

Learning for Sustainability



Florin Popa
DG EAC, European Commission



Learning in a changing climate

FRANCE

Schools closed after 'exceptional' floods hit northern France

Flooding has hit dozens of towns in northern France, leaving roads sometimes only passable in boats and dozens of schools closed, authorities said Tuesday.

Issued on: 07/11/2023 - 16:01 1 min



French firefighters walk in a flooded street in Denis Charlet

MENU SEARCH

EducationWeek

LEADERSHIP POLICY & POLITICS TEACHING & LEARNING TECHNOLOGY OPINION

SCHOOL & DISTRICT MANAGEMENT

How Sweltering Heat Disrupts Learning and What Schools Can Do

By Caitlynn Peetz — June 17, 2024 5 min read



Article | Published: 05 October 2020

Learning is inhibited by heat exposure, both internationally and within the United States

R. Jisung Park, A. Patrick Behrer & Joshua Goodman

400 million students have experienced climate-related school closures since 2022, new report says

Cuarenta y siete escuelas de Valencia sin daños abren sus puertas y dan cobijo a los alumnos de centros afectados

Más de 22.000 estudiantes han podido hoy regresar a las aulas

DANA en Valencia: Las 3 ideas clave para recuperar la normalidad escolar de los niños afectados por la catástrofe



Sillas de colegio, amontonadas en una calle de Massanassa, Valencia, tras el paso de la DANA // REUTERS

WEATHER

Home | Weather Warnings | Flood Warnings | Monthly Outlook | Coast and Sea | Help

How hot does it have to be for schools to close?



THE SLOVENIA TIMES

BUSINESS POLITICS SOCIETY TRAVELS SPORT OPINION CORPORATE NEWS



School starts for all children despite flood damage

September 1, 2023 - 15:16

First day of school in Luče, north Slovenia. Photo: Nebojša Tejić/STA

A new school year started in Slovenia on 1 September for 194,000 primary and 82,000 secondary school students. Although the first day of school came less than a month after massive floods devastated large parts of the country, including many schools, all students were able to start classes.

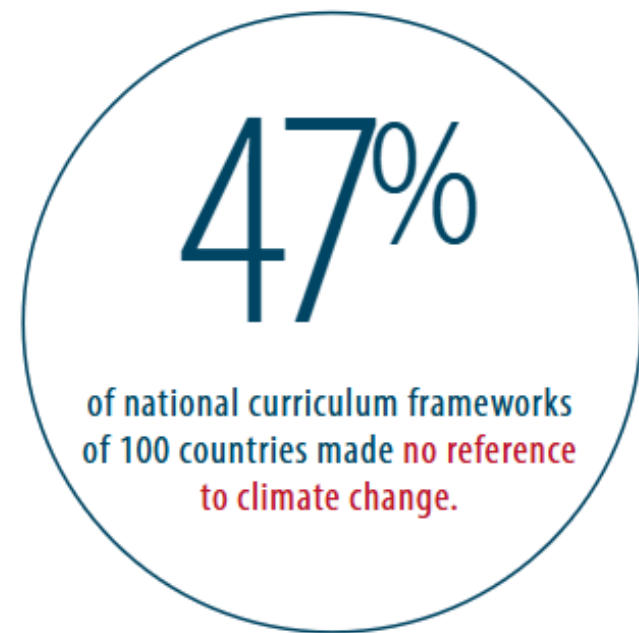
The early-August floods damaged 12 kindergartens, 19 primary schools and five high-schools. Some schools were also damaged in storms in July, according to data by the Education Ministry.





While 95% of surveyed primary and secondary teachers

felt that teaching climate change is important, less than 30% expressed a readiness to teach it.



