EFEE Newsletter

EDUCATION EMPLOYERS' MONTHLY NEWS

BUSY MONTH? US TOO.

(we didn't even have time to take a cover picture)

PISA 2025: A WAKE-UP CALL FOR EDUCATION

EFEE's take on what Europe's education systems need next

GIVING VOICE TO EDUCATION EMPLOYERS

EFEE shaping key European and international education debates



PISA 2025: From Results to Action

The PISA 2025 results provide a clear warning for education systems, but also evidence that improvement is possible. More than 760,000 students across 91 countries and economies participated in the latest OECD assessment, representing approximately 33 million 15-year-olds worldwide.

While science performance remained comparatively resilient, mathematics and reading continued their longer-term decline. Across OECD countries, mathematics performance fell by 22 points between 2015 and 2025, while reading fell by 28 points. Today, one in five 15-year-olds is a low performer simultaneously in science, mathematics and reading.

For EFEE, these results should not simply trigger another debate about scores and rankings. PISA should instead be a starting point for considering what education systems need to deliver quality learning for all. The results show that declining performance is not irreversible: policy choices, the organisation of education, the allocation of resources and the capacity of the education workforce can make a difference.

From PISA evidence to EFEE priorities

In response to PISA 2025 and the forthcoming European education initiatives, EFEE has developed two complementary position papers: "Strengthening basic skills and improving performance in school education" and "Quality Education for All: A 2040 Roadmap."





Read the papers by clicking on the images

The first places strengthening basic skills within a wider systemic approach. Educational performance is influenced by interconnected factors including curriculum, school leadership, teacher shortages, initial education and professional development, socio-economic inequalities, family engagement and the capacity of institutions to respond to different learner needs.

EFEE also stresses that equity and excellence must advance together. Improving outcomes means providing targeted support where needs are greatest, investing in prevention and early intervention and ensuring access to specialist support, while continuing to create opportunities for high-performing learners to reach their potential. In other words: raise the floor without lowering the ceiling.



Click here to check it out

A slice of PISA Campaign

To bring these messages to a wider audience, EFEE translated its position into the **"PISA delivery"** campaign.
The campaign presents stronger education systems as a **recipe**:

Start with a strong base: by addressing teacher shortages, investing in educators, strengthening leadership and providing time and capacity to teach well.

Add the right ingredients: restore reading as a foundation for learning, use technology to deepen rather than bypass learning, foster curiosity and motivation, strengthen European cooperation and put social dialogue at the core of sustainable reform.

Make sure everyone gets a slice: by targeting support where needs are greatest, prioritising prevention and early intervention, providing access to specialist support and advancing equity and excellence together.

This recipe ultimately comes down to three priorities: support educators, invest where it matters most and strengthen basic skills.

What does this mean for education employers?

For education employers, PISA 2025 reinforces an important point: **improving basic skills is also a workforce and organisational challenge**.

Education systems are simultaneously expected to improve learning outcomes, integrate digital technologies and AI, respond to increasingly diverse classrooms, promote inclusion and well-being, and prepare learners for changing societies and labour markets. These ambitions have direct implications for the people and institutions responsible for delivering them.

This means addressing **teacher shortages**, investing in high-quality initial education and continuous professional development, strengthening school leadership and ensuring educators have the **time, resources and organisational capacity** to meet new expectations. Digital transformation should likewise support education professionals rather than simply create new responsibilities or administrative burdens.

It also means ensuring that reforms are developed **with education employers, not simply for them**. EFEE calls for structured involvement of education social partners in the design, implementation and monitoring of European initiatives. Social dialogue can help identify workforce implications, anticipate capacity needs and ensure that reforms are both ambitious and operationally sustainable.



EDUCATION EMPLOYERS AT THE TABLE

EEFEE members are actively contributing to the revision of the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, helping ensure that the voice of education employers is represented in this important international process.

The revision is being supported by an Independent Expert Group bringing together governments, employers and workers to help shape an updated framework for the teaching profession. Discussions are addressing key issues including equity and inclusion, digital transformation and AI, teacher autonomy and academic freedom.

For EFEE, the direct involvement of our members is particularly valuable, bringing practical experience on workforce sustainability, working conditions and professional development into the debate and reinforcing the importance of social dialogue in shaping the future of the teaching profession.

EFEE AT BERLIN FOR THE BILDUNGSTALK

EFEE joined the Bildungstalk at the Bertelsmann Stiftung in Berlin, bringing the education employers' perspective into discussions on the PISA 2025 results and what they mean for Germany's education system.

