

Funding of Global Citizenship Education in Europe

Report based on national inputs from:

- the Funding working group on 30/10/2025
- the Connect for Global Change partner group 3/11/2025
- and available public sources

Quick recap

Across Europe, funding for Global Citizenship Education (GCE) is increasingly under pressure as public budgets shrink and government priorities shift away from international solidarity and civic engagement. Discussions within the ENfCIGS Funding Working Group and the Connect for Global Change partner group show a shared concern among civil society organizations in France, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark and Slovenia: the gradual withdrawal of state support is threatening the continuity of long-term educational programmes, while alternative sources—such as EU funding or private foundations—remain patchy and very competitive.

In **France**, participants described a tightening funding climate for international solidarity and GCE. Support from the French Development Agency (AFD) and the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) is expected to decrease strongly. With a further cut of \$700 million announced for 2026, development aid will have lost more than half of its budget in two years. Moreover, funding for associations, already severely reduced, is falling to unprecedented levels, threatening the existence of many of them, active the fight against poverty and inequality, protection of rights, and community action. This appears paradoxical, given that polls indicate that 66% of the French population supports France's action for international solidarity, and that French people, through donations, highly support the social sector. This new cut in budget for solidarity will increase the hole in the financing of international solidarity policies: ODA would fall by 58% in two years, a figure that would rise to 64% for the budget of the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, particularly that used to support the actions of NGOs, specify Coordination Sud. As the government reorients aid budgets toward diplomatic and migration-related priorities. This has left civil society organizations searching for co-funding opportunities and new partnerships with foundations or European programmes. The risk is that GCE becomes an afterthought in development cooperation policy, framed more as soft diplomacy than as education for solidarity.

In **Finland**, the situation is even more severe. The current government has frozen funding for GCE and communication for the government term, dismantled the development communication unit, and discontinued support for peace work, in-service teacher training, equality and anti-racism work. Especially small GCE, peace, and youth sector CSOs now depend almost entirely on private foundations or EU projects to continue their educational and communications work on global justice and global responsibility in Finland. The result is that the work of many small CSOs is entirely at risk, or that GCE activities are discontinued. The field is becoming more fragmented, with fewer opportunities for continuity and scale. Uncertainty remains over whether larger CSOs can continue their GCE work with the MFA

programme funding. Funding decisions for the next four-year period are expected in the coming weeks.

Belgium still maintains a relatively stable public funding line for GCE on national level. Government support continues, and existing programmes remain operational. However, there is uncertainty about the future: with a new five-year framework beginning in 2027, political shifts could bring reductions similar to those seen in neighbouring countries and in the regions of Belgium. The Flemish government already reduced funding for GCE and international solidarity to 0 by the beginning of this year. Some policymakers are already referring to the Netherlands as an example of a “leaner” public role in GCE, a comparison that has caused concern among educators and NGOs. The sector is preparing advocacy efforts to protect GCE funding in the next programming cycle.

The **Netherlands** illustrates what happens when state support disappears altogether. After fifteen years without dedicated GCE funding, public engagement in international solidarity visibly declined. Recently, following the 2023 elections, there has been renewed interest in citizen engagement and education about global issues, but the policy framework has yet to be rebuilt. In the absence of public funds, private donors and organizations like Wilde Ganzen have stepped in. Wilde Ganzen applies a co-funding approach that encourages citizen involvement: rather than fully financing projects, it matches the funds raised by communities through initiatives like the [“Wilde Week”](#). Yet, most private funders continue to prioritise project activities in the Global South, leaving domestic GCE work in the Netherlands relatively underfunded.

In **Slovenia**, Platform SLOGA has played a leading role in supporting GCE activities for over eight years, funding pilot projects and teacher engagement initiatives. This stability will end in 2026, when the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MFEA) changes its policy to discontinue national support unless the activities form part of EU-funded projects. Only one GCE strategic partnership project—implemented by a SLOGA member—will continue to receive state funding. Within the formal education system, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is included in the national curriculum but relies entirely on teachers’ voluntary initiative; few structural incentives ensure its integration. Informal adult education in GCE exists through community events and NGO-led workshops, yet it lacks formal recognition or steady funding. Many of SLOGA’s activities—such as workshops for teachers and the GCE Teachers’ Club—demonstrate strong local commitment but face an uncertain future as national co-funding disappears. From 2026 onward, GCE in Slovenia will depend heavily on EU calls and the capacity of civil society organizations to secure matching funds.