70% of young people cannot explain climate change

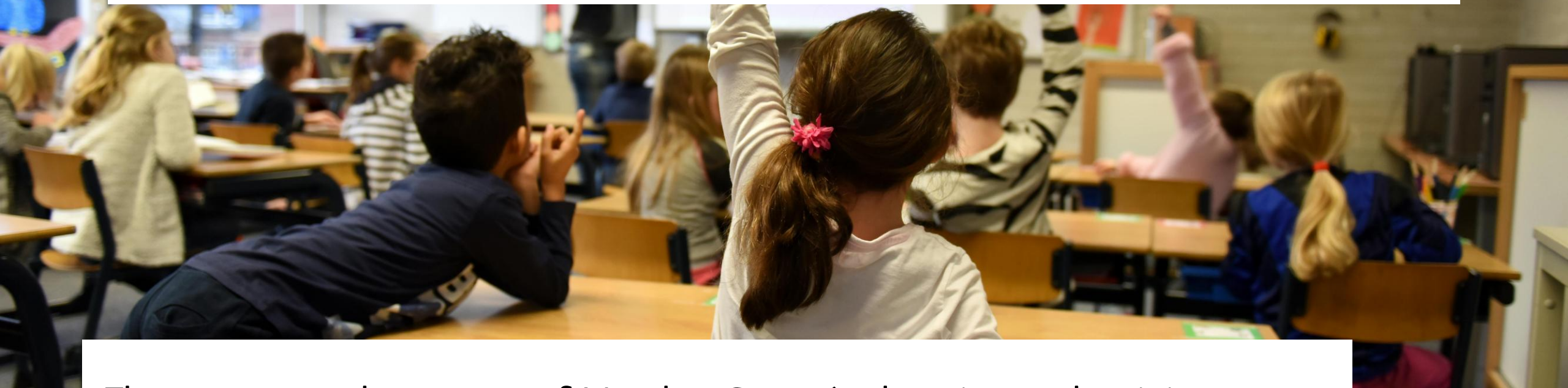
or can only explain its broad principles or do not know anything about it.

[Greening Education Partnership | UNESCO](#)

85%

Of EU citizens consider climate change a serious problem.

Education at EU level



The content and structure of Member States' education and training systems remain the competence of the relevant **national and/or regional authorities**.

EU has a key role in **supporting** efforts to improve and modernise national education systems.



How does cooperation take place?

Supporting EU Member States with their reforms of education and training systems.

Enhancing synergies with other policy areas, such as research and innovation, social policy, employment and youth, as well as with **EU funding instruments** to better support national reforms.

Peer learning methods – Working Groups, e.g. WG schools on learning for sustainability.

Education and training monitor – progress towards targets and indicators.



How does cooperation take place?

**European Education Area
Union of Skills**

Erasmus+



Focus topics



Quality, equity, inclusion and gender equality



European higher education



Green and digital transitions



Lifelong learning and mobility



Supporting teachers and trainers



International cooperation in education



Council recommendation on learning for the green transition and sustainable development

27.6.2022 EN Official Journal of the European Union C 243/1

I
(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RECOMMENDATIONS

COUNCIL

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION
of 16 June 2022
on learning for the green transition and sustainable development
(2022/C 243/01)
(Text with EEA relevance)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Articles 165 and 166 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

1. Across the Union, while many Member States have made good progress in the implementation of policies and programmes of learning to support the green transition and to promote learning for sustainable development, there is nonetheless a need to continue and step up efforts in that regard. Policy and practice for this kind of learning should be further stimulated and supported. It is necessary to recognise the need for interconnected learning across the environmental, economic and social pillars of sustainable development, while placing a specific focus on the environmental pillar.
2. The European Green Deal ⁽¹⁾, the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 ⁽²⁾, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) strategy Education for Sustainable Development for 2030 and the related United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) work ⁽³⁾ highlight the key role of schools, higher education and other education and training institutions in engaging with learners, parents, educators ⁽⁴⁾ and the wider community on the changes needed for a successful, just and inclusive green transition. In its conclusions on 'Biodiversity – the need for urgent action' ⁽⁵⁾, the Council stressed that investing in education, among other areas, is key in gathering the best data and finding the best solutions in this regard. The EU Youth Strategy identifies a sustainable green Europe as a goal and calls for all young people to be environmentally active and educated.



Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on learning for the green transition and sustainable development 2022/C 243/01 (Text with EEA relevance)

ST/9795/2022/INIT

OJ C 243, 27.6.2022, p. 1–9 (BG, ES, CS, DA, DE, ET, EL, EN, FR, GA, HR, IT, LV, LT, HU, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SK, SL, FI, SV)

[Expand all](#) [Collapse all](#)

▼ Languages, formats and link to OJ

	BG	ES	CS	DA	DE	ET	EL	EN	FR	GA	HR	IT	LV	LT	HU	MT	NL	PL	PT	RO	SK	SL	FI	SV
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STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

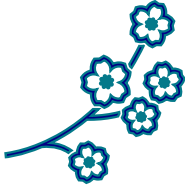
ACCOMPANYING THE PROPOSAL FOR
A COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION ON LEARNING
FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



Council recommendation on learning for the green transition and sustainable development



Providing opportunities to understand, engage with and value the natural world and its biodiversity



Strengthen, including through financial support, high-quality lifelong learning for the green transition and sustainable development



Facilitate learning methods and approaches that are collaborative, experiential, practically oriented and relevant to local contexts and traditions and support interdisciplinary and cross-curricular activities.

Provide fact-based and accessible information on the climate, environmental and biodiversity crisis and its drivers

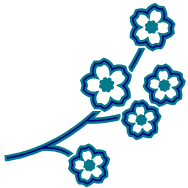


Develop problem-solving and collaboration skills; foster critical thinking, media literacy skills and systems thinking

Call to action for EU countries



make sustainability a central focus in education policies and programmes.



ensure all learners, in formal and non-formal settings, have **access to sustainability education**.



invest in **green and sustainable equipment, resources and infrastructure**.



support educators in developing their knowledge and skills to teach about the climate crisis and sustainability.

Working Group



European Commission > European Education Area > Schools

Learning for Sustainability

Expand all Collapse all

European Education Area
Working groups 2021-2025

- > ECEC
- > Schools
 - > Pathways to School Success
 - > Learning for Sustainability
 - > Higher Education

Working group Schools: Learning for Sustainability

The aim of the working group is to promote mutual learning and exchange on sustainability education in schools, including the development of sustainability competences. Together, the members explore the key role of primary and secondary schools in educating and empowering pupils and students for the green transition.

The working group supports the implementation of the 2022 Council Recommendation on learning for the green



<https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/EAC/Learning+for+Sustainability>



Working Group Outputs

Key messages

For each of our meetings we publish key messages which summarise our discussions and include examples of good practice:

- [Whole School Approaches to sustainability](#) (available in 24 languages)
- [Organising and designing curriculum and building core competences](#) (available in 24 languages)
- [Good practice in teacher education and gaps in provision](#) (available in 24 languages)
- [Leadership for sustainability](#) (available in 24 languages)
- [Collaboration and partnerships for sustainability: building connections beyond the classroom](#) (available in 24 languages)
- [Sustainability in school education: assessment of student learning and competences](#) (available in 24 languages)
- [Effective policy design in learning for sustainability](#) (available in 24 languages)
- [Sustainable infrastructure and learning environments](#) (available in 24 languages)
- [Tackling and overcoming eco-anxiety in students](#) (available in English, translations forthcoming)
- [Vocational Education and Training sector and the greening of the labour market](#) (available in 24 languages)
- [Student participation and action in learning for sustainability](#) (available in English)
- [The twin transitions: digital and sustainability in school education](#) (available in English)
- [Networking of non-formal and formal education programmes - strategies at national and municipal level](#) (available in English)
- [Learning for sustainability and citizenship education](#) (available in English)
- [Outdoor education: benefits, challenges and good practice](#) (available in English)

<https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/EAC/Learning+for+Sustainability>



Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)

eu|academy

Explore by topic ▼

What would you like to learn today?