The event gathered representatives from German Länder ministries, teachers, universities, foundations and other education stakeholders, with contributions from the OECD, UNESCO-IIEP and the Ministry of Education of Schleswig-Holstein.

Rather than focusing only on the results themselves, discussions looked at how evidence can be turned into long-term strategies and sustainable improvements. For EFEE, the key message was clear: improving outcomes requires not only identifying challenges, but giving education systems the capacity, structures and support to respond effectively.

ELNE CORNER

ELNE JOURNAL 9TH EDITION OUT NOW!

This new edition, titled "Contextualising Stakeholder Perspectives", reflects on ELNE's third project year and explores collaborative leadership through the perspectives of different education stakeholders.

Inside, you will find a roadmap of Year 3 activities, the Research Committee's Final Report and the Year 3 Policy Recommendations, drawing on ELNE's Calls, European Education Month, stakeholder discussions and Annual Conference.

The findings highlight participation, shared responsibility, trust and dialogue, alongside the need for adequate time, resources and supportive structures.

As ELNE enters its fourth and final year, the network will build on these conclusions by exploring collaborative leadership from a sectoral perspective across different levels of education, bringing together the knowledge accumulated throughout ELNE's four-year journey.



Read the ELNE Journal here

ELNE KICKS OFF ITS FOURTH AND FINAL YEAR

The ELNE consortium met in Brussels to kick off the fourth and final year of the project, reflecting on progress and setting priorities for the months ahead.

Partners approved the Year 3 Policy Recommendations and discussed how ELNE can further bridge policy and practice, turning its work on collaborative leadership into practical resources for education stakeholders.

The meeting also looked ahead to the upcoming Calls for Inspiring Showcases and the next European Education Month, taking place **from 20 January to 17 February 2027**.

The Calls for Proposals officially open on 5 October.

NEWS FROM BRUSSELS *(and beyond)*

EFEE CONTRIBUTES TO DISCUSSIONS ON THE UPCOMING EU EDUCATION PACKAGE

On 9 September 2026, EFEE took part in focus group discussions organised by the European Commission in Brussels on how European cooperation can support schools in addressing the decline in basic skills. The discussions, held in the presence of members of the Cabinet of Executive Vice-President Roxana Mînzatu, will contribute to the development of potential EU support under the upcoming Education Package.

The exchange focused particularly on the proposed European School Alliances, which would strengthen cross-border cooperation between school authorities and schools to improve literacy, mathematics, science, digital and citizenship skills. Participants discussed how such cooperation could translate successful approaches into practical action, achieve measurable improvements and ensure that good practices can be sustained and scaled across education systems.

For EFEE, the discussion provided an important opportunity to bring the education employers' perspective directly into the preparation of the Education Package, particularly regarding the support, capacity and cooperation needed at school and system level. This is especially relevant as the Package is expected to address three interconnected challenges: declining basic skills, growing teacher shortages and the need for sovereign digital education infrastructure.



STRENGTHENING EDUCATION COOPERATION IN NORTH MACEDONIA

EFEE Secretary General Daniel Wisniewski visited Skopje for a series of meetings with key education, employment and innovation stakeholders in North Macedonia. The visit included a meeting with Minister of Education and Science Vesna Janevska, focusing on the country's education priorities, ongoing reforms and opportunities for stronger European cooperation and future collaboration with EFEE.

The visit also included exchanges with the Organization of Employers of Macedonia (OEM) on skills mismatches and cooperation between business, VET and higher education, as well as meetings with the national Centre for the Development of Vocational Education and INOVA, the Agency for Innovation, Scientific and Technological Development and Entrepreneurship.

These exchanges contribute to EFEE's work to strengthen connections between education employers across Europe, create new opportunities for cooperation and peer learning, and broaden participation in European education policy and social dialogue.





NEWS FROM BRUSSELS *(and beyond)*

SOTEU 2026: SKILLS WERE MENTIONED, BUT WHERE WAS EDUCATION?

On 16 September 2026, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen delivered the annual State of the Union Address (SOTEU), outlining the Commission's priorities for the year ahead. Competitiveness, resilience, technological transformation and Europe's strategic independence featured prominently. Skills were part of the conversation, but education itself received considerably less attention.

While skills are essential to Europe's competitiveness, developing them ultimately depends on strong, well-resourced and sustainable education and training systems.

This is particularly relevant as attention turns to the upcoming EU Education Package, which is expected to address basic skills, teacher shortages and the future of digital education and AI.

