



EUCLASS Alliance: Bridging European Union (EU) Vocational Schools for Citizenship Education

Premios Transferencia de Conocimiento de la Formación Profesional

Promising Practice

Implemented by: ENAC ETS in Italy, together with eurocultura and the University of Trento, Luovi Vocational College (Finland), Kuressaare Ametikool (Estonia), Firda Vocational School (Netherlands), San Viator vocational school (Spain), AKMI International (Greece)

Where: Italy, Spain, Greece, Estonia, Finland and Netherlands

Status: Started in November 2024

Summary: The EUCLASS Alliance is an EU-funded project designed to support its members to strengthen the provision of citizenship education. The Alliance is a transnational network of VET providers who train teachers in actively engaging their students in democratic life and furthering understanding of their rights and responsibilities as European citizens. The project supports the development of teaching materials; provides training for educators; and engages students in activities to foster a stronger sense of European identity. The coordinating organisation of the Alliance is an Italian non-profit organisation, the ENAC ETS (Ente Nazionale Canossiano ETS), which works with VET partners across the six countries involved. The project is funded as part of the Erasmus+ Jean Monnet programme.

Overview

The EUCLASS Alliance is building a European network of VET schools to integrate citizenship education into vocational training. The training bolsters the knowledge of young VET students about the European Union, and the rights and responsibilities citizens derive from their country being a member state. The Alliance comprises associations of VET providers; individual VET providers; a non-governmental organisation; and a university from six EU countries (Estonia, Finland, Greece, Italy, Netherlands and Spain).

Co-funded by
the European Union
Project: 101176100 – ERASMUS-JMO-2024-NETWORKS



Fig 1.1 Promotional content for the 2026 competition

The project has developed and delivered a teacher training programme and provided curriculum resources for VET providers. The project started in November 2024. All outputs will be delivered by November 2027.

Description

The EUCLASS Alliance project is funded by the Erasmus+ Jean Monnet programme which funds innovative projects to 'promote a better understanding...of the European Union and the functioning of its institutions and to address the widespread lack of knowledge of the European Union and a lot of disinformation [which] increase people's disenchantment about the Union and its policies'¹. This project is designed for young people in VET schools.

The project started with research across the six partner countries to engender a mutual learning approach. The intended aim is to develop and pilot curriculum support for VET teachers to engage their students in learning about the EU. The project's activities combine national and transnational activities, collaborative projects and events with peer VET providers and VET teachers and trainers.

The EUCLASS Alliance project has multiple workstreams to achieve its goals:

Mapping existing practices and needs assessment

A transnational study explored how the participating countries implemented EU citizenship education in their VET providers. The study² defined EU Citizenship Education as 'knowledge of European institutions, democratic values, civic participation, human rights, and environmental sustainability within a European context. It supports the development of key competences such as critical thinking, intercultural understanding, and political engagement'.

Each national team examined their curriculum frameworks and voluntary practices and explored the views and needs of teachers in the VET sector to establish how and whether EU citizenship is taught. The study uncovered that 'this topic remains largely marginal within VET curricula'. Whilst there were differences across countries, the study's conclusions were that general education curricula tend to include more room for citizenship topics than VET curricula which are more focused on preparing learners for the labour market. A comparative report additionally highlighted both the gaps and opportunities in the provision of EU citizenship education in VET.

Five generally applicable findings were:

1. **Policy recognition without EU-specific identification:** all countries recognised the importance of civic competences and democratic values which aligned with EU-level recommendations. However, direct references to EU citizenship (rights, institutions, participatory mechanisms) were rare.
2. **Dependence on educator initiative:** inclusion of EU topics was too dependent on educator or school discretion, leading to inconsistency within and between countries.
3. **Reliance on EU-funded or extracurricular projects:** EU citizenship education was often only available through EU mobility and cooperation programmes which reached a small fraction of students.
4. **Lack of VET specific teacher training:** additional resources and training needed on how to integrate EU citizenship topics in a meaningful way into vocational subjects.
5. **Missing or inaccessible teaching materials:** even where materials existed, few were adapted to the VET sector.

SPECIFIC GOALS



Strengthening collaboration between vocational training schools and create a sustainable network of vocational training institutions promoting European citizenship education: establish lasting activities between partners to facilitate the sharing of best practices and innovative teaching methodologies, creating a more dynamic and impactful learning environment for both educators and students.



Strengthening European identity and awareness of EU issues among students: Increasing the sense of European belonging and identification with common values among students, enabling them to critically engage with EU issues and policies.



Strengthening the European dimensions in vocational training programmes: incorporate EU content into regular training/educational programmes.



Improving teachers' skills: enabling teachers to adopt material and pedagogical approaches to teach the European dimension.

Fig 1.2 EUCLASS Alliance specific goals

¹ For more information on Erasmus+ Jean Monnet actions, see: <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/jean-monnet-actions/jean-monnet-other-education-training>

² EUCLASS Alliance: bridging EU Vocational Schools for EU Education, Collective Desk Research Report (Studying EU Citizenship Education in VET Settings), p4 (see <https://euclass.enac.org/homepage/eu-class-alliance/project-results/wp2-desk-research-2/>)

Whilst all countries either have increased the time and curricula effort given to delivering citizenship education, few had embarked on a teacher training programme or on creating curriculum materials which students found relevant, useful and applicable.

Identifying examples of good practices and effective implementation

The transnational study also identified what was working well in the partner countries. The study analysed two types of initiatives ³:

- i. **Best Practices:** long-term, structured and validated approaches with significant impact and replicability.
- ii. **Quick Wins:** simple, fast and cost-effective activities that generate immediate awareness or engagement.