Anna Kathar... ▼

En ▼

Home > Dashboard > Leading Sustainability In School Education

Leading sustainability in school education

🕒 One day

📊 Beginner



Resume



<https://academy.europa.eu/>

completing the
EUROPEAN
EDUCATION AREA



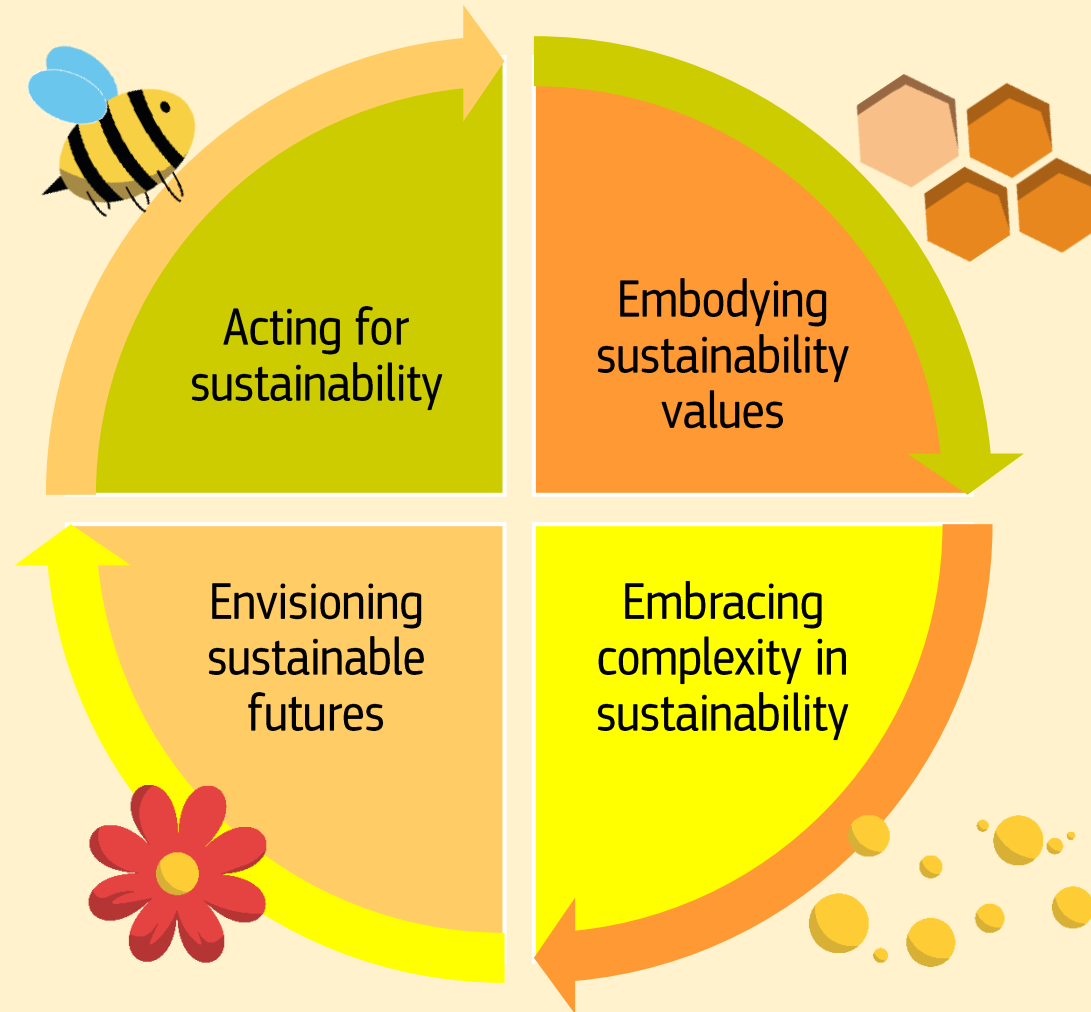
GreenComp

the European sustainability competence framework



GreenComp describes a set of **sustainability competences** which can help learners think, plan and act with empathy, responsibility, and care for the planet.