For education employers, these ambitions must be accompanied by sufficient investment, workforce capacity and support for the institutions responsible for delivering them.



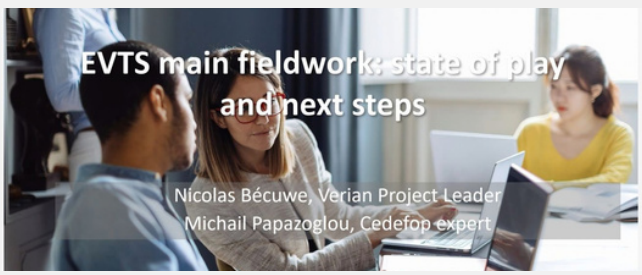
Read EFEE's article here

EFEE JOINS CEDEFOP'S 5TH EVTS STAKEHOLDERS GROUP MEETING

On 21 September 2026, EFEE participated in the 5th Stakeholders Group meeting of Cedefop's European Vocational Education and Training Teachers Survey (EVTS). The initiative focuses on supporting the professional development of teachers and trainers in VET schools across Europe.

The meeting provided an update on the EVTS pilot findings and their contribution to the new European Agenda on teachers and trainers and the upcoming VET strategy. Participants also discussed the state of play and next steps for the survey's main fieldwork, alongside recent Cedefop work on VET teachers and trainers.

EFEE's participation helps ensure that the education employers' perspective is represented in discussions around the professional development, needs and future of Europe's VET teaching workforce, while contributing to the exchange between Cedefop and key stakeholders as the EVTS work progresses.



NEWS FROM BRUSSELS *(and beyond)*

EUROPEAN EDUCATION SOCIAL PARTNERS MEET TO ADVANCE THE ESSDE AGENDA

On 25 September 2026, EFEE and ETUCE members came together for a European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education (ESSDE) Working Group meeting, continuing their joint work on key priorities for Europe's education sector.

Discussions covered the European Semester 2026 and how to strengthen the involvement of education social partners in the next Semester cycle. EFEE and ETUCE also worked on their joint Framework of Actions on institutional autonomy and academic freedom, with the objective of adopting the final document at the ESSDE Plenary in November.

Looking ahead, delegates discussed the ESSDE Work Programme 2027-2029, alongside the attractiveness of the teaching profession and ongoing joint projects addressing social dialogue capacity building, AI and algorithmic management, and telework and the right to disconnect.

The meeting once again demonstrated the role of European social dialogue in bringing education employers and trade unions together to address shared challenges and shape the future of education policy and employment in the sector.



EUROPEAN LITERACY COALITION LAUNCHES IN BRUSSELS

On 22-23 September 2026, EFEE attended the launch of the European Literacy Coalition in Brussels, bringing together stakeholders to discuss how Europe can strengthen literacy and build a more coordinated approach to promoting reading.
The first day explored literacy as a public good and shared responsibility, alongside the role of strong literacy ecosystems in building a more literate Europe. Discussions also presented the Warsaw Memorandum, which sets out a vision towards building the European Literacy Coalition.

The second day moved from discussion to action through collaborative workshops, allowing participants to exchange ideas and contribute to the Coalition's next steps.

For EFEE, the initiative comes at an important moment. With literacy remaining a fundamental basic skill and foundation for learning, cooperation between education stakeholders will be essential to strengthen reading and ensure that learners across Europe develop the skills they need to participate fully in education, work and society.



EFEE RESPONDS TO THE SECOND-PHASE CONSULTATION ON THE QUALITY JOBS ACT

EFEE has submitted its contribution to the European Commission's second-phase consultation on the Quality Jobs Act (QJA), bringing the perspective of education employers into the ongoing discussion on the future of job quality in Europe.

EFEE supports the objective of strengthening job quality, recognising that good working conditions and sustainable employment are essential to attracting, developing and retaining qualified education staff and, ultimately, to delivering high-quality education and training. At the same time, future EU action should recognise the diversity of education systems and employers and remain proportionate, evidence-based and adaptable to national and sectoral realities.

The contribution addresses key areas including AI and algorithmic management, occupational safety and health, fair transitions, skills development and social dialogue.

EFEE particularly emphasises effective implementation of existing frameworks, capacity building and simplification, while ensuring that technological transformation supports rather than replaces human judgement and professional autonomy.

Throughout its response, EFEE underlines the importance of social dialogue in developing practical and sustainable solutions for changing education workplaces, while respecting the different realities of education employers and workers across Europe.

Read EFEE's full position paper here





Good news: This is the last page.

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