



EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH – ECER 2025

International scientific conference titled European Conference on Educational Research – ECER 2025, September 8–12, 2025, Belgrade, Serbia: European Educational Research Association (EERA), <https://eera-ecer.de/ecer-programmes>

The European Conference on Educational Research (ECER) is the largest and preeminent annual educational research conference in Europe. It gathers the academic community, education policymakers, and practitioners with the aim of exchanging research findings and methodological solutions in educational research. It further serves as a space for jointly considering pressing challenges, developing evidence-based interventions in education, and presenting innovations in educational research. This year's conference, ECER 2025, hosted in Belgrade from September 8 to September 12, 2025, brought together more than 2,500 participants from 73 countries. The conference was organized by the Educational Research Association of Serbia (ERAS) in cooperation with the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, the University of Belgrade, and the Institute for Educational Research, with the vital support of the European Educational Research Association (EERA) as the umbrella organization, as well as the Ministry of Science, Technological Development, and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia and several nongovernmental organizations.

The conference theme was *Charting the Way Forward: Education, Research, Potentials and Perspectives*, which allowed for deliberation on the importance, role, but also responsibility of educational researchers in initiating and guiding future practices, especially at a time of heightened ideological tensions, accelerated technological development, and global climate change. As conference organizers emphasized, neither education nor educational research constitutes a unitary, hermetic system. Rather, diverse cultural contexts and different disciplinary, methodological, and theoretical approaches constitute both drivers and challenges in contemporary educational research. Transdisciplinarity has been recognized as

the key approach allowing for comprehensive exploration of complex social issues and phenomena, as well as overcoming the increasingly blurred lines between politics, practice, and science. In light of this view, the main objectives of education today include identifying factors shaping education systems and processes, ensuring the well-being of every child, understanding the place of education in the context of environmental and demographic changes, and examining the role of artificial intelligence in everyday life and learning. Accordingly, ECER 2025 was envisioned as a space for *mapping future directions* together, that is, considering various ways education can and should nurture individuals' potentials and well-being, while simultaneously building open and inclusive communities that support diversity.

The conference week started with the Emerging Researchers' Conference. From September 8 to September 9, around 450 young researchers participated in this event, exceeding expectations based on previous years' numbers. Subsequently, from September 9 to September 12, the main program of ECER 2025 encompassed plenary sessions, invitational symposia, workshops, and poster presentations. Belgrade truly beamed with life during this week. Participants donning conference tote bags with the recognizable logo featuring a little astronaut learning from a spelling book (designed by Dobrosav Bob Živković) could be seen downtown, especially near the Faculty of Philosophy, the Student Square and Park, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and the Children's Cultural Center. Participants enjoyed spirited exchanges even outside formal sessions, at downtown coffee shops, during breaks, and at informal evening gatherings. Student volunteers particularly contributed to the atmosphere. Their energy, professionalism, obligingness, and solidarity left a lasting impression on international participants and rendered them one of the most delightful and recognizable informal symbols of the conference.

On September 9, the opening ceremony took place, after which introductory sessions and workshops set the thematic framework and rhythm for the whole week. From morning till evening, more than 2,500 researchers simultaneously conducted presentations in 65 classrooms within thematically organized 90-minute sessions. On Wednesday, September 10, and Thursday, September 11, esteemed regional and European experts in the field of education held plenary sessions, with the program also featuring workshops, poster presentations, and symposia. On Friday, September 12, the conference concluded with plenary speakers' joint panel session and the awards ceremony.

This year's keynote speakers were: Prof. Dr. Pavel Zgaga (University of Ljubljana), who explored relationships between educational research, policymaking, and political processes that shape the functioning of education systems; Dr. Gabi Lombardo (European Alliance for Social Sciences and Humanities – EASSH), who focused on the role of the scientific community in devising a new European research and innovation framework and the significance of researchers' active participation in shaping future European programs; Prof. Dr. Ben Williamson (University of Edinburgh), who analyzed the inception and effects of biological and educational data integration on the development of novel analytical approaches and the implications of bio-edu-data models for educational research, policy, and practice; Dr. Karin Doolan (Institute for Social Research in Zagreb), who investigated educational challenges in post-disaster settings and the ethics of care in communities recovering from crises; Prof. Dr. Tünde Kovács Cerović (University of Belgrade), who scrutinized the mechanisms of development creation within the framework of international initiatives for improving education and the role of global policies in shaping local educational practices; and Prof. Dr. Aleksandar Baucal (University of Belgrade), who shed light on challenges in and pedagogical approaches to encouraging collaborative problem solving among students, emphasizing conditions that allow for a systematic and sustainable development of these skills in the school setting. Although the lectures were thematically and theoretically diverse, they were unified by an admirable dedication to shaping more just, relevant, and sustainable education systems in Europe through educational research.

Several key themes were highlighted during the conference, including the integration of socioemotional and cognitive dimensions in education, digital tools and processes in pedagogy, cooperation between science and practice, and the regional dimension of educational research. Of crucial significance was the fact that numerous regional researchers had the opportunity to present their research findings and the local context within the European framework. Furthermore, informal conversations in between sessions that centered on student protests and pressures on education in Serbia emphasized the social and political dimensions of education and showed how the international community can provide valuable support.

Other major advantages of the conference included a high level of interdisciplinarity, the substantial contributions of regional researchers, and the prominent involvement and dedication of young researchers. ECER 2025

in Belgrade successfully merged local and international perspectives, allowing educational researchers and practitioners to exchange ideas, establish contacts, and relate research to practice. Honoring the initiative and interest of a large number of researchers, conference organizers enriched the program with a session dedicated to student protests, encompassing volunteer students' testimonials and select student poster presentations. Due to participants' overwhelming interest, this session was held twice to allow as many visitors as possible to familiarize themselves with the context, characteristics, and distinctive features of the current student movement in Serbia.

Interweaving exceptional presentations, lively discussions, and abundant networking among conference participants, ECER 2025 showed how much can be achieved when science and practice come together in an open, inclusive environment. Particularly notable was the role of student volunteers, whose engagement contributed to the organizational and symbolic dimensions of this conference. Wearing blue steward vests, visually resembling the ones students wear within public initiatives, they reminded participants of the current social and educational context in Serbia and highlighted the importance of solidarity in the educational community. This visual hallmark subtly framed the conference as an event that not only produced scientific contributions but also reflected the needs and the pulse of the community.

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