

ACTION Plan on Basic Skills

Why They Are Important

Literacy is foundational for all learning. Education systems need to consider how different media impact literacy development while actively promoting engagement with more complex texts to foster literacy.

Mathematical skills for thriving in our technology-rich world. They help individuals make informed decisions based on data, and improve their prospects in the labour market.

Science skills for critical thinking and problem-solving. They are essential for more advanced STEM education and careers and for a successful green transition.

Digital skills for competitiveness, modern society and everyday life. Media literacy is key for active and informed citizenship.

Citizenship skills for fostering active participation in democratic societies. Rapid technological advancements coupled with rising polarisation and the spread of dis- and misinformation, make cultivating citizenship skills more crucial than ever.

Where we are

...there are **18 million underachieving pupils** in Europe and 47.7 million of low-qualified adults (aged 25-64)

... **one-in-three** 15-year-olds in the EU struggle to understand and apply mathematics in real-life situations

...**one-in-four** fails to interpret basic texts or apply simple scientific knowledge.
More than 40% of young people lack basic digital skills
... there is a **decline in eighth graders' civic knowledge** in several EU countries

...**only half** of all adults have basic digital skills and fewer than **40%** engage in lifelong learning or training



Key Action

Piloting a Basic Skills Support Scheme to reduce underachievement among pupils across the EU by addressing basic skills deficiencies earlier and faster

How it works

The Commission will pilot the scheme with interested Member States to define together a framework of effective measures, including early intervention and individual, tailor-made support, from school to initial VET. Focus will be on proven measures, for example:

- early identification mechanisms and regular monitoring
- personalised support
- additional professional development
- specialist roles at schools
- learning networks of schools
- supporting parents and stronger collaboration with the community
- national targets

Who benefits?

Every child should be able to reach an adequate level of basic skills by the end of compulsory schooling.

Additional actions:

- Pilot the first European School Alliances through the Erasmus+ programme in 2026.
- Pilot personalised learning pathways in basic skills through the use of artificial intelligence (AI) systems.
- Set out an EU Teachers and Trainers Agenda.
- Pilot a mentoring system for early career teachers in all subjects by 2026.
- Engage volunteers under the European Solidarity Corps in 2026 for mentoring and tutoring activities for underachieving children and adults as part of the 'Volunteering Teams in High Priority Areas' strand.
- Launch an EU literacy coalition in 2026, involving governments, businesses and libraries.

We will make it happen together

- The **European Commission** will work in partnership with **Member States**, with **education and training providers**, the **private sector**, **social partners** and **civil society stakeholders**.
- The **Commission** will enhance the monitoring of basic skills performance in the context of the European Semester and through the future European Skills Intelligence Observatory.
- **Member States** are invited to make best use of EU funding programmes.