EU STEM Coalition General Assembly

April 2025, The Hague

April 23rd

On the 23rd of April, 2025, The EU STEM Coalition General Assembly took place in The Hague, The Netherlands. This event gave coalition members the chance to meet in person so as to consider the state of STEM education in Europe, and address matters of internal relevance to the functioning of the network. Below, each of the events which took place during this general assembly are reported upon.
To see the full collection of presentations used during this general assembly, click here.

Talk show
After short welcoming remarks from the EU STEM Coalition's chairwoman Beatrice Boots, a live talk show brought together leading voices in STEM to explore the future of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and policy across Europe. Moderated by Derk Marseille, with co-moderation by Bouke Bosgraaf (Platform Talent voor Technologie), the session featured expert insights from Mervi Asikainen (Vice-Cair of the board of LUMA, Finland and lecturer at Department of Physics and Mathematics University of Eastern Finland, Finland), Professor Hanne Deprez (Professor integrated STEM education at KU Leuven, Belgium), Amaia Esquisabel Alegría (Director of Scientific Policy at the Basque Government's Department of Science, Universities, and Innovation, Spain), and Victoria Cummings (Senior Manager, Workforce Development & EU projects at SEMI, Belgium).
The conversation moved fluidly between big-picture thinking and practical actions, addressing why advancing the STEM ecosystem is crucial, what key challenges are holding it back—such as outdated curricula and teacher shortages—and how to implement meaningful change through collaboration, innovation, and long-term vision. Speakers stressed the importance of shifting mindsets, strengthening networks, and promoting inclusive, cross-disciplinary approaches. The talk concluded with reflections on the role of the EU STEM Coalition and clear calls for coordinated efforts, data sharing, and actionable next steps to build a resilient and attractive STEM landscape for future generations.

Members meeting
The members meeting was hosted with the intention to update the members of the EU STEM coalition on its internal as well as external central activities. The topics covered were as follows:

- CoVE STEM Europe – CoVE STEM Europe is a European project funded by the Erasmus Plus program. This project brings together industry and education organizations from seven different European countries to help meet the skills shortage through STEM education. This will be done by developing education in the fields of the Green and digital transitions, as well as by involving otherwise underrepresented groups in STEM
    - In addition, part of CoVE STEM Europe's task is to support the EU STEM Coalition, meaning that activities such as general assemblies, taskforce meetings, and policy advocacy will be funded by the project. Further, we urge members to continue the sharing of best practice examples, as this activity will be up scaled through CoVE STEM Europe.
- Forward Looking Project – The secretariat of the EU STEM Coalition is supporting an application to an Erasmus Plus Forward Looking Project, along with the coalition member ThinkYoung. This project is aimed at popularizing technical education in Europe among students.
    - The content generated by this project will be tested by pilot programs, and translated into policy recommendations.
- NextLevel – The secretariat has additionally applied for an Erasmus Plus capacity building project called NextLevel. This project will support the development of technical education in Kosovo and Albania by contributing to the establishment of EQF level 5 curricula. NextLevel will also facilitate student exchange between its Western Balkan member states and a German industry partner working in the field of electrical engineering.
    - NextLevel has in its consortium CINOP, as the lead partner, PTvT, University Kadri Zeka, University of Vlora, Schulz, and the technical education school of Kamenica.
- Expansion – Lastly, it was noted that the EU STEM Coalition had considerably expanded since the last general assembly. Today, the Coalition encompasses 24 different European Union countries, as well as many of the European neighborhood countries. As a coalition intended to represent the stakeholders of STEM education in Europe, this expansion is a positive development, and one which the secretariat will continue to pursue.

Communication

After having our members meeting, Wendel, Derk, and Beatrice took the floor to talk about the communication of the EU STEM Coalition. What is still missing from our website? How can we increase our reach? What do members need to improve their own communication? These questions were addressed during this session.

With a topic of users and engagement, they presented several numbers and statistics to the coalition. They explained that the EU STEM Coalition's social media is doing well and is still growing in followers. Additionally, they presented information on how long users would visit the website, which pages were most looked at, how they find the EU STEM Coalition's website, and more.

Then, Derk opened to floor to attendees to share their needs and wants from the coalition from a communication point of view. Asking whether members would be willing to keep contributing to the website with insightful stories, initiatives, and best practices.

Presentation Ukraine

Nataliya Limonova, from Edtech Ukraine was next to present. During her presentation, Nataliya described the exceedingly difficult circumstances in which teachers and students have to work in Ukraine. Russia's war in the country has forced many schools to operate underground in bomb shelters, making even the simple act of attending classes a struggle in a country which is already deprived of resources due to the invasion.

Nataliya further described how the wartime context has necessitated changes in the educational curricula to reflect the new needs of Ukraine. Students now learn how to pilot drones and defend from cyber-attacks, alongside other topics relevant to the defence of their country. Nataliya played a video for the Coalition which helped to illustrate the grim situation. This video can be seen here.

Next, Nataliya introduced the work being done by Edtech Ukraine to continue developing STEM education in Ukraine by helping to provide resources when possible, and connecting relevant actors in the field.