Multiple practices were identified across all partner countries and included: in-depth EU study tours; EU simulation exercises; integrated curricula modules; online learning platforms; and ad hoc presentations. The study presented 'Recommendations for Stakeholders':

- **For educators:** start small with quick wins, and gradually embed EU topics into existing curricula. Use student-centred, participatory approaches.
- **For VET institutions:** create cross-disciplinary teams to coordinate citizenship education. Link efforts to school identity and strategic development goals.
- **For policymakers:** provide dedicated funding and teacher training schemes. Recognize citizenship learning in curricula and quality assurance frameworks.
- **For EU institutions and national agencies:** continue to support innovative, accessible tools for EU education. Facilitate networks and partnerships among VET providers.

The partners published the recommended practices as part of the project.

Developing an Online Teacher Training Programme for EU Citizenship

Modular online training courses were created to strengthen VET teacher competences in EU-related topics. They are hosted on an open-source Learning Management System and combine a series of video lectures given by university professors and a range of self-paced learning materials, knowledge quizzes and external resources. Each module lasts 1.5 to 2 hours and provides certification upon completion.

Module 1: History of EU Integration and EU institutions:

- History of European Integration
- European Institutions:
 - European Parliament
 - European Council
 - European Commission
 - European Court of Justice and the European Central Bank
- Decision-making in the EU

Module 2: EU Policies and Actions:

- Economic Policy: Single Market and Innovation
- Social Policy and Solidarity
- EU and Sustainable Development

- EU and the World:
 - Foreign Policy
 - Security and Defence
- EU and Borders
- EU and You:
 - Citizenship and Culture
 - Values and Democracy

Developing Curriculum for EU Citizenship with VET Teachers

In September 2025, twenty-three VET educators from the partner countries participated in a three-day EUCLASS Summer School to exchange information and experience on how to best teach EU citizenship knowledge in the VET context and to develop materials which can be integrated into VET curricula. Participants were encouraged to utilise the lessons for use in the classroom.



Lesson 2.7:

The EU and You: Citizenship and Culture

Main Focus: The value added of European citizenship? Key Takeaways: Key point here is that we cannot be a European citizen without being a citizen of one of its member states And European citizenship does not replace national citizenship but adds to it	Making it Engaging: Have students try to identify what rights they would lose if they were not EU citizens Have students identify what might be shared cultural events and values that are essentially European Have students look at surveys from Eurobarometer to see how Europeans felt about being part of the EU
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Fig 1.3 Example lesson from September 2025 Workshop

The motivation to address EU citizenship in lesson planning and to integrate learning materials was made clearer to the participants.

“It showed me that EU values can be taught in ways that are fun, accessible, and meaningful for vocational students. – VET educator”

Implementing Curriculum in the Classroom

The next steps of the project are for teachers in the EUCLASS Alliance to integrate EU citizenship education into their courses and classrooms. Teachers will adapt the learning materials and record what is working to improve their students' understanding of EU institutions, policies and their rights as citizens. This resource will support other educators and provide meaningful feedback for future EUCLASS initiatives.

VET students will test the learning resources and participate in simulations of EU decision-making procedures, debates, EU-themed days and transnational exchanges. The pilot approaches will be monitored and used to refine the teaching materials.

Objectives

The objective of the EUCLASS Alliance project is to integrate EU citizenship education into VET curricula thereby ensuring that all learners—regardless of their chosen educational route—have opportunities to understand and to engage with democratic life. The project equips teachers with the

³ See p4, EUCLASS Alliance: bridging EU Vocational Schools for EU Education, Report on Effective Implementation and Best Practices in EU Citizenship Education within the VET Context, see: <https://euclass.enac.org/homepage/eu-class-alliance/project-results/wp2-best-practice/>

competence and curriculum material to provide an engaging learning experience for VET students. Overall objectives are to:

- Strengthen the EU dimension in initial vocational training curricula for young people.
- Improve the competence and confidence of VET teachers to teach EU topics.

By achieving these outcomes, it is expected that students will have a better awareness of the policies and values that the EU promotes and the rights provided to EU citizens. It is also expected that VET teachers and providers will build longer term relationships with their counterparts in other EU countries.

Outcomes and impact

As of late 2025, the training materials for VET teachers are being piloted with a target outreach to 600 students. The goal of the current initiative is the creation of a pan-European Union network which connects different vocational training providers from which best practices, diverse perspectives and innovative teaching methods can be shared.

Insights and challenges faced

The EUCLASS Alliance was built out of a concern that young people in VET do not experience the same opportunities to learn about the European Union as those

in general education. As the exploratory work started, several issues were uncovered:

- lack of confidence of VET teachers to incorporate EU citizenship education.
- lack of space in the curriculum for them to do so.
- lack of engaging curriculum material for teachers to use (from a single source) for their students.
- lack of interaction and understanding across countries of the similar challenges experienced.

Whilst teachers in each partner countries experience these issues differently, there is a willingness to work together to create and test new curriculum resources. A key finding of the project has been the importance of empowering teachers to ensure citizenship education is integrated seriously and appropriately into VET curriculum.

Conclusions and next steps

The EUCLASS Alliance will be piloting its EU citizenship education amongst its VET providers in the upcoming years. The partners in the Alliance expect to continue the work after project completion in 2027. The Alliance has committed to maintain an online catalogue of best practices and to update the training modules. It is hoped that membership of the Alliance will expand beyond the partner VET providers in the six countries. Enrique Blanco and Paolo Nardi from EfVET supported the identification of this promising practice. For more information on the European Forum for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (EfVET), see: <https://efvet.org>.

Learn more

For more information, please contact:
Luca Calligaro, Head of Internationalisation
ENAC Ente Nazionale Canossiano ETS
Luca.calligaro@enac.org

To learn more about EUCLASS ALLIANCE, see:
<https://euclass.enac.org>

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