples of the activities carried out by the WGs as part of the EU Education Solidarity Group for Ukraine.

Table 11: Examples of the WGs activities as part of the EU Education Solidarity Group for Ukraine

Topic	Working group	Date (2022)
UA related item in the WG agenda - BFUG statement, E+ project flexibility, recognition of qualifications (SE example)	WG HE	16 March
Online [survey on the integration into VET of people fleeing Ukraine](#)	WG VET	17 March 31 March
Welcoming Ukrainian refugee children and young people in schools: identifying MSs' needs and fine-tuning policy guidance	WG Schools (Pathways) (ad hoc meeting)	24 March

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[57] https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/meetings/consult?lang=en&meetingId=37894&fromExpertGroups=true
[58] https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/meetings/consult?lang=en&meetingId=42735&fromExpertGroups=true
[59] https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/information-people-fleeing-war-ukraine/fleeing-ukraine-support-education_en

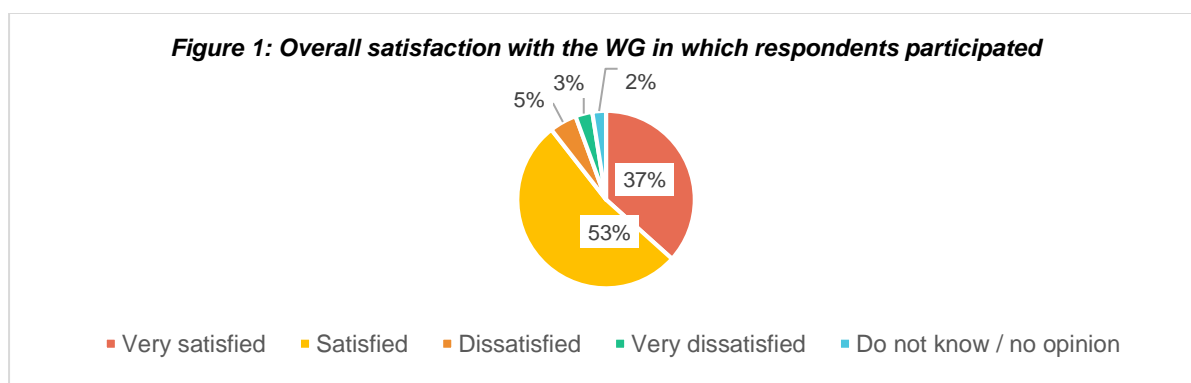|		
Welcoming Ukrainian children and families in early childhood education and care (ECEC) across Europe	WG ECEC (special meeting)	25 March 31 March
A part of the meeting focused on support measures to persons displaced from UA	WG AL	31 March
Teachers for refugee students: hiring UA teachers	WG Schools (Pathways) (focus session)	4 April
Providing ECEC in different formats / programmes	WG ECEC (special meeting)	5 April
EU funding opportunities	WG Schools (Pathways) (focus session), open to other WGs	7 April
Digital Education provisions for Ukrainian refugees survey	WG DELTA (ad hoc meeting)	12 April
ECEC staff (supporting staff across the EU + recruiting Ukrainian staff)	WG ECEC (special meeting)	22 April
Ukrainian refugee children not (yet) attending school in the host countries – outreach, support and coordination with Ukrainian curriculum	WG Schools (Pathways) (focus session)	25 April
UA related item on the WG agenda (responses to WG survey; Ukrainian representatives presented needs)	WG HE	27 April
Talking to children about (the) war, addressing disinformation in wartime, a UA perspective on history teaching about UA, and preventing segregation of refugees inside and outside the classroom	WG Equality and Values meeting, open to WG Schools (Pathways)	28 April
Psychosocial Support for Refugee Learners; Repository of tools for teachers and schools in the European Toolkit for Schools	WG Schools (Pathways) open to WG Equality and Values (Peer learning seminar)	19-20 May
Reviewing topics related to welcoming children and families in ECEC; special cooperation project with UNICEF (1)	WG ECEC (special meeting)	20 May
Organisation of entrance exams for UA students	WG HE/WG Schools (Pathways) (webinar)	13 June
Language learning support for inclusion of Ukrainian children into education	WG Schools (Pathways) (Peer learning seminar)	13-14 June
Reviewing topics related to welcoming children and families in ECEC; cooperation project with UNICEF (2)	WG ECEC (special meeting)	15 June
Higher education support to Ukraine	WG HE	27 June
UA related item on the agenda: Presentation of Temporary Protection Directive and update	WG HE	13-14 Sept
Regular WG meeting with a UA related discussion focused on outstanding issues for the school year 2022/23; presentation of the practical manual for MS	WG Schools (Pathways)	19-20 Sept

Regular WG meeting with a UA related discussion focused on support measures to persons displaced from UA; exchange on the main challenges in relation to AL	WG AL	20 Sept
Professional recognition of teacher qualifications for people displaced from UA	WG Schools (Pathways) (seminar)	30 Sept
Country mapping of the Member States' response to the arrival of Ukrainian refugees and how this was handled in the ECEC sector – results of the first cycle	WG ECEC (webinar)	4 October
Enhancing enrolment of displaced children from Ukraine in EU host country schools	WG Schools (Pathways) (focus session)	7 December

6. Moving forward, some midterm reflections

This section provides brief midterm reflections about the functioning of the WGs over the first part of the mandate. It comprises some key insights from the survey of all WGs members on the functioning of the WGs during this first phase of their mandates.

