EU STEM Coalition General Assembly
November 2025, Brussels

In Memoriam – Beatrice Boots

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the loss of our colleague, founder, and beloved Chairwoman, Beatrice Boots. For 25 years, Beatrice was an inspiring force within our community: warm, committed, and always focused on people. She shaped programmes such as Jet-Net, Universum, and the EU STEM Coalition with her conviction that inspiring young people in STEM begins with discovery, experience, and genuine curiosity.

The origins and growth of the EU STEM Coalition, founded in 2016, are deeply connected to her vision. Beatrice brought together partners from across Europe to collaborate, exchange knowledge, and strengthen STEM strategies. Under her guidance, the Coalition developed into a respected European network whose spirit of openness and cooperation reflects her values. Even during her illness, she remained closely involved in our work—joining us at the General Assembly in Brussels in November, where she deeply enjoyed the discussions and the shared sense of purpose.

As we honour her memory, we reaffirm our commitment to carrying forward the work she believed in so deeply. Together, we will continue to build on the foundation she laid, keeping the Coalition active and future oriented as Europe enters a new era of STEM initiatives. The secretariat—led within PTvT's international team by Rolf and Fleur —will ensure continuity and maintain the momentum she helped create. Beatrice passed away peacefully in Bali, surrounded by her family and close loved ones. We are profoundly grateful for everything she gave to our network, to STEM education, and to the many people she inspired.

Rolf Schreuder, Fleur Korte

EU STEM COALITION

Co-funded by the European Union

November 5th

The second General Assembly of 2025 took place in Brussels. Although the day began less than ideally, with drone activity reported in and around Brussels Airport, most members arrived on time. And many with entertaining accounts of their unexpected travel adventures. With the programme scheduled to start at 14:00, participants had ample opportunity to reconnect and catch up before the formal sessions commenced.
To see the full collection of presentation used during this General Assembly, click here for Day 1, and for Day 2 part 1 and part 2.

Updates from the EU STEM Coalition
Once everyone was seated, the programme opened with brief welcoming remarks from Rolf Schreuder and Fleur Korte, followed by updates on the network's activities over the past six months. Joan Vandehoek provided an overview of progress of the Centre of Vocational Excellence STEM Europe since their kick-off at the April General Assembly. Members were then invited to help identify new contacts in countries where the Coalition is not yet well represented, including Ireland, Iceland, Cyprus, Poland, Romania, and Lithuania.
An update was also given on the Coalition's position paper responding to the European Commission's STEM Education Strategic Plan. Following a feedback session at the April GA, Matthew Coates and Fleur Korte revised and published the final version, which has been well received by the Commission and other stakeholders, strengthening the Coalition's voice in EU STEM policy discussions. Furthermore, the event '' Accelerating Europe's Tech Advantage: Union of Skills for Chips, Tech and Inclusion'' organised October 2nd with SEMI, the OECD, and the EU STEM Coalition on inclusion in high-tech sectors was highlighted.
As a response to this event, the Coalition received an invitation from Executive Vice-President Mînzatu for a meeting with her Cabinet. During this meeting, Cabinet member Vanessa Debiais-Sainton asked the EU STEM Coalition to come up with two-pager with STEM policy recommendations which we get to present to the cabinet.
Finally, the Secretariat reported on improved communication reach, including higher visibility on LinkedIn and the website, and encouraged members to share noteworthy initiatives for wider dissemination.

Opportunities for upcoming calls
Although the Erasmus+ Work Programme 2026 had not yet been released during the GA, several upcoming calls and policy initiatives from the European Commission are expected to be of relevance to the EU STEM Coalition. For example, the call for the European Skills High-Level Board and the European STEM Executive Panel, which will offer opportunities to contribute expertise directly to EU-level policy making.

