

*schools

Elos

education stretching borders



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Elos, an introduction

Elos is an educational concept which seeks to promote the European and international dimension in education. It is about preparing young people for a future in a society in which European integration and globalization are a reality. Elos enables them to function in such a society, to deal with its challenges and to take advantage of the opportunities that arise, in a responsible and well-informed manner.

In brief, Elos is about students developing 'Europe competence': being willing and able to act as an active citizen in a European and wider international context.

It is also about schools integrating this approach in their curriculum and school policies, and collaborating with partner schools and organizations abroad to develop a truly European learning environment.

Elos: students' competences, school standards and a quality network

Firstly, Elos defines the **learning outcomes for students**, describing the various dimensions that come into play when students (and citizens in general) participate in a Europe-related context:

- Having appropriate knowledge, being able to access, evaluate and process new information, about Europe and the wider world and being able to act accordingly. *For example: students have an informed opinion on European and international issues such as enlargement of the EU. They also know basic concepts such as democracy and human rights.*
- Being able to communicate effectively with peers from other countries and cultures in an international context in everyday life and to cope with problems that may arise in such a context. *For example: students are able to discuss aspects of everyday life (such as family life or school systems) in various countries.*
- Being able to work with peers from other countries and cultures on joint tasks and projects. *For example: students are able to collaborate on common research on topics of shared interest, such as the effects of climate change on European rivers.*
- Being able to work and learn in an informal and work-related context and demonstrate entrepreneurship in a European/international setting. *For example: students organize their own internship abroad or plan their own exchange programme.*

The Common Framework for Europe Competence applies to students at all levels of the educational system, possibly each with their own focus. The Elos concept of Europe Competence includes International Job Orientation and Entrepreneurial Skills as well as foreign languages and European history. Thus, students in both vocational and academically oriented programmes of learning will benefit from the Elos competence concept.

Secondly, Elos defines a **quality standard for schools**, describing the requirements for a school to be allowed to call itself an 'Elos school'. By signing a 'letter of commitment', schools declare that they will work towards meeting these requirements:

- Including a European and International Orientation ('EIO') in a variety of lessons and through activities abroad, so that students can develop 'Europe competence' gradually during their whole school career (knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students need for their future as 'European (and international) citizens'); using jointly developed products, such as the Elos portfolio for students and other instruments to support EIO learning and assessment (*indicator Education Process/Learning Environment*).
- Striving towards embedding the Elos goals in the school curriculum and in the school policy to ensure coherence and sustainability (*indicator School Curriculum and Policy*).
- Building the institution's internal capacity to achieve these goals (for example, facilitate an 'Elos School Team/Coordinator' to develop lesson plans and materials; allow educational staff to attend European Elos events and training courses) (*indicator Staff Competence and Institutional Capacity*).

- Being involved in structural international exchange activities with international partner schools/ colleges and – if applicable – other organisations abroad (*indicator International Cooperation*).
- Taking part in general monitoring and evaluation activities at school level, national level and international level, and other relevant studies (when requested) (*indicator Quality Assurance*).

Or in summary: making the European and international dimension a matter of school policy and the curriculum.

Thirdly, Elos offers an **international network of schools**, sharing the same objectives. In all participating countries, a national network (and/or several regional networks) of Elos schools exists. All Elos schools have adopted both the framework for Europe competence for the students, and the Elos School standard. As part of the international network, being an Elos schools entails:

- Participating in international network meetings to share experiences and further develop the concepts and practices.
- Contributing to international evaluation and research projects .
- Having access to reliable partners, all equally committed to the common objectives with respect to the European and international orientation in education.

Although Elos is a multi-dimensional concept, it is important to emphasize that the aim is to prepare students to deal constructively with a future in which the importance of the European and international dimension will continue to grow and become more evident.

The various dimensions and levels of Europe Competence are defined in **the Common Framework for Europe Competence**.

The requirements for schools are described in the **Elos School Standard**.

Both documents can be downloaded from the Elos website: www.eloseducation.info

How does your school benefit from Elos?

Elos is an initiative currently covering approximately fifteen countries. The frameworks (CFEC, Teacher competences), concepts and school standard have been developed for use in all these countries. Yet, Elos respects the differences in educational systems between the participating countries and therefore leaves room for variation in the details of the implementation at the national levels. National/regional Coordinators and National School Networks will be able to offer practical help and support.