Competence areas





GreenComp



Competence areas



**EMBODYING
SUSTAINABILITY
VALUES**



Valuing sustainability



**EMBRACING
COMPLEXITY
IN SUSTAINABILITY**



Systems thinking



**ENVISIONING
SUSTAINABLE
FUTURES**



Futures literacy



**ACTING
FOR
SUSTAINABILITY**



Political agency

Competences



Supporting fairness



Critical thinking



Adaptability



Collective action



Promoting nature



Problem framing



Exploratory thinking

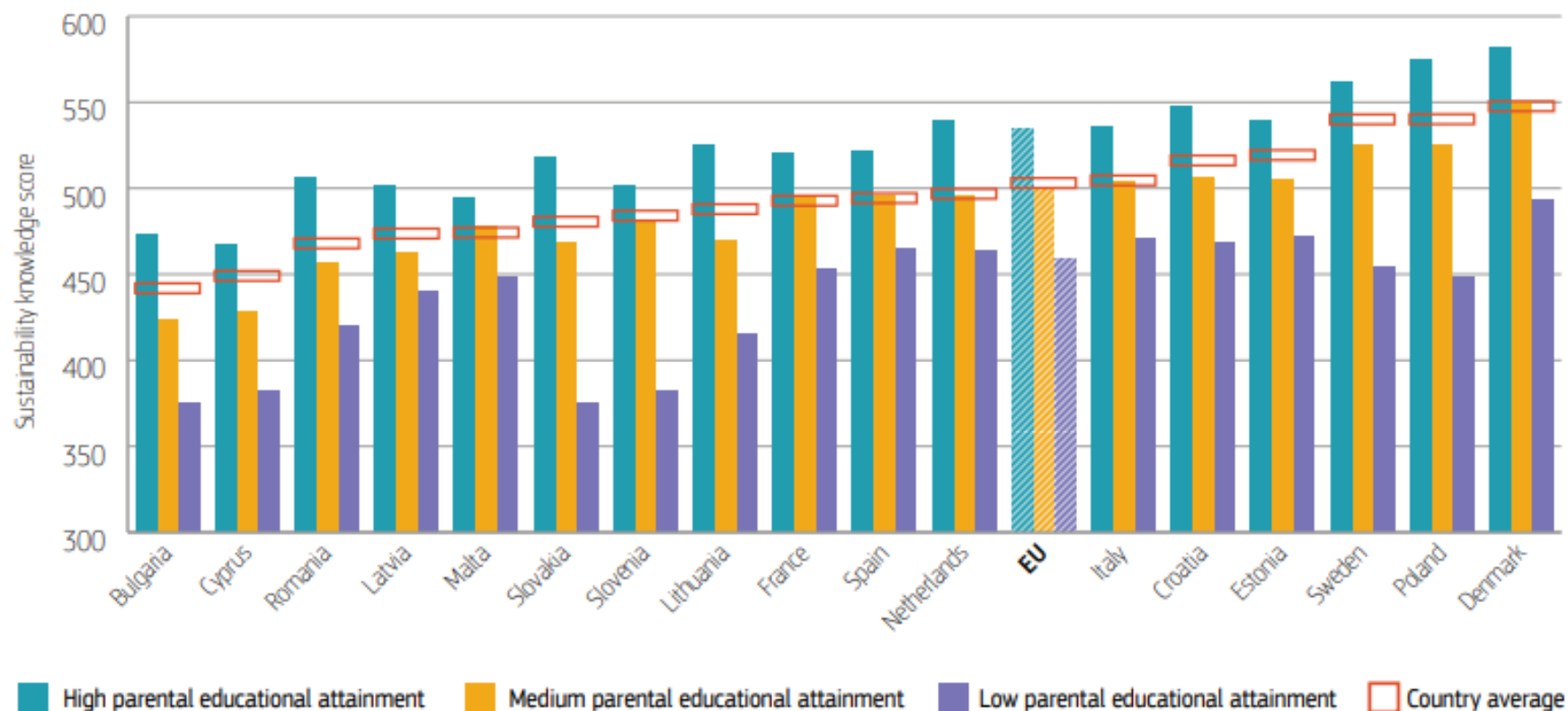


Individual initiative



Sustainability knowledge

Figure 1. **Foundational knowledge about sustainability varies between EU countries and by socio-economic background**



Source: European Commission (Joint Research Centre) calculations, based on a special extraction of data from the 2022 International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS). [Download data](#) [Monitor Toolbox](#) Note: the score has a mean of 500 and a standard deviation of 100 among all participating ICCS 2022 countries; countries are displayed in ascending order according to the country's average score.