In **Poland**, GCE funding remains fragmented and largely project-based. For the 2024/2025 school year, the government allocated 5,8 mln EURO to support new subjects such as citizenship and health education, which include elements of GCE. However, Poland lacks a dedicated national funding mechanism for GCE. Most initiatives are integrated into broader educational reforms or rely on EU co-funding and grants. The absence of a comprehensive national strategy means that GCE activities are often ad hoc, dependent on the priorities of individual ministries or regional authorities. Civil society organizations and NGOs play a

crucial role in implementing GCE projects, but their work is constrained by limited and unpredictable funding.

Catalonia (Spain) is notable for its relatively robust GCE funding landscape, supported by strong regional government commitment and active civil society partnerships. The region benefits from a favorable policy environment, with GCE integrated into the school curriculum and backed by public funds. However, this positive situation is not without risks. The rise of right-wing political parties in Spain poses a potential threat to the continuity of GCE funding and policy support. These parties often prioritize nationalistic agendas over global solidarity and citizenship education, which could lead to budget cuts or shifts in priorities. Despite these challenges, Catalonia remains a leader in GCE within Spain, with ongoing projects and initiatives that emphasize global citizenship, human rights, and sustainable development concordeurope.org¹.

In **Piedmont (Italy)**, there is currently no dedicated regional funding mechanism or comprehensive strategy for Global Citizenship Education (GCE). The region's main contribution to inclusive and globally oriented education comes through the EDISU Piemonte Scholarship, a financial aid program supporting both Italian and international students in higher education. This scholarship promotes equal access to education and fosters a diverse, intercultural academic environment, indirectly aligning with GCE principles by encouraging global exchange and cooperation. However, the scholarship is not specifically designed for GCE, and there is no evidence of a regional GCE policy or funding line. Most GCE-related activities in Piedmont are project-based, dependent on national or EU-level initiatives, or driven by civil society organizations and universities through ad hoc projects. The absence of a regional GCE strategy means that initiatives remain fragmented and lack sustained, targeted support. Nevertheless the region provides genuine co-funding for GCE initiatives such as c

Latvia does not have a dedicated national GCE funding mechanism. Instead, GCE projects are primarily supported through co-funding from EU programmes. For 2025, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched a grant competition with a total budget of EUR 50,000, offering up to 90% co-financing for eligible projects. This approach reflects Latvia's reliance on external funding sources, as national resources for GCE are minimal. To strengthen GCE integration, Latvia has developed a "passport" document that links GCE project results to the school curriculum, aiming to increase teacher adoption of GCE materials. However, the lack of a stable national funding line creates uncertainty for long-term planning and sustainability. Civil society organizations in Latvia are actively engaged in GCE but face challenges due to limited financial resources and the need to constantly seek co-funding opportunities.

Lithuania has not had a separate funding mechanism for GCE since 2020. While GCE projects still receive co-funding, the country lacks a uniform national GCE strategy. Public expenditure on education in Lithuania stands at 3.7% of GDP, with the government funding 90.1% of primary to post-secondary non-tertiary education. However, this funding is not specifically earmarked for GCE. The concept of GCE is included in several national policy documents, but without dedicated funding, its implementation remains fragmented. NGOs

and academic institutions are key players in promoting GCE, often collaborating with ministries to advocate for greater integration of global citizenship themes into the education system. Despite these efforts, the absence of a national strategy and dedicated budget line hinders the scaling up of GCE initiatives.

