



*Employers entrusted to deliver
Sustainability Growth Innovation*

Position Paper

SGI Europe key messages on the EU Teachers and Trainers Agenda

27 May 2026

Introduction

SGI Europe has contributed to discussions supporting the preparation of the future EU Teachers and Trainers Agenda through participation in stakeholder consultations organised on behalf of the European Commission. This paper reflects exchanges with SGI Europe members and their experience as employers and providers of services of general interest, including in education and training.

SGI Europe supports efforts to strengthen the attractiveness and sustainability of the teaching profession. At the same time, it considers that any future EU initiative in this area must fully respect the diversity of national education systems, public-sector employment frameworks and collective bargaining arrangements. From a cross-sectoral public services perspective, the key challenge is not only to address the situation of teachers themselves, but also to take account of the wider governance, workforce and investment conditions within which education systems operate.

For SGI Europe, the added value of the Teachers and Trainers Agenda should therefore lie in supporting evidence, cooperation and investment, while fully respecting national competences, social dialogue autonomy and established public-sector frameworks.

Respect national competence and public-sector bargaining coherence

SGI Europe underlines that core aspects of teachers' working conditions, including pay, working time, pensions and employment status, fall primarily within national competence and are governed by national legislation and collective bargaining. In many Member States, these issues are negotiated across the public sector as a whole, reflecting established institutional balances that ensure coherence, equity and predictability in public employment.

Teachers' working conditions cannot be assessed in isolation from wider public-sector governance and labour-market frameworks. Where integrated collective bargaining arrangements apply, treating teachers as a separate category at EU level risks fragmenting national systems and weakening the coherence of existing social dialogue structures.

It is therefore essential that the Teachers and Trainers Agenda clearly distinguishes between EU-level analysis and support, and matters that must remain anchored in national social dialogue. EU action should focus on enabling conditions and evidence, while avoiding prescriptive approaches on core employment conditions, in line with subsidiarity, proportionality and social partner autonomy.

Avoid profession-by-profession fragmentation

Discussions during the consultation process showed that many challenges affecting teachers' working lives are not unique to the teaching profession. Shortages, workload pressure and administrative burden are often linked to broader developments across public services, including demographic change, labour-market tightness and evolving organisational demands.

In a number of Member States, teachers are part of integrated public-sector employment and governance frameworks where working conditions are developed alongside those of other professions. SGI Europe therefore considers that the Teachers and Trainers Agenda should avoid profession-specific approaches that could fragment existing systems or create unintended spillovers across the wider public sector.

Strengthen social dialogue without EU substitution

SGI Europe believes that social dialogue remains the primary and legitimate channel for addressing teachers' working conditions, in line with national traditions and practices. This approach is consistent with the 2023 Council Recommendation on strengthening social dialogue in the European Union, which reaffirms the role of autonomous social partners while explicitly respecting national competences and collective bargaining autonomy.

Against this background, the Teachers and Trainers Agenda should support and recognise social dialogue, without substituting or pre-empting national processes. EU-level action is most effective when it focuses on enabling conditions, mutual learning and capacity-building, without interfering in the substance or level of collective bargaining.

Investment, capacity and coherence: focusing EU value-added

SGI Europe considers that challenges affecting teachers' working conditions are closely linked to investment capacity and long-term planning in education systems. Persistent shortages, workload pressure and limited support functions often reflect constraints in staffing, infrastructure and training budgets, rather than shortcomings in regulatory frameworks alone. Sustainable improvement therefore depends on predictable and adequately resourced public investment, anchored in national priorities and governance structures.

Improving the attractiveness of the teaching profession requires attention not only to teachers themselves, but also to the wider organisational, governance and financing conditions within which schools and training institutions operate. This reflects a broader challenge faced across many public services.

Digitalisation illustrates this link. While digital tools are now integral to education systems, their impact on teachers' working lives depends largely on how they are resourced, governed and supported. Where investment in training, support staff or infrastructure is insufficient, digitalisation can increase administrative burden and workload rather than improve teaching conditions. Existing social partner frameworks, including the 2020 Framework Agreement on Digitalisation, already provide a sufficient basis to manage these transitions within national systems.

Recent EU-level analysis reinforces the central role of investment. The proposed Council Recommendation on human capital identifies growing shortages in education as a structural risk for Europe's skills base and competitiveness. The Joint Employment Report 2026 similarly points to persistent labour shortages and skills gaps, including in education, and underlines the importance of coherent investment strategies and national reform capacity.

In this context, the European Semester can contribute to policy coherence and visibility for education and teaching workforce challenges, while fully respecting national competences. As recalled in SGI Europe's position on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2028–2034, any stronger link between EU funding and the Semester should preserve subsidiarity, proportionality and long-term investment planning, particularly for services of general interest such as education. Used in this way, the Semester can help align education, skills and labour-market priorities with available EU funding instruments, without introducing additional conditionality or sector-specific prescriptions.

Taken together, these elements suggest that the added value of the EU Teachers and Trainers Agenda lies in supporting investment capacity, coherence and anticipation, rather than in defining new standards. For SGI Europe, focusing EU action on funding frameworks, evidence and coordination tools offers the most appropriate contribution to strengthening the attractiveness and sustainability of the teaching profession, while fully respecting national governance models and social dialogue autonomy.