Another opportunity under consideration is the possibility of applying for a new Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE), which would become the second CoVE with all partners being members of the EU STEM Coalition, following the CoVE STEM Europe. Finally, the upcoming call for STEM Education Centres was discussed. The Secretariat took stock of potential interest among Coalition members, noting that a significant number expressed willingness to participate.

Installation working groups

The meeting then moved to the establishment of the new working groups. This was the inaugural session for all groups, which focus on the themes "AI in Education," "Primary and Secondary STEM Education," and the newly launched "Education & Industry Collaboration." Each group was tasked with defining its theme, formulating a mission statement, identifying initial concrete activities, and selecting vice-chairs to support the chairs in their coordination roles. After an hour of productive discussion, the groups reconvened in the plenary room to present their initial outcomes. The feedback session, moderated by Fleur Korte, provided the three chairs with an opportunity to share the key insights and proposals developed during their first working-group meetings.

After concluding the session, participants gathered for a group photo before closing the day's programme. The agenda for day two was briefly reviewed, after which participants departed for the informal networking dinner.

November 6th

Technopolis research on Promoting STEM education in Schools

On the second day, the General Assembly with a presentation by Rebecca Allinson and Dovydas Caturianas of Technopolis. The EU STEM Coalition was fortunate to see the premier of the research on promoting STEM education in Schools, commissioned by DG EAC. Due to the extensiveness of the research, they had the whole morning to present their study findings, which included challenges, trends, EU dimensions, and recommendations on school, national, and EU level. They conducted this research in all 27 member states, and 6 non-EU countries, writing a separate country report for each. Challenges and trends faced in one country often also were experienced in others, stating the situation of STEM is similar in many EU countries. Starting with the challenges, such as governance fragmentation, teacher shortages, curriculum rigidity, infrastructure gaps, underuse of non-formal learning, and weak evidence/evaluation. All challenges were accompanied with good examples of initiatives come across during the research.

Update from Hungary

The first country update of the day was from the Hungarian STEAM platform, presented by Zoltan Marton. He highlighted the various activities of their organisation ranging from talent development and teacher professional development, to educational research and building ecosystems. Further, the EU STEM Coalition learned how the Hungarian STEAM platform builds ecosystems and partnerships with a quadruple helix approach, adding the ''society'' element to the already existing government-education-business triple helix.

Technopolis research on Promoting STEM education in Schools

The second part of the Technopolis research covered the role of the EU in STEM. What role can the EU play in driving strategic coordination, policy alignment, and investing in STEM Education? Opportunities were presented for the Commission's STEM Education Strategic Plan to connect national programmes and establish shared objectives, as well as developing common monitoring tools and reporting frameworks. Other opportunities for stronger coordination were proposed to be more EU sustainable funding models and aid capacity-building for smaller countries and rural areas. The audience was tasked to divide their imaginary budget of 10 million euros amongst the topics of ''governance and strategy alignment'', ''teacher recruitment and professional development'', ''equity and inclusion'', ''curriculum reform and interdisciplinary'', and ''infrastructure and digital tools''. By far the winner in received funding would be the second topic teacher recruitment and professional development.

Update from Scandinavia

Mikkel Bohm from Astra introduced the idea of a Nordic STEM Coalition, as the talks are ongoing to create this platform with eight Nordic countries. Then, Malin Thunborg from Teknikcollege Sweden presented the Swedish STEM Strategy, introduced earlier this year by the Swedish government. The strategy spans the entire education system - from preschool to doctoral studies - and outlines key focus areas, key actions, and strategic goals. A dedicated STEM delegation has also been appointed to oversee implementation and will deliver a report in December 2027.

The strategy's focus areas include fostering early interest and ensuring high-quality teaching, creating attractive educational pathways, and promoting gender equality and broader participation. Its goals set targets for mathematics performance, enrolment in upper-secondary STEM programmes, and growth in higher-education STEM fields. Measures include strengthening foundational STEM skills, enhancing teacher training, supporting inclusion, and advancing vocational education and lifelong learning.