For your school, Elos will serve as a drive for (further) internal growth and development, as well as a marketing or branding instrument.

- Your students and teachers will get involved internationally by participating in engaging projects with partner schools abroad.
- Embedding and integrating European and International projects into lesson plans and school policy deepen your school's international experiences.
- Elos partners are developing modules for teacher training courses, in order to ensure that teachers will be competent to teach in Elos schools.
- You will have access to an international network of schools sharing your idea(l)s, standards and frameworks, allowing you both to find partners for your international projects more easily.
- The same network will help you to establish both structure and status in European and International Orientation.
- You will be able to distinguish positively from other schools by meeting the Elos School Standard, thus appealing to students/parents/employers who appreciate the European and international dimension.

Elos Schools will receive **a certificate and other signs of recognition**, such as a wall sign, when they sign a 'letter of commitment' to work towards the Elos School Standard and again after 3 years when they are expected to have made considerable progress to meet the Elos School Standard in order to receive the official Elos school certificate. The national Elos coordinators are responsible for monitoring, evaluation and certification.





How do students benefit from Elos?

Students will be better prepared to work or study in an internationally oriented environment:

- They learn about their rights, responsibilities and opportunities in the European Union and how to act as informed and critical citizens of Europe and the wider world.
- They learn factual and up-to-date information to critically discuss Europe and the European Union in its international context.
- They learn about Europe and international affairs in authentic situations so they are better prepared for future study and work in an international setting.
- They interact meaningfully with peers from other countries in Europe and beyond and thereby develop their social and intercultural skills.
- They develop entrepreneurial skills in an international context.
- They are able to develop international academic and vocational experience through international work-related and informal learning experiences.
- Through International Job Orientation they will be prepared to make choices for their international studies and professional career.

Students will receive an **Elos certificate** indicating their level of 'Europe Competence' from their school. The partners in the European Elos network are promoting the recognition of this certificate by institutions for vocational and higher education and by employers, in order to ensure that students with an Elos certificate will benefit even more from their achievements in their further educational and professional careers.

Only certified Elos schools can award Elos student certificates, provided that a student presents a satisfying portfolio based on the CFEC level relevant to the type of education he/she has followed.

What characterizes an Elos school?

The schools that work together as partner schools within the European Elos Network (Elos Schools) can be characterized as follows:

- They participate in a national quality network that develops a European and International Orientation (EIO) within a European Elos concept.
- They are involved in structural international exchange activities with several schools abroad (including at least one school that also implements Elos); and strive towards embedding these activities in the school curriculum and school policies to ensure coherence and sustainability.
- Inside and outside the classroom, they work towards Europe Competence (knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students need for their future as European citizens), with a substantial number of students in the age groups 12 to 19.
- They use jointly developed instruments to measure and certify achievements.
- They take part in general monitoring and evaluation activities of the European Elos Network.
- They allocate available resources to realize these goals.

Schools wishing to join the Elos network will have to confirm in writing that they are committed to striving towards such a school profile, in the Elos 'Letter of Commitment'.



Elos: working with priorities of the European Council (*)

In May 2009, the European Council formulated four strategic objectives in its Strategic Framework for European cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020) for the period until 2020. These are:

- Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality.
- Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training.
- Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship.
- Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship at all levels of education and training.

The European Framework for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning recognizes the importance of competences such as learning to learn, entrepreneurship and communication in foreign languages.

Because of the great relevance to students Elos works in line with both these objectives and key competences in order to prepare the students in the best possible way for their future. Elos therefore includes special focus on entrepreneurship, informal learning and work-related learning (as is shown in the fourth strand of the CFEC) in its programme.

() The European Council, a body of the European Union consists of Heads of State and Government. It provides the European Union with the necessary input, advice and decisions for its development.*

Joining the Elos network

If you share the ideas and ideals described here, please go to our website **www.eloseducation.info** and locate your national or regional coordinator. If your country does not have a national or regional coordinator, please contact the European coordinator, European Platform – Consultancy & Training.

European Elos coordinator

European Platform - Consultancy & Training
Kennemerplein 16
2011 MJ Haarlem
The Netherlands
T: +31 (0)23 553 11 50
elos@epf.nl

For further information, please visit the website **www.eloseducation.info**
Twinspace: <http://new-twinspace.etwinning.net/web/p29244/welcome>