Curricula and activities

All EU education systems include the topic of sustainability in their curricula:

- Most often in **interdisciplinary** way
- Sometimes part of **citizenship education**
- Rarely as a **separate subject**

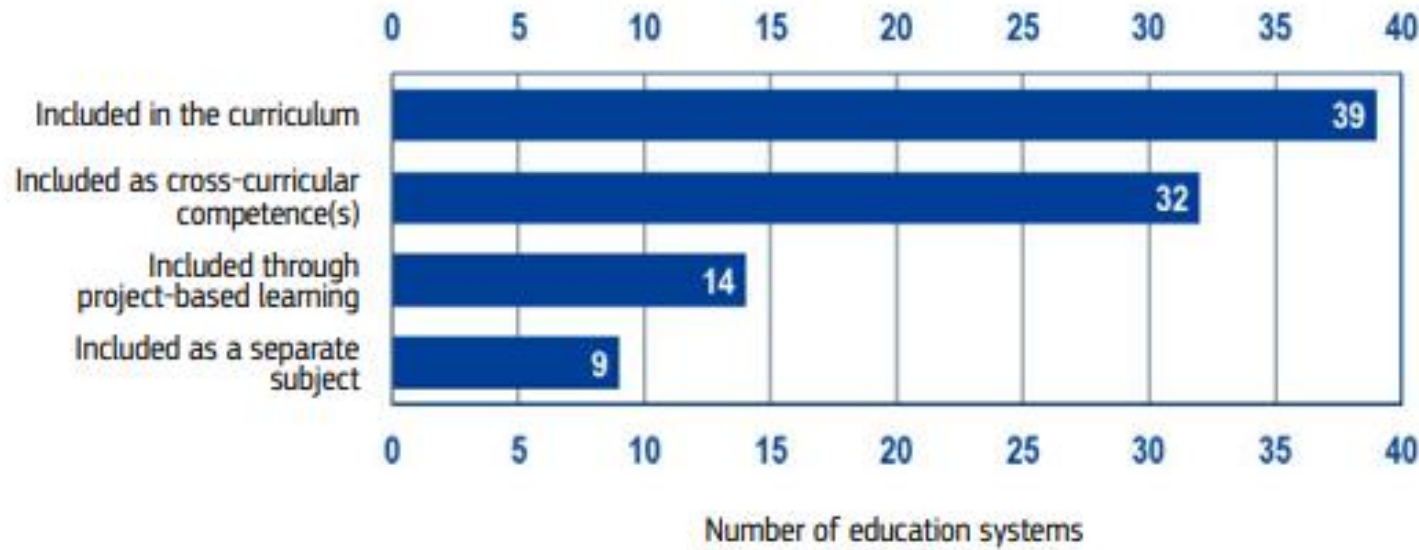
Only 48.0% of schools report that all eighth grade students can take part in activities related to sustainability.

Most prevalent: **low-impact activities** such as recycling (83.9%).

Less prevalent: **action-oriented activities** such as projects involving gathering information outside school, such as interviews in the neighbourhood (13.1%).

Curricula and activities

Figure 1: Number of education systems including sustainability in their curricula (ISCED 1, 24 and/or 34), 2022/2023



Source: Eurydice.

