

Pilot project on European Schools Alliances and its contribution to citizenship education, democratic competences and European values

2026/2713(RSP) - 08/10/2026 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 443 votes to 98, with 47 abstentions, a resolution on the pilot project on European Schools Alliances.

The forthcoming pilot on European Schools Alliances, announced in the Commission work programme 2026, aims to strengthen structured cooperation between schools across the EU, moving beyond project-based cooperation towards more sustained and system-level collaboration in school education.

Under the Erasmus+ 2026 annual work programme, European Partnerships for School Development will support cooperation between schools, school authorities and other relevant actors in testing innovative pedagogical methods and in helping develop structured, sustainable and accessible cooperation and mobility in school education, including under the forthcoming European Schools Alliances initiative.

Significant disparities persist across regions, including rural, remote and border areas, islands and outermost regions, affecting the capacity of schools and local and regional authorities to engage in European cooperation. Schools with fewer resources and learners with fewer opportunities should be able to benefit fully from European education initiatives.

According to Eurobarometer surveys only 42 % of 16–30-year-olds understand a great deal or a fair amount about the EU, and only 30 % feel they have a say over decisions affecting the EU, underlining the need to strengthen active citizenship, democratic participation, critical thinking and resilience to disinformation from an early age.

Parliament welcomed the Commission's forthcoming pilot on European Schools Alliances initiative, which was rolled out under the Erasmus+ annual work programme in 2026. It considered it an opportunity to strengthen cooperation in school education across the EU.

It stressed that the initiative should pursue a balanced set of objectives, combining improved educational outcomes, stronger basic skills, innovation in teaching and learning, mobility opportunities, social inclusion, democratic resilience and preparation for future skill needs.

The Commission is called on to:

- ensure that citizenship education, democratic competences, media literacy, critical thinking and knowledge of the EU and its values are integral components of the pilot, including through participatory and experiential learning approaches that enable pupils to engage actively with democratic processes and European cooperation;
- **minimise administrative burdens** and complexity for participating schools, particularly through proportionate reporting requirements, simplified procedures and clear, practical guidance for schools, school authorities and local actors;

- **promote synergies** between the pilot and existing EU funding programmes and initiatives, such as Erasmus+, national and regional partnership plans, the European Social Fund Plus, and the Youth Guarantee.

The resolution stressed that participation must be **genuinely inclusive** and called for targeted measures to enable schools in disadvantaged or low-capacity contexts, as well as learners with fewer opportunities to become involved. It encouraged the pilot to support accessible and inclusive pupil and teacher mobility, including through group exchanges, collaborative teaching, peer learning, digital cooperation and the exchange of innovative and inclusive teaching practices.

Parliament called for **clear monitoring and evaluation** criteria from the outset, covering participation, inclusion, learning outcomes, mobility uptake, administrative efficiency and impact on basic skill levels, including civic competences.

It stressed that European cooperation in school education should complement and support national systems, while fully respecting Member State competences in the field of education.

Members emphasised that the pilot's design and implementation should involve close cooperation with the Member States and relevant national and regional authorities, schools, teachers and other relevant stakeholders, in order to ensure alignment with existing education systems and full implementation and ownership by the beneficiaries.

Lastly, Parliament requested to be regularly informed during the preparatory phase and implementation of the pilot, including through timely exchanges on objectives, governance, selection criteria and interim results.