Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Read the newsletter in Nederlands, Italiano, македонски, shqip, Ελληνικά

The last newsletter of SKATE!

The SKATE project wants to increase **inclusion** in day-care and preschools for children from **0 to 6 years,** with the use of **(assistive) technology**.

SKATE Guidelines available!

The SKATE Guidelines on Inclusive Classrooms for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) contains the main theoretical aspects of the SKATE Learning Programme for teachers and professionals in ECEC.

The SKATE Guidelines provides an overview of essential issues for appropriate use of digital technologies (ICT and AT) in inclusive educational settings for young learners (0-6 years of age). The SKATE Guidelines consist of four main areas of interest (chapters):

- Inclusive Education
- Early Childhood Education and Care
- Technology: ICT and AT
- Creating digital inclusive education in early education settings

Read the SKATE Guidelines

SKATE Learning programme ready and tested!

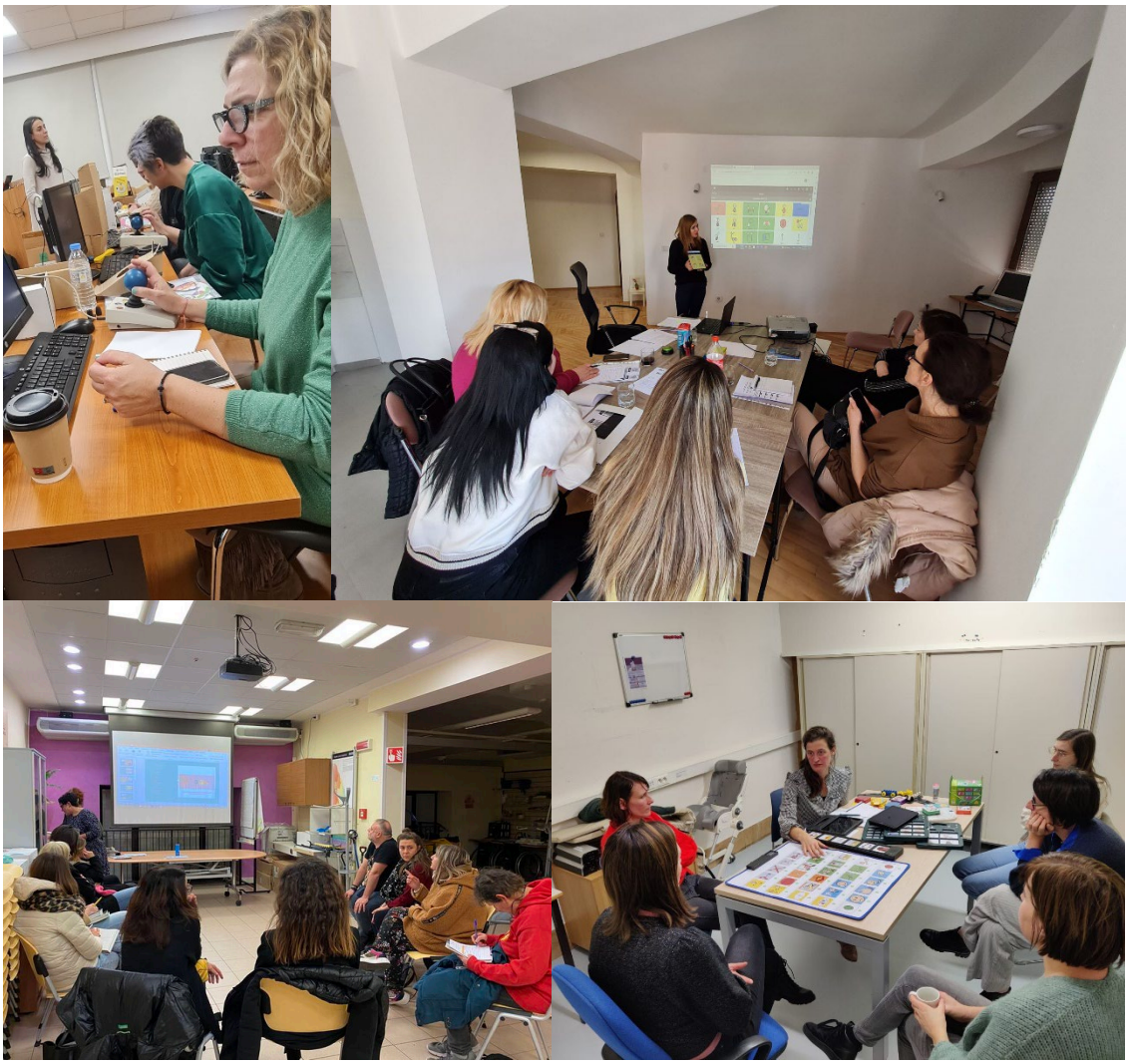
Together with relevant stakeholders the project team developed a SKATE Learning Programme to guide the **professional development** of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) teachers and professionals on technology-based inclusive education. The Learning Programme consists of **four modules**:

- Module 1: Inclusive Education & Early Childhood Education
- Module 2: Technology: Using ICT with Early Learners
- Module 3: Technology: Using ICT/AT with Early Learners
- Module 4: Creating digital inclusive education in early education settings

Each module of the Learning Programme consists of sessions for three different levels of experience:

- Beginner
- Intermediate
- Advanced

A total of 50 school team members (teachers, care teachers, (special) educators, pedagogical coordinators, paramedics, directors) participated in one of the local SKATE Learning Programmes across four European countries. This Learning Programme was aligned to the local school system and adapted based on the needs of the participating schools. These were identified through the Entelis self-assessment framework for schools.



