

**Press Release  
22/02/2024**

**The STEAMBrace project aims to advance STEAM education in Europe by fostering networking among stakeholders, providing training, and establishing a digital framework.**

Despite women constituting over half of the population, they represent just 40% of STEM professionals. To counter this disparity, **STEAMBrace** focuses on gender balance among graduates from secondary to doctoral levels.

**STEAMBrace is a 36-month project funded under the Horizon Europe programme by the European Commission.** The project aims to bridge the current gender gap in STEM fields with the creation of a coordinated Alliance at European level and development of numerous networking and educational activities using a creative thinking and an evidence-based approach. This strategy strengthens problem-solving, emotional intelligence, and collaboration – crucial skills for modern workplaces.

Women's representation in STEM fields has long been a concern, with statistics indicating a persistent gender gap among STEM professionals. **While women make up 52% of the European population, only 40% of STEM workers are women, and a mere 10.7% of patents are submitted by women.** Recognizing the urgency of this issue, the European Commission has initiated policies to promote gender equality in research and innovation. This effort aims to achieve a gender-balanced European research workforce by 2030, from technicians to department heads.

STEAMbrace's actions will follow a multi-stakeholder approach to better understand the gaps and limitations of STEM education per country, age, gender, socio-cultural aspects, among others, and **boost the change in education towards a European sustainable (environmentally-responsible, socially-inclusive and economically-balanced), inclusive and reproducible STE(A)M education system** that will positively influence in the transition towards a cultural and social cohesion of Europe.

This interdisciplinary STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) approach takes centre stage. **This holistic method integrates transversal competencies such as arts, creativity, and innovation with traditional STEM subjects.** It has gathered significant attention for its potential to reshape STEM education, engage a broader range of students, and address the persistent gender gap within these fields.

**"The European children will be the centre of STEAMbrace as they will be able to test in the case studies all the activities and processes, participate in national and European contests and will, finally, lead a new generation of boys and girls, in equal and balanced terms, for the real 21st century revolution in education,"** says Juancho Pons, the project's coordinator. "They have to discover the equal role models who are already working in STEM fields and realize that boys and girls can make a scientific and technical career if they want to and work hard enough".

**STEAMBrace aims to achieve:**

- **A coordination network between organisations from the cultural and creative industries (CCIs), civil society, technological enterprises, secondary and higher education institutions and digital citizen platforms** to foster the uptake of artistic, cultural and social science approaches in STEM education, research and innovation:
- **Increased understanding about the benefits of integrating artistic, cultural and social science approaches in STEM education,** research and innovation and its impact on competitiveness, gender equality and career perspectives

- **Pilot for the first European Union “STE(A)M week for future women innovators”** together with science and technology museums, technological enterprises, secondary and higher education institutions, CCIs and relevant civil society organisations.
- **STEAM skills development and increased interest in new technologies, including those applied to cultural value chains and cultural heritage, to bridge the gender gap.**

As education systems increasingly adopt the STEAM approach, we can look forward to a more inclusive, diverse, and gender-balanced European future in the realms of science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics.

"The STEAM approach, thanks to the guidance to student inquiring, discussions and critical thinking, help explore through curiosity, play and hands-on learning," states Pons. "STEAMbrace is going to create and test activities and new processes that will take us to a higher level and to **a STEAM certificate that can be accepted and approved by the European education community**".

The project started in January 2024 and celebrated its Kick-off Meeting on February 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> in Zaragoza, Spain, hometown of the coordinator organisation, Edelvives. It has been funded under the call HORIZON-CL2-2023-HERITAGE-01 with 2.884.085,75€.

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## Project partners

The consortium is formed by ten organisations from five different countries and expertise: EDELVIVES (Spain), AIJU ASOCIACION DE INVESTIGACION DE LA INDUSTRIA DEL JUGUETE CONEXAS Y AFINES (Spain), WITEC SWEDEN (Sweden), C4G - CONSULTING AND TRAINING NETWORK, LDA (Portugal), ACADEMIA DE INVENTORES SL (Spain), PROVINCIA PORTUGUESA DA CONGREGACAO DOS IRMAOS MARISTAS (Portugal), CONTACTICA SL (Spain), ASOCIATIA DE TINERET RAISE YOUR VOICE (Romania), SVEUCILISTE U ZAGREBU EKONOMSKI FAKULTET (Croatia), UPV/EHU UNIVERSIDAD DEL PAIS VASCO/ EUSKAL HERRIKO UNIBERTSITATEA (Spain).

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## For more information

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