

Future-ready eTwinning Schools: from strong foundations to leading change

Hybrid conference for eTwinning Schools

Zagreb, Croatia

Date: 05-07 November 2026

Format: Hybrid

Venue: Esplanade Zagreb Hotel

Target audience: eTwinning School representatives (school leaders and teachers), mentors and mentees participating in the eTwinning Schools mentoring scheme pilot.

Background

Across Europe, education systems are facing increasing demands to prepare learners for a world shaped by digital transformation, artificial intelligence, climate challenges, and evolving societal needs. At the same time, persistent gaps in basic skills, inclusion, wellbeing, and equitable access to quality education continue to affect student outcomes and long-term opportunities.

In response, European policy initiatives emphasise the need for **whole-school approaches** that combine strong foundational competences with innovation, resilience, and inclusion. The eTwinning annual theme “*Future-ready schools*” supports this vision by positioning eTwinning schools as learning organisations that:

- equip learners with strong basic and digital/AI-related skills
- foster inclusion, wellbeing and student agency
- embed collaboration and European cooperation
- build resilience and preparedness for change

Within this approach, school development is not a linear process but a collaborative and sustained effort, requiring structured peer learning and support mechanisms.

Moreover, the **eTwinning Schools mentoring scheme (2025–2026)** responds directly to this need by fostering partnerships between experienced and less experienced eTwinning Schools. Through structured collaboration, mentoring pairs co-develop action plans, reflect on their practices and improve.

The eTwinning Schools Conference 2026 in Zagreb will bring these strands together, helping schools to drive further changes in teaching, leadership and school culture.

Objectives of the conference

This conference builds on European priorities and provides participants with opportunities to connect classroom practice with whole school development. Participants will have the opportunity to:

- explore approaches to integrating basic skills, digital/AI competences, inclusion and wellbeing into school practices
- reflect on what it means to be a future-ready school in their local context
- strengthen their capacity to implement a whole-school approach aligned with the eTwinning School mission
- learn from mentor-mentee pairs about effective peer learning and school improvement strategies
- develop and/or refine action plans for their own schools or mentoring partnerships

Draft agenda

All times indicated are

Day 1 – Thursday, 05 November <i>Plenary session (streamed for the online audience- no registration needed)</i>	
13:00 - 14:00	Registration
14:00 - 14:30	Opening EC and representative from Croatian NSO
14:30 - 15:00	Keynote 1: What does it mean to be a future-ready school? <i>(what it means for schools to be future-ready in today's rapidly changing world- introduction of the annual theme)</i>
15:00 - 15:45	Panel discussion: Shaping tomorrow's schools together: The panel discussion will bring together different voices from the educational community to reflect on what makes a school truly future-ready. Through diverse perspectives, the discussion will explore how schools can respond to emerging challenges while ensuring strong basic skills, inclusion, wellbeing, digital and AI readiness, student participation and resilience. The session will encourage dialogue on how whole-school approaches, collaboration and European cooperation can help shape learning environments that prepare young people for the future.
15:45 - 16:15	Break

16:15 – 17: 00	Mentor-mentee showcase: Peer learning and school improvement strategies in action. Mentoring pairs present their collaborative action plans, share challenges overcome, and demonstrate how structured peer learning strengthens capacity across the eTwinning School mission statements.
17:00-19:30/20:00	Networking and cultural activity
20:00	Dinner at a restaurant in the city
Day 2 – Friday, 06 November <i>One room per session will be streamed for the registered online audience</i>	
9:30 – 11:00	Workshop session 1 (4 in parallel)
11:00 – 11:30	Break
11:30 – 13:00	Workshop session 2 (4 in parallel)
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 -15:30	Workshop session 3 (4 in parallel)
15:30 –16:00	Break
16:00- 19:30	eTwinning Schools visits. Participants will have the opportunity to visit local eTwinning Schools in Zagreb. These visits will demonstrate how eTwinning Schools foster collaboration, inclusion, wellbeing, digital education and student participation into everyday school life.
20:00	Dinner at the hotel
Day 3 – Saturday, 07 November <i>Plenary session (streamed for the online audience – no registration needed)</i>	
9:30 – 10:30	Developing your school's year 1 action plan – from classroom steps to school-wide vision <i>Group Work: Develop your school's action plan with a focus on a future ready plan linked to the eTwinning School Mission. This session guides participants in creating strategic initiatives that equip students with the critical thinking, adaptability, and forward-looking skills. The mentors and mentees will facilitate the session.</i>
10:30 – 11:15	Presentations from group work

11:15 – 11:45	Break
11:45- 12:15	Keynote speech
12:15 – 12.30	Closing
12.30	Lunch boxes – Departures

Workshop

1. Shared leadership

Workshop themes:

- Distributed leadership models in school practice
- From individual initiative to collective responsibility
- Strengthening leadership culture in mentoring systems
- Using SELFIE for Schools to support collaborative decision-making

2. Schools as inclusive and innovative learning organisations

Workshop themes:

- Designing inclusive learning environments for all learners
- Digital wellbeing and safe online learning spaces
- Supporting learners with diverse needs through cooperation
- Innovative pedagogies to reduce learning gaps and strengthen engagement
- Integrating basic skills with digital tools in classroom practice
- AI in the classroom: practical and ethical use

3. Schools as collaborative learning organisations

Workshop themes:

- From classroom projects to whole-school collaboration culture
- Mentoring and peer learning in school development
- Engaging parents and communities in collaborative learning
- Developing teacher teams for shared pedagogical innovation
- Using digital tools to enhance collaboration and co-creation

4. Schools as role models for other schools

Workshop themes:

- Sharing and scaling eTwinning good practices
- Schools as mentors: supporting other schools in development
- Futures literacy in education

5. Student agency

Workshop themes:

- Student voice in school development and decision-making
- Democratic school culture and shared responsibility
- Connecting student agency to real-world challenges and futures thinking
- Student participation in digital and AI-supported learning activities