

CALL FOR EVIDENCE FOR AN EVALUATION / FITNESS CHECK

TITLE OF THE EVALUATION	European Education Area – interim evaluation
LEAD DG – RESPONSIBLE UNIT	DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture - Unit A.1. Strategy and Investments
INDICATIVE TIMETABLE (PLANNED START DATE AND COMPLETION DATE)	From Q2-2023 to Q2 2025
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	European Education Area portal European Education Area (EEA) Progress Report: Communication , Commission Staff Working Document ; Annex 1-Roadmap of EEA Actions , Annex 2-Co-creation of the EEA , Education and Training Monitor 2022

A. Political context, purpose and scope of the evaluation

Political context

In her Political Guidelines, Commission President von der Leyen made a commitment to making the European Education Area a reality by 2025. Over the course of 2020 and 2021 several policy documents – the 2020 [Communication on Achieving the European Education Area by 2025](#), the February 2021 [Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond \(2021-2030\)](#) and the November 2021 [Council Resolution on the governance structure of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond \(2021-2030\)](#) – set out a comprehensive approach to developing the EEA, as well as the following strategic priorities (objectives) for reform and European cooperation:

- improving quality, equity, inclusion and success for all in education and training
- making lifelong learning and mobility a reality for all
- supporting the green and digital transitions in and through education and training
- enhancing competences and motivation in the education profession (teachers and trainers)
- reinforcing European higher education.

Such aims have a geopolitical dimension, supporting education as part of a stronger Europe in the world.

The comprehensive approach also includes:

- EU-level actions to support Member States in implementation
- mobilisation of EU funds for national reforms and investments in line with EEA objectives
- a reformed governance framework for cooperation and co-creation
- 7 EU-level targets combined with reinforced performance monitoring.

In 2022 the European Commission adopted a [Communication on Progress towards the achievement of the European Education Area](#) as its contribution to the midterm review process throughout 2023.

In its February 2021 Resolution, the Council called on the Commission to provide an evaluation report on the EEA to be published in 2025. This Commission evaluation will feed into the preparation of the next phase, including the Council's review of the strategic framework.

<p>Purpose and scope</p>
<p>The interim evaluation of the EEA (2021-2030), covering 2021 to 2024, aims to provide an assessment of progress in developing the EEA. It will involve thorough analysis of the progress made so far, based on the standard evaluation criteria in the Better Regulation Guidelines, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the continued relevance of the strategic priorities, by considering whether they still address current and future developments and needs, including their adaptability to unexpected developments; • the effectiveness of the measures taken, by looking at the quantitative and/or qualitative effects of EU-level actions and selected national actions and the way the reformed governance structure and EU-level targets have contributed to the effects achieved, and by trying to identify any unexpected or unintended effects; • the efficiency of EU and national activities aimed at creating the EEA, by considering the costs and benefits, as well as the scope for simplification, streamlining and reducing the administrative burden; • the internal coherence of the approach towards creating the EEA, including trying to identify gaps and overlaps (e.g. in EEA actions, working methods, governance structure or EU-level targets), and external coherence with other policies and strategies with similar/complementary objectives; • EU added value resulting from cooperation and EU-level actions to create the EEA compared to what could reasonably have been achieved by Member States acting alone. <p>Lessons learned from the evaluation will deepen the Commission’s understanding and contribute to its evaluation report that will prepare the next phase until 2030. On the basis of that report, the Council will review the strategic framework – including EU-level targets, governance structure and working methods – and make any necessary adjustments for the second (2026-2030) cycle, as appropriate, to adapt to the reality and needs of the EEA or any other major developments in the EU.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">B. Better regulation</p>
<p>Consultation strategy</p>
<p>The evaluation is subject to the Commission’s Better Regulation rules. A consultation strategy will be developed to gather evidence and input from all interested parties, as set out below.</p> <p>The 2023 EEA midterm review is a process of listening, dialogue and joint reflection with Member States, the Council, the European Parliament and other EU institutions, social partners, civil society, and other stakeholders, to assess achievements and draw lessons from the first years of creating the EEA. The EEA Progress Report adopted by the College on 18 November 2022 is the Commission’s contribution to this EEA midterm review process, suggesting issues to focus on during the joint reflection throughout 2023.</p> <p>In 2024, the midterm review process will be followed by an online public consultation, based on a questionnaire to gather assessment, data and evidence and to ensure that the views of a broad range of respondents are collected. The public consultation will be accessible on the Commission’s central public consultations page, the Have Your Say web portal, and other relevant portals. It will run for at least 12 weeks and will be carried out in all official EU languages. Eight weeks after its closure, the Commission will publish a factual summary report on the consultation page.</p> <p>Targeted consultations will also be conducted, involving key stakeholders, to get their assessment of EU and national activities aimed at creating the EEA and their (expected) impacts. These may include surveys/questionnaires, interviews, meetings, workshops and focus groups. They may also include outreach adapted to specific stakeholders.</p> <p>The Commission will prepare a synopsis report – as an annex to its evaluation report – on the results of all consultation activities that will feed into the evaluation (including this call for evidence, the 2023 midterm review process, the 2024 online public and further targeted consultations).</p>
<p>Why we are consulting?</p>
<p>The aim of the consultations is to collect information, expertise and views from interested parties to arrive at an evidence-based and measured judgment of how much progress has been made in creating the EEA.</p>
<p>Target audience</p>
<p>Contributions from the main education and training stakeholders, the general public and any parties affected by or having an interest in European cooperation in education and training are welcome.</p> <p>Stakeholders include (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • national and regional/local authorities

- learners and educators in all education and training sectors (formal, non-formal or informal)
- sector-specific or horizontal stakeholder organisations and networks in higher education, school education, adult education, and vocational education and training
- organisations and networks representing learners or educators
- non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society
- international organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Council of Europe, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- other relevant bodies or citizens.

Data collection and methodology

An external contractor will carry out assignments that will support the Commission in conducting the evaluation.

The methods used to gather and analyse evidence and make the assessment will follow the general principles and minimum standards set by the Commission's Better Regulation Guidelines.

Several documents on the progress made in creating the EEA are already available to use in the evaluation, such as:

- the 2022 [Communication on Progress towards the achievement of the European Education Area](#); the [Commission Staff Working Document](#) accompanying the Communication; [Annex 1 – Roadmap of EEA Actions](#), [Annex 2 – Co-creation of the EEA](#)
- European Commission's annual analysis of how education and training systems develop across the EU ([Education and Training Monitor 2022](#))
- European Education Area: Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the EEA and beyond (2021-2030) – Working Groups (2021-2025) [Periodic report](#): November 2021-March 2023.