Technopolis research on Promoting STEM education in Schools

The final part of the Technopolis presentation focused on recommendations and a discussion with the network. The report encourages adopting a whole-school STEM approach, empowering and connecting teachers, and fostering innovation and inclusion in the classroom. National and regional recommendations include developing comprehensive STEM strategies and investing in teachers and learning environments. Another key recommendation is to embed systematic monitoring and evaluation within STEM initiatives. At the EU level, Technopolis recommends strengthening coordination across programmes such as Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, the RRF, Digital Europe, and others. It also highlights the value of developing a European STEM competence framework and reinforcing peer-learning opportunities and networks. Similar to the national level, improved monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are also advised at the EU level.

Keynote Prof. Louise Archer on Science Capital

After the lunch break, Professor Louise Archer from UCL delivered a presentation on her research regarding inclusive STEM using the science capital approach. She addressed the issues of low interest in STEM amongst young students and highlighted how students' engagement with STEM is strongly shaped by their everyday experiences, social networks, confidence, and sense of belonging. The Science Capital framework provides a way to understand and address these differences by focusing on how schools can recognise, value, and build on the diverse forms of knowledge and cultural capital that students bring. Professor Archer emphasised that creating more inclusive STEM environments requires shifting teaching practices, widening representations of who can succeed in STEM, and fostering strong connections between students' lives and STEM learning. She also presented several case studies in which she has followed several students from the age of 10 to 21 and how their attitude towards STEM evolved.

Inclusive talent motivation models

Professor Louise Archer opened with an inspiring presentation on Science Capital, showing how family, identity and daily experiences shape young people's engagement with STEM. Rolf Schreuder then introduced the 'STEM Mentality Model' as a complementary way to understand student motivations. The model identifies five motivational profiles (Explorers, Creative Makers, Innovators, Societal Applicators and Doers) focusing not on demographics but on what drives students, such as curiosity, creativity or societal relevance. It is currently being revised.

Rolf noted parallels with Sweden's new attitudes-to-technology segmentation. Together, these frameworks underline that there is no single "STEM learner," but a diverse range of identities and motivations. As Europe moves towards a coordinated STEM Education Strategy, the GA discussions highlighted growing interest in combining these models to support more inclusive outreach, stronger policy design and learning environments where more young people can see themselves in STEM.

STEM Education Strategic Plan with European Commission

The last item on the agenda was a conversation with Francesca Maltauro, Deputy-Head of Unit of Digital Education at DG EAC and one of the key authors of the STEM Education Strategic Plan of the Commission. Francesca explained the policy context of the strategic plan and reflected on the learnings and insights it is built on. She also highlighted the Commission's integrated approach and several related initiatives that align closely with the STEM Education Strategic Plan, primarily the Action Plan on Basic Skills. She noted that additional plans for VET and digital education also fall within the broader framework of the Union of Skills.

The network is eagerly awaiting the announcement of the so-called STEM Education Centres. Policy expert Maria Podlasek-Ziegler from DG EAC explained how this plan is being developed. Once the call is published, we will closely monitor the opportunities for our members. Participants raised several insightful questions, allowing us to explore multiple aspects of the plan. However, many details could not yet be shared, as the Erasmus+ guide for 2026 had not been published at the time of our meeting.

This exchange between the EU STEM Coalition and the Commission was highly valuable for both sides. Effective policymaking and implementation must continue to learn from one another. That is how we can make smart and rapid progress toward our shared goals.

Note: At the time of writing, the Erasmus+ Work Programme and Guide for 2026 had not yet been published. As a result, some details referenced in the discussion may have since evolved or become clearer following their release.

Wrap up and conclusions

After two inspiring and insightful days, Rolf closed the General Assembly with his concluding remarks. The EU STEM Coalition then continued the fruitful discussions in a more informal setting, coming toghether over drinks and light refreshments to reflect, connect, and exchange ideas.