

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002794/25
to the Commission
Nikos Pappas (The Left)
(9 July 2025)

Subject: Foreign investment in private education and its impact on public education in the European Union

Education is a fundamental public good, with the EU committed — through Regulation (EU) 2021/817 — to promoting quality and equality. It is crucial that recent developments in private education do not undermine these objectives.

In recent years, there has been an increasing infiltration of foreign investment capital into private education in Member States such as Greece, Italy, Cyprus and the Netherlands. International investment groups are acquiring educational institutions, which raises questions about the impact on public education, equal access and social cohesion. In some cases, inequalities are increasing and there is a risk of ‘two-tier education’.

In view of the above:

1. How does the Commission assess the increasing presence of foreign investment capital in private education in the Member States and the possible impact on public education?
2. What measures does the Commission intend to put in place to ensure that the infiltration of foreign capital does not lead to inequalities in access to and quality of education provided?
3. How does the Commission intend to support Member States in strengthening and upgrading public education so that it remains competitive and attractive for students and their families?

Submitted: 9.7.2025

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Minzatu on behalf of the European Commission
(14 August 2025)

Matters concerning the organisation of education systems remain a competence of the Member States. Questions concerning the funding and investment in higher education, the public or private status of the legal entities providing it, as well as the ownership of higher education institutions fall under the competence of Member States.

However, Article 21(1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/817 ⁽¹⁾ (‘Erasmus+ Regulation’) establishes that ‘the Programme shall be open to the participation of public and private legal entities active in the fields of education and training, youth and sport’.

Furthermore, Regulation (EU) 2021/523 ⁽²⁾ (‘InvestEU Regulation’) established the InvestEU fund as part of the InvestEU programme, seeking to catalyse and attract both private and public financing.

The InvestEU advisory hub will also support public and private promoters in addressing market failures or suboptimal investment conditions across various policy areas, including a social investment and skills policy window for investment in higher education.

The Commission remains committed to encouraging Member States to cooperate and, where necessary, to support and complement their efforts.

This is to ensure, as stated in paragraph 1 of the European Pillar of Social Rights, that ‘everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market’.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/817/oj/eng>.

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/523/oj/eng>.