Denmark is a significant contributor to global education, with an annual contribution of EUR 33.5 million to the Global Partnership for Education for the period 2022–2025. The Danish government funds 93.4% of primary to post-secondary non-tertiary education, demonstrating a strong public commitment to education. However, GCE funding at the national level is less consistent. While 25% of Denmark’s international cooperation budget is linked to global solidarity, national calls for GCE projects are infrequent, with the next expected call not due until 2027. In the interim, regional authorities and civil society organizations (CSOs) play a critical role in sustaining GCE activities. Annual calls for CSO projects provide some continuity, but the lack of a regular national funding cycle creates challenges for long-term planning. Additionally, while Denmark’s higher education institutions and mobility programmes (such as Erasmus+) support internationalization, these initiatives are not always aligned with GCE objectives. The political landscape in Denmark has shown a lack of concrete national action on GCE, particularly in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), leaving much of the work to regional actors and private foundations.

The situation in **Europe** for GCE looks difficult as well. It is unclear if a new edition of the DEAR programme will come into existence in the new Multi-annual Financial Framework. As an instrument of DG INTPA this has always been a reliable source for funding GCE projects. Nonetheless it seems that the Global Gateway is dominating the discussions in the commission and that GCE is no priority. Through the DEAR MSG and the TED working group we obtain valuable information on the expected changes. Options like CERV and Erasmus+ seem to be new options but competition is much more severe, as the purpose of these programmes is not to serve international solidarity initiatives.

Main Take-aways

- **Europe-wide:** GCE funding is **shrinking** as governments shift priorities away from international solidarity, leaving civil society to rely on **patchy, competitive** EU and private funding.
- **France:** GCE is **deprioritized**, with funding redirected to diplomacy and migration, risking its reduction to “soft diplomacy” rather than a core educational mission.
- **Finland: Frozen GCE funding** and dismantled support structures leave small CSOs dependent on private foundations or EU projects, fragmenting the sector and threatening continuity.

- **Belgium: Stable but uncertain**—current national funding remains, but political shifts (e.g., Flemish cuts to zero) and upcoming framework changes raise concerns about future reductions.
- **Netherlands: State withdrawal** after 15 years without dedicated funding has weakened public engagement; private co-funding (e.g., Wilde Ganzen) fills gaps but prioritizes Global South projects over domestic GCE.
- **Slovenia: National funding ends in 2026**, leaving GCE dependent on EU calls and CSO capacity; formal education integration is voluntary and lacks structural support.
- **Poland: Fragmented, project-based funding** (€5.8M in 2024/25) with no national strategy, relying on EU co-funding and civil society to drive ad hoc initiatives.
- **Catalonia (Spain): Strong regional GCE funding and policy**, but right-wing political risks threaten to undermine continuity and shift priorities away from global citizenship.
- **Piedmont (Italy): No dedicated GCE funding**; indirect support via scholarships (e.g., EDISU) promotes inclusivity but lacks a regional GCE strategy or targeted initiatives.
- **Latvia: No national GCE funding**—relies on EU co-financing (EUR 50K in 2025) and pilot projects like the “passport” curriculum, with civil society facing resource constraints.
- **Lithuania: No GCE funding since 2020**; projects depend on co-funding and fragmented policy support, with NGOs leading advocacy but hindered by lack of national strategy.
- **Denmark: Strong international education funding** (EUR 33.5M/year to GPE) but **inconsistent national GCE support**, with infrequent calls and limited political leadership, leaving regional actors to fill gaps.
- Reliance on **EU funding** (DEAR, Erasmus+, CERV or in the future Global Gateway related AgoraEU) is growing. These programmes rarely replace sustained national funding and are under pressure as well. And because of budget cuts in multiple countries, there is an increased competition on EU calls.
- **Civil society organizations** remain key drivers of GCE through creativity, co-funding, and grassroots teacher networks, but long-term sustainability is at risk without renewed public commitment.

Links

- Sara Kinsbergen shared a link to an article [Donor preferences for recipient control of international development aid](#)
- Anna Kivimaki-Pelluz shared a link to [the Civil Society Alliance for Global Citizenship Education](#) (we have no link with them yet, although some members are part of this network).