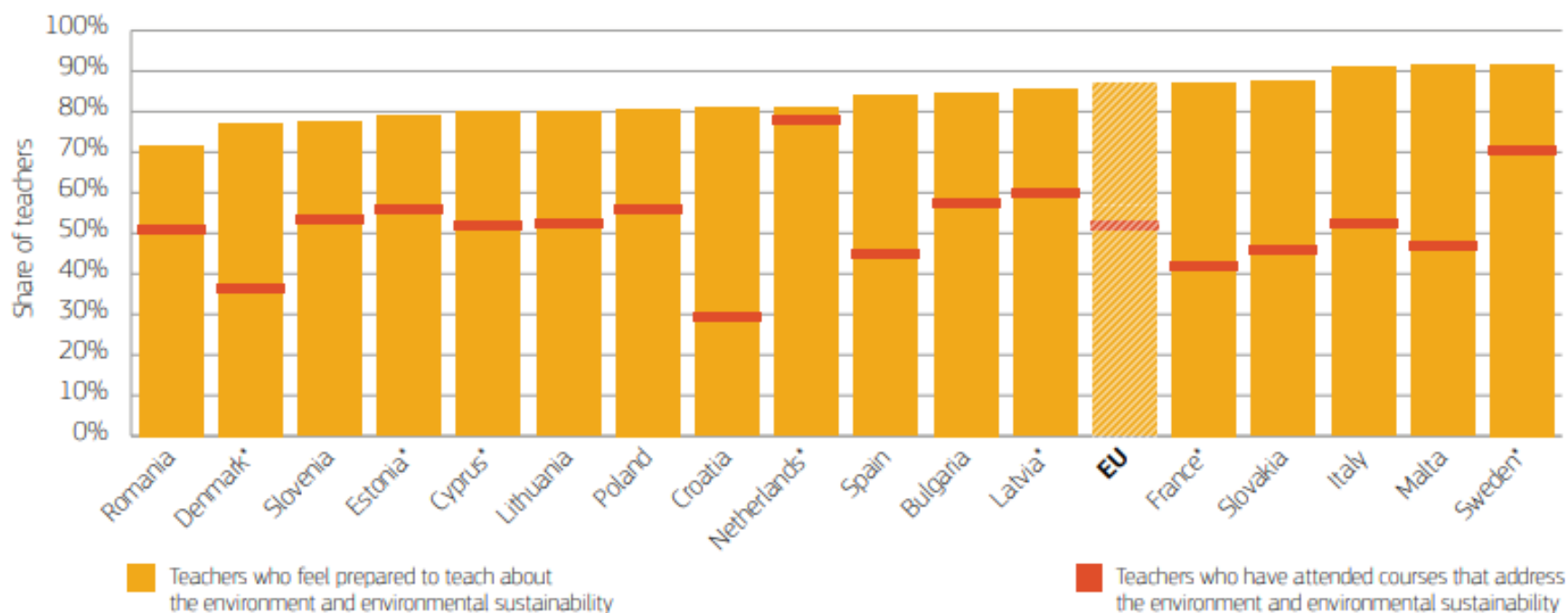
Where?

- science subjects and geography, and to a lesser extent in citizenship education.
- integrated into social studies (e.g. economics), history, technology and art and design.



Are teachers prepared?

Figure 6. Teachers may be underestimating the complexities of learning for sustainability



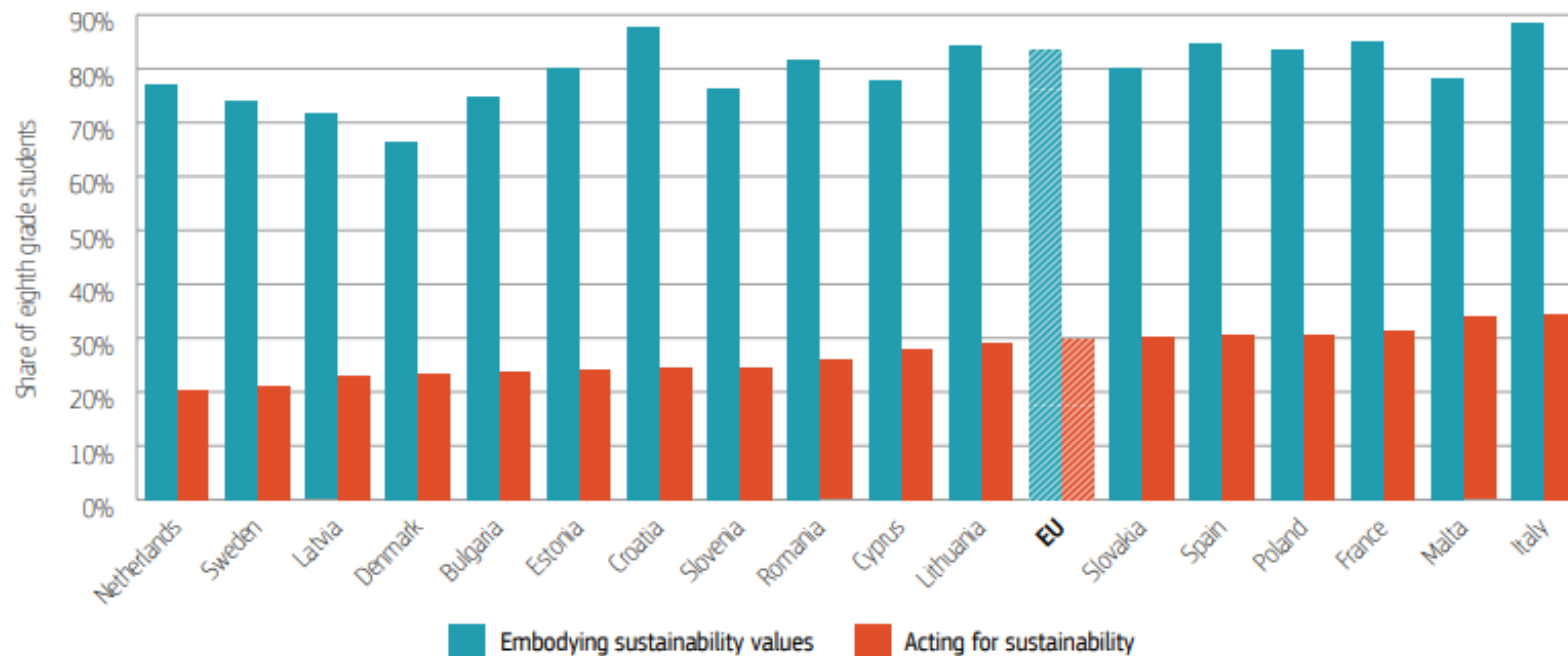
86.8% of teachers feel prepared to teach about sustainability but only about half of all teachers have learned how to do this."