Lastly, Nataliya introduced to coalition ways in which groups within the European Union could help support Ukraine during Russia's war of aggression. She described how building ties to Europe is an important way to directly support Ukraine, as well as to show the people of Ukraine that the West stands with them, and they are not forgotten. With this message in mind, The EU STEM Coalition signed a memorandum of cooperation and understanding with Edtech Ukraine, thereby committing to continue supporting one another, no matter the circumstances.

Techkwadraat and STO

Two (senior) project leaders of Platform Talent voor Technologie, Nienke Steenks and Lieke Meijer, presented the work they do, to showcase the current programmes on STEM education in the host country of the General Assembly, the Netherlands. They started out by describing the situation regarding STEM in the Netherlands. Fewer students are choosing STEM profiles. This is largely because young people are more likely to choose technology-related paths when they've had positive experiences with it, feel confident in their abilities, have some relevant skills, and see these careers as aligning with their identity. Research shows that students are more inclined toward science and technology when they engage in hands-on activities and clearly understand future career opportunities. In response, educators are developing adaptable, impactful educational strategies based on proven practices.

Project leader Nienke Steenks presented the Sterk Techniekonderwijs (STO) programme, which aims to strengthen technical education across the Netherlands by making it sustainable, widely accessible, and of high quality for pre-vocational (pre-VET) students. STO is active in 74 regions, where pre-VET schools, vocational education institutions (VET), regional businesses, and local governments collaborate closely to align education with regional needs and opportunities.
Senior project leader Lieke Meijer elaborated on the vision of Techkwadraat, which strives to provide every child—both in and outside the classroom—with access to high-quality STEM education. This initiative is a broad collaboration involving Platform Talent voor Technologie, various ministries, and regional networks made up of schools, businesses, museums, science centres, libraries, and other educational and cultural organizations. Together, they work to create inspiring learning environments that foster talent and curiosity in science and technology from an early age.

Poster carousel
All participants at the general assembly were asked to fill in a format which outlines the profile of the organization which they represent. They then printed their profiles, and brought them along to the GA.
During the poster carousel event, members were asked to introduce their organizations using their posters. All attendees were grouped into breakout groups in which each person was given four minutes to give an introduction, then one minute for questions.
This event was intended to help build a better understanding among the coalition members of which other organizations are in the coalition, and thereby promote cohesion. The posters used during this event are linked at the end of this report.

April 24th

Position Paper
The secretariat of the EU STEM Coalition is in the process of writing a position paper responding to the new European STEM Education Strategic Plan. This paper has been written in cooperation with a number of the coalition's members, and addresses the following topics:

- The need for a more bottom up approach in supporting European STEM education.
- The need for better data and available information on the individual circumstances in the European member states pertaining to the status of STEM education.
- The importance of diversity and inclusion when supporting STEM education.

The topics which the paper focuses on were introduced to the attendees. Following presentations on each topic, attendees were given the chance to provide feedback and additional comments to the points made. A conversation then took place, facilitated by Mentimeter, in which more general ideas surrounding what should be included in the paper were discussed.

National STEM Profiles

Mikkel presented his idea of making national STEM profiles providing a holistic view of the STEM education in every European country. He did mention that although this was an idea of his, Commission representative Maria Podlasek-Ziegler from DG EAC mentioned the day before already that the Commission is working on these profiles. Furthermore, he stated that we should look into these profiles and see if there are any additions we would like to see.
The organizational profiles used during this event can be viewed here.

Looking Forward

During the presentation on the future direction of the EU STEM Coalition, we focused on identifying priorities for the remainder of 2025 and beyond. Matt and Fleur opened the session by introducing several proposed initiatives. One key idea was to develop a white paper addressing the Teachers Agenda, which is scheduled to be published by the European Commission in 2026. The purpose of this white paper would be to contribute expert insights, policy recommendations, and practical considerations from the STEM education community to ensure that the Teachers Agenda reflects both the needs and aspirations of educators working in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The topic of teachers and how to provide them with the right tools to be good teachers was also much discussed during the talk show the day before. In addition to the white paper, another initiative presented was the organization of a joint event in collaboration with SEMI and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This event, which is scheduled to take place after the summer, will focus on the theme of inclusion and diversity within the semiconductor industry specifically.
Following the presentation of these planned activities, we invited all participants to actively contribute their own ideas and priorities. Using Mentimeter, attendees were asked to share their thoughts and suggestions in real time. To guide this input, we framed the discussion around three major themes that are currently shaping the STEM landscape in Europe and beyond: inclusion and diversity, the green transition, and digitalisation. These themes represent key societal and technological shifts that will continue to influence the demand for STEM skills and the ways in which these skills are developed and applied.
The feedback will help steer the strategic direction of the EU STEM Coalition's activities moving forward and will also inform the planning and implementation of initiatives under the CoVE STEM EUROPE framework. By gathering diverse perspectives and aligning our efforts with the priorities of our network members, we aim to ensure that the Coalition remains responsive, relevant, and impactful in addressing the challenges and opportunities in STEM education and workforce development.

Evaluation

In conclusion, we, the secretariat, are grateful for everyone's eager participation in this general assembly. Having the opportunity to discuss the important topics covered during the two days which we all spend in The Hague provides a valuable chance to gather input and perspectives from Europe's foremost experts in STEM education. Doing so is essential for determining the strategies and focus of the coalition.

The next general assembly will be hosted in November 2025. Further information on the next general assembly will be shared via the EU STEM Coalition's newsletter, as well as other coalition media platforms.