



ECU2030 Program: Chess in Education

Vision

Chess in Education is one of the most scalable ways to grow chess participation and deliver measurable social and educational value. Our approach is practical: support federations and educators with **high-quality methodology**, **recognized training**, and **digital training services** that remove cost and distance barriers.

What we delivered

- **A dedicated ECU Education Commission platform** with resources, news, and a structured framework focused on the educational value of chess (not only competitive outcomes): <https://edu.europechess.org/>
- **A university-level Academic Training Course: “Chess in Primary Education”**, launched in **June 2024** in collaboration between the **European Chess Union** and the **Lifelong Learning Centre of the University of the Aegean**.
- **Recognized, structured qualification**: the course provides a **lifelong Academic Certificate** from the University of the Aegean and is described as a **recognized academic qualification of 320 hours through distance learning**, aligned with Continuing Professional Development standards and recognized through ECTS (12.8 ECTS).
- **A fully digital delivery model (digital training services)**:
 - **20-week course** conducted in English via the **Moodle** platform
 - Self-paced study with assignments after each unit
 - Content delivered through interactive materials, documents, research papers, live sessions, video instructions, external resources, project work and assignments
- **A complete methodology pathway inside the academic course**, including:
 - The **SMART Method to Teach Chess** (provided by the ECU Education Commission since 2017)
 - Research-informed practice (a curated set of studies on Chess in Education)
 - Practical classroom resources and project-based outputs educators can reuse
- **Operational integration with ECU digital services**: course payments and access are connected through ECU Hub: <https://ecuhub.eu/course/chess-in-primary-education/>

- **A structured “CiE Package” for teaching chess in schools**, equipping educators with a confident start to introduce Chess in Education:
 - Two-day Training Course (certificated by the European Chess Union)
 - 80-page Training CourseBook
 - Downloadable Extra Material (posters, handouts)
 - Teacher’s Guide: ECU101 curriculum of 40 lessons, based on the SMART Method
 - Classroom Demonstration slides for each lesson (diagrams + classroom activities)
- **A searchable Chess Research Database**, updated twice a year, created to provide a comprehensive, structured resource of chess-related academic articles (covering, among others, education, cognitive development, psychology, AI, and interdisciplinary connections):
 - Created by Seyhan Nisel, curated by John Foley, searchable implementation by Alexis Harakis
 - Includes a collection spanning 1832–2022 (peer-reviewed, indexed journals; English language) Source: <https://edu.europechess.org/chess-research-database/>
 -

What we are planning (2026–2030)

1) Make digital training services the default access point for federations

We will connect ECU’s digital training services with a practical membership pathway to help federations scale Chess in Education nationally. The objective is to move from isolated initiatives to a repeatable model: trained educators, consistent methodology, and a simple structure for participation and continuity.

What this enables:

- A clear route: train educators → implement in schools → retain participants through membership structures. Consistent quality standards (training + materials + certification). Better reporting and measurable outcomes (useful for ministries, municipalities, and sponsors)
- A sustainable model that supports federation growth without increasing bureaucracy
- Creating a platform for all trained teachers, where they can exchange experiences, discuss challenges, and contribute to making the program more effective in practice.
- Maintain a predictable annual calendar of online courses, webinars, and educator support sessions.

Proof and blueprint: the Romanian C.E.S.S. model

The C.E.S.S. Project (“Competences and Higher Education through Chess”), awarded to the Romanian Chess Federation under the Smart Growth, Digitalization and Financial Instruments Program 2021–2027 (PoCIDIF) with a total investment of €4.5 million, demonstrates that

chess can attract serious EU-level resources when it is presented as a modern, digital, skills-based program. This is not an isolated success; it is a blueprint for how federations can modernize official structures through digitalization and sustainable funding and the outcome will be outsourced to all European federations.

2) Scale the Aegean “Chess in Primary Education” course as a European reference

- Continue and strengthen the academic course worldwide as a flagship pathway for educators.
- Support wider federation participation by improving visibility, onboarding, and guidance on how federations can integrate the course into national teacher-development plans.

3) Expand the CiE Package into a federation-ready implementation toolkit

- Make the CiE Package easier to adopt at national level by packaging it as a practical implementation toolkit:
- Clear “start-up” pathway for schools and municipalities
- Training + lesson resources + classroom slides in one coherent deployment plan
- Guidance on how to train local instructors and scale nationally

4) Research-informed practice as a standard (not an afterthought)

- Use the ECU Chess Research Database as a living reference to keep methodology current.
- Implementation of continuous research in different areas related to chess and education. Such research could be conducted by Known European research centers. The results of these studies could provide valuable evidence of the role of chess in education, worldwide.
- Translate research into practical guidance for educators (what works, for whom, and under what conditions)
- Case studies from a specific countries with long tradition in chess in school programs demonstrate the practical results of implementing chess in education and serve as a model for other countries.

5) Strengthen quality standards and recognition

- Promote consistent quality through clear learning outcomes, educator competence standards, and transparent certification pathways.
- Connect training content with practical classroom application and measurable outcomes.

6) Partnerships that increase adoption (not bureaucracy)

- Encourage cooperation with universities, teacher-training institutions, municipalities, and EU-supported programs where relevant.
- Prioritize partnerships that help federations scale Chess in Education with clear governance and measurable results.
- Future implementation of a chess subject program at European Universities.

7) Continuation of current policies

- Expand the ECU CiE Ambassadors Partnership program with Federations
- Recognize Best Practices for Chess in Schools projects
- Increase the number of ECU EDU training courses in different languages

8) Simple, comparable KPIs

Track outcomes that are meaningful and comparable across federations:

- Number of educators trained through ECU digital training services
- Course completion and satisfaction
- Number of schools and pupils reached (where federations track this)
- Number of federations actively running Chess in Education initiatives

Resume

We will strengthen Chess in Education across Europe by scaling **recognized, high-quality educator training** and making **digital training services** the backbone of access. Building on the university-level “Chess in Primary Education” academic course developed with the University of the Aegean, and supported by practical implementation resources such as the **CiE Package** and the ECU **Chess Research Database**, we will expand structured online pathways, federation-ready toolkits, and partnerships that increase adoption—always with clear standards, measurable outcomes, and equal access for federations of every size.

Sources:

- <https://edu.europechess.org/>
- <https://edu.europechess.org/academic-training-course/>
- <https://ecuhub.eu/course/chess-in-primary-education/>
- <https://edu.europechess.org/cie-package/>
- <https://edu.europechess.org/chess-research-database/>