Source: ICCS 2022. [Download data](#) [Monitor Toolbox](#) Note: the indicator captures the share of teachers who feel very well or quite well prepared to teach about the environment and environmental sustainability, and the share of teachers who report having attended courses on these topics as part of pre-service or in-service training; countries not meeting sample participation requirements are marked with an asterisk.



Sustainability values ≠ action

Figure 3. Sustainability values do not go hand in hand with acting for sustainability



About 84% of students value sustainability, but not even 30% take action.

- Most common actions:
- Reducing use of electricity
 - Reducing food waste

Source: European Commission (Joint Research Centre) calculations, based on ICCS 2022. [Download data](#) [Monitor Toolbox](#) Note: the indicator for embodying sustainability values captures the share of students agreeing with the statement that it is important to make changes to one's personal lifestyle to be more environmentally friendly; the indicator for acting for sustainability captures the average percentage of students reporting that they participate in the following activities often: purchasing used instead of new clothing, reducing water use, reducing electricity use, avoiding buying products with plastic packaging, reusing old items that are still in good condition, limiting their use of plastic items, reducing food waste, and repairing items rather than replacing them; countries are displayed in ascending order according to the acting for sustainability indicator.



School Learning Environments for Sustainability



[School learning environments for sustainability in the EU - Publications Office of the EU](#)

completing the
**# EUROPEAN
EDUCATION AREA**



[Creating sustainable school learning environments - Publications Office of the EU](#)



[Case studies on learning environments for sustainability - Publications Office of the EU](#)



[A compendium of good practices for learning environments for sustainability - Publications Office of the EU](#)



School Learning Environments for Sustainability

- **Learning environments:** include the natural environment on school grounds or outside
- **Outdoor lessons** (biodiversity observation, composting, gardening, etc.)
- Nature-based space must be intentionally **integrated into pedagogy**
- **Student participation** in designing and managing green spaces is crucial
- **Equity challenges:** benefits of nature-based learning may not be equally accessible to all students
- Need to support outdoor learning via **sustainable design, funding, whole-school participation, and teacher training**



Outdoor learning

- **Resilience, self-regulation & adaptability**
- **Collaboration and communication**
- **Systems thinking & sustainability competence**
- **Autonomy & initiative**
- **Wellbeing and concentration**



What is needed

- **Intentional design & guided reflection**
- **Whole-school and systemic support**
- **Teacher education & capacity building**
- **Long-term funding and policy backing**
- **Quality assurance mechanisms**



Financial support through Erasmus+



Making school meals enjoyable and healthy for children and our planet.

[SchoolFood4Change](https://www.schoolfood4change.eu/)



Enhance green awareness for through arts and digital tools.

[Welcome to Green Tales Project](https://www.greentalesproject.eu/)



Game-based learning and teaching programme on sustainable development for cross-curricular education in secondary schools.



Any Questions?



[Learning for the green transition and sustainable development | European Education Area \(europa.eu\)](#)



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