



## Advocacy on Education for Environmental Sustainability (EES)

In the framework of the work on Global Citizenship Education (GCE), SOLIDAR Foundation is working on advocacy towards the mainstreaming of Education for Environmental Sustainability (hereafter EES) in formal, non-formal and informal learning. **This document aims to recap and help the understanding of the connections between the several ongoing initiatives at the EU level regarding EES and GCE**, to support our members and partners' advocacy actions for improving the policy making. The 2021 edition of the Citizenship and Lifelong learning Monitor will further offer evidence-based policy recommendations on EES and its linkages to GCE, thanks to the analysis carried out in 11 countries, with the support of our members.

The environmental dimension of Education for Sustainable Development addressed by EES, equips all learners with the tools to understand the interconnections among natural systems, human actions, and the need for individuals and groups to analyse issues, make decisions, and take actions that support sustainable ecosystems. **EES is fundamental to implement transformative education at national and European level and facilitate the transition to a just and green society**. Our advocacy will focus on ensuring that EES encompasses the lifelong and life-wide learning approach and contributes to the progress towards [the Sustainable Development Goals subtarget 4.7](#).

At the EU policy level, the key role of education and training for the green transition is briefly mentioned in the [European Green Deal](#), which highlights the importance of engaging all learners to understand and find solutions to the environmental challenges faced in our society. Further, the [Communication on the European Education Area](#) highlighted the importance of education and training in supporting the shift towards a more sustainable and resource-efficient society, which is also a relevant component of the [Updated Skills Agenda](#). These three prominent strategies put forward by the European Commission prompted a number of policy initiatives aimed at enhancing the role of education and lifelong learning for achieving sustainable societies. Below you can find a summary of such initiatives, which are reflected also in the priorities for the current programming period (e.g. Erasmus+, ESF+).

## Education for Climate Coalition

The **Education for Climate Coalition** is a European Commission initiative which aims to co-create a participatory education community to support the changes needed for a climate-neutral society. **The Coalition aspires to create an EU-wide education community to address concrete challenges to inspire, develop and draw on innovative European education capabilities**. SOLIDAR Foundation participated in the first Education for Climate gathering, which took place on 22 June. During the meeting, a call to learners, teachers, practitioners, and other actors in the education system to engage in climate-related

education initiatives was launched. At the moment, the Coalition is at its early stage and it is as of 25 November that it should gain momentum, thanks to the first **Education for Climate Day**. On this occasion, the Commission will indeed launch the collaborative community platform of the Coalition, which should empower all stakeholders, including practitioners and learners, to engage in the process and have their say in policymaking. Member organisations can engage in the process by joining the Coalition directly and by supporting SOLIDAR Foundation's work in this process. For further information and participation opportunities, contact the [Secretariat](#) and consult the [Coalition webpage](#).

While the Coalition has the ambition to recognise the importance of a bottom-up approach and to establish the participatory dimension of the policymaking for EES, other initiatives aim to reform existing policies and tools as to mainstream EES. Among these, a prominent one is the development of a **European competence framework on sustainability**<sup>1</sup>. This would be a multidisciplinary European competence framework within the context of lifelong learning for the development and assessment of knowledge, skills and attitudes of citizens on climate change and sustainable development. The Competence Framework is rooted in the **Council Recommendation on Key Competences for lifelong learning**, adopted by the Council of the European Union in May 2018. This legislative tool<sup>2</sup> identifies eight key competences essential to citizens for personal fulfilment, a healthy and sustainable lifestyle, employability, active citizenship and social inclusion. It represents a reference framework for education and training stakeholders as it presents successful ways to promote competence development through innovative learning approaches, assessment methods and support to educational staff.

The above-mentioned policy initiatives are complemented for implementation purposes by the use of the EU funding instruments, which now feature a "green dimension" such as the Erasmus+ and the European Social Fund + (ESF+). Both programmes, in fact, address the priorities of the European Commission concerning the environment, namely the green and digital transitions (the twin transition).

### **Council Recommendation on Education for Environmental Sustainability**

The European Commission is working on a proposal for a Council Recommendation on Education for Environmental Sustainability. The Recommendation is expected to be finalised and adopted by the Commission in November, together with a Staff Working Document<sup>3</sup>. The Commission launched a Public Consultation to gather input and ideas to feed into the proposal that **SOLIDAR Foundation contributed to**. Prior to this, SOLIDAR Foundation contributed to the preparatory phase of the process by [providing feedback](#) to the [Roadmap](#) which guided the development of the proposal.

SOLIDAR Foundation is also part of the **European Alliance on Climate Education**, a civil society coalition led by the Lifelong Learning Platform and Generation Climate Europe, which was formed to support the

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<sup>1</sup> For further information, see:

Bianchi, G., Sustainability competences (2020) EUR 30555 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, ISBN 978-92-76-28408-6, doi:10.2760/200956, JRC123624. Available at: <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC123624>

<sup>2</sup> A Recommendation of the Council of the European Union is one of two kinds of non-legal binding acts in the EU as established with Article 288 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The Recommendation is an instrument of indirect action aiming at preparation of legislation in Member States.

<sup>3</sup> The Staff Working Documents (SWD) are complementary internal documents of the Commission that include analysis such as impact assessments, summaries of impact assessments, staff working papers.

proposal for a Council Recommendation. The Alliance organised in cooperation with the Commission a series of workshops for stakeholders, tackling the following issues in the context of Education for Environmental Sustainability: the measuring of policy impact, cross-sectoral cooperation and partnership and capacity-building and education for teachers. During the workshop on cross-sectoral cooperation and partnership, the Commission presented its initial findings of its coming report on cross-sectoral cooperation in policymaking and in the education sector. SOLIDAR Foundation will disseminate the results of the report once released.

Further, SOLIDAR Foundation took part in the **dialogue with the European Commission to exchange information and best practices on EES from civil society**. The Commission shared that the incoming Council Recommendation will look at education in a larger sense, including vocational education and training (VET) and Adult Learning (AL). Furthermore, the Recommendation will be aligned with the United Nations Agenda 2030 and the UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development programme: [ESD for 2030 Framework](#).

Further readings:

- SOLIDAR Foundation, [Global Citizenship Education Policy Paper](#)
- SOLIDAR Foundation, [Citizenship and Lifelong Learning Monitor 2020](#)
- SOLIDAR Foundation, [Briefing Note on the EC Communication Achieving the European Education Area by 2025](#)
- BRIDGE 47, [Unlocking the transformative potential of education: the alliance between Lifelong Learning and SDG Target 4.7](#)
- Lifelong Learning Platform, [Lifelong Learning for Sustainable Societies](#)
- SOLIDAR Foundation [Study Visit Report, Green and Digital Exchanges](#)
- SOLIDAR Foundation, DARE Network, Bridge 47, [Changing the Narrative around the SDGs, Event Report](#)
- CONCORD, [Global Citizenship Education: How much do we care?](#)