6.1. Feedback from the survey of WG members

A survey conducted in May-June 2022 across all WGs[60] provided valuable insights into the views of the WG members on the WGs in which they have participated to date. Overall, **90% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied to date with the WG in which they had participated**, as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Overall satisfaction with the WG in which respondents participated

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
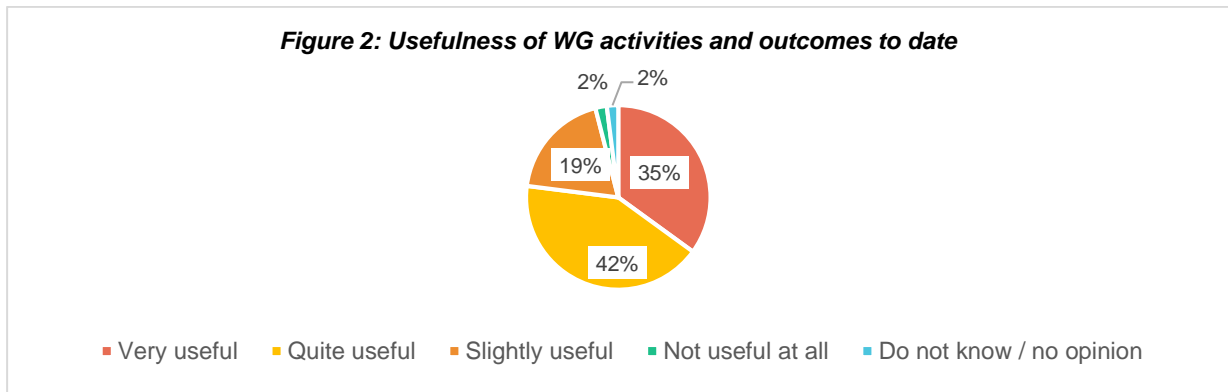- Very dissatisfied
- Do not know / no opinion

The highest proportion of respondents who were very satisfied were involved in the WGs focusing on Equality and Values (54%), ECEC (45%) and Schools: Pathways to School Success (42%).

Similarly, there **was a very positive response from WG participants about the perceived usefulness for the WG activities for their own work**: 77% said that they found them quite (42%) or very (35%) useful, as shown in Figure 2 below. The most useful activities were considered to be PLAs, the presentations of good practices, and the discussion of issues related to the crisis in Ukraine.

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[60] A total of 122 responses were received, covering all WGs. The largest proportion of responses (76%) came from representatives of EU Member States or other participating countries.

Figure 2: Usefulness of WG activities and outcomes to date

2%   2%
19%   35%
42%

■ Very useful   ■ Quite useful   ■ Slightly useful   ■ Not useful at all   ■ Do not know / no opinion

In terms of the methodology used for WG activities, 88% of survey respondents were very satisfied (33%) or satisfied (55%). As regards the Teams channel set up for their WG, 86% of respondents found it easy or very easy to access, while 59% found it quite or very useful, while 24% found it only slightly useful and 6% not useful at all. For the future WG activities, a large majority (86%) of respondents expressed the wish for a mix of online and in-person meetings.

The survey also confirmed that **WGs experts consider that the WG activities are strongly linked to the priority areas of the strategic framework and contribute to a range of other relevant EU priorities** (e.g. Upskilling Pathways, European Green Deal, different EU equality strategies, etc.).

Concerning education related issues in relation to the invasion of Ukraine, 77% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the way in which their WG addressed these issues; 59% also felt that the WG should continue addressing them.

The top three focus areas that have been reported to have the closest link with the WGs are **green and digital transitions** (50% of respondents), **quality, equity, inclusion and gender equality** (48% of respondents) and **lifelong learning and mobility** (39% of respondents).

Participants identified different European and EU-level initiatives to which the WGs have in their view contributed to, such as European Higher Education Area, Bologna Process, European Research Area, European Skills Agenda, Upskilling pathways-new opportunities for adults, Action Plan 2030 Digital Compass, European Green Deal, Osnabruck Declaration, VET recommendation, EU Strategy on the rights of the child, Child Guarantee, Anti-racism action plan, EU Roma Strategic Framework, Action plan on integration and inclusion etc.

Finally, **concerning possible adjustments to the topics being addressed** by the WGs in view of future work programme as of 2023, **the vast majority of participants did not report any need for specific adjustments.**

6.2. Moving forward towards 2025

The European Education Area midterm review in 2023 is foreseen as a process of listening, dialogue, and joint reflection with Member States, the Council, the European Parliament and other EU bodies, social partners, civil society, and other stakeholders. The aim is to jointly discuss achievements and draw lessons from the first years of experiences building the EEA. This should also include the reflection on the WGs, for example, examining the need for adjusting the focus and working methods of the WGs to ensure that they play a key role in driving forward the implementation of the EEA, examining how WGs outcomes can be more widely disseminated at European, national and regional levels, and how the political level can more effectively follow up on them and provide guidance on further work.

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