After the SKATE Learning Programme the participants evaluated the programme, allowing the project team to make additional adjustments and finalise the local SKATE Learning Programmes.

Technology-based inclusive classroom activities in the participating schools!

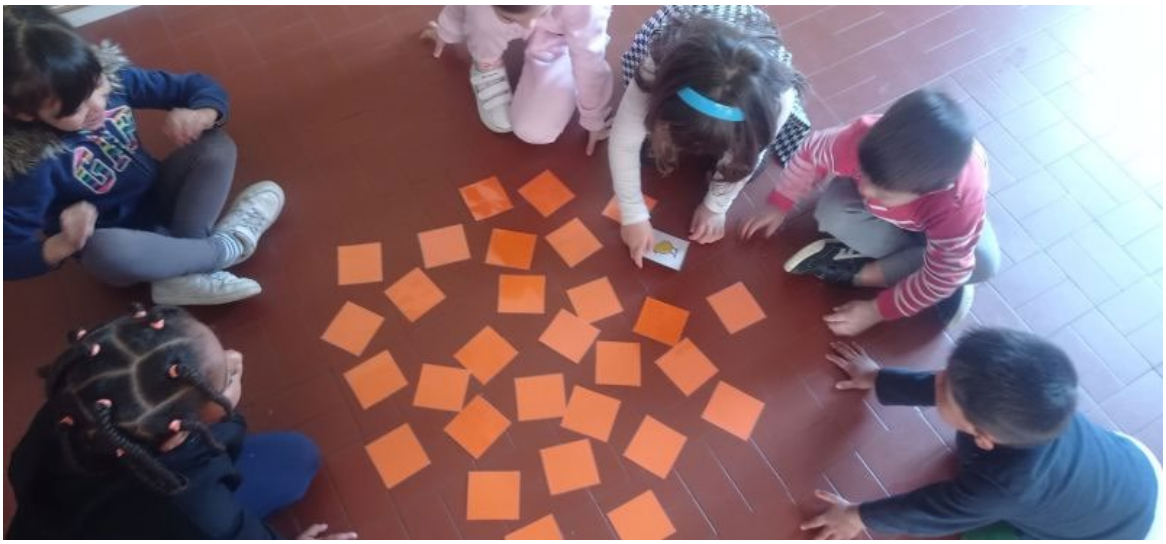
During the design phase, school team members, with the guidance of technology experts, designed **21 inclusive classroom activities using ICT and AT**. The aim was to enhance the participation of all children, and in particular the participation and inclusion of children with special educational needs. In doing so, the school teams made use of two templates: 1) a **Use Case Template**, for describing the profile of the children identified as children with special educational needs and

2) an **Activity Template**, which support the development of the technology-based inclusive classroom activity. You can download both templates here.

Across the four countries, approximately **330 pre-schoolers**, with and without SEN, from **14 preschools** were involved in the technology-based inclusive classroom activities.

Some of the **technologies (ICT and AT) used** during these classroom activities were: interactive whiteboard, LED board, projector, Bluetooth speaker, educational software, BigKeys keyboard, BigTrack (trackball), Osmo educational games system for iPad, tablet, C-pen, sensors, digital story sequencer, talking photo album, GoTalk, talking picto wall (Touch and Talk), talking clothes pegs, CBoard, Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) adapters and symbols.

Some **examples of technology-based inclusive classroom activities** carried out in the different countries, are: story telling with sequencing and story structure by use of CBoard; recognition of alphabet letters and phonemes in small and capital letters by labelling pictures and copy typing (e.g., from small to capital letters) with the use of a BigKeys keyboard; the use of a digital story sequencer/talking photo album during the morning circle; the use of Osmo for all young learners in one of the learning corners; and learning different syllable by use of a C-pen.



After the implementation of the technology-based inclusive classroom activities 22 school team members and 53 parents evaluated the activities they were involved in, by completing a survey (there was one for school team members and one for parents). The evaluations were mostly positive.

Two quotes from the surveys:

- "Very rewarding tool [Osmo], we should dare to use this more in the classroom and not just individually." (teacher)

- "We are very grateful and happy with this device [AAC]. Our son has really changed (positively) because of it." (parent)

The results of the surveys can be found in this article.

SKATE Multiplier Events

In May, a multiplier event was organised in each partner country for teachers, professionals and other stakeholders in ECEC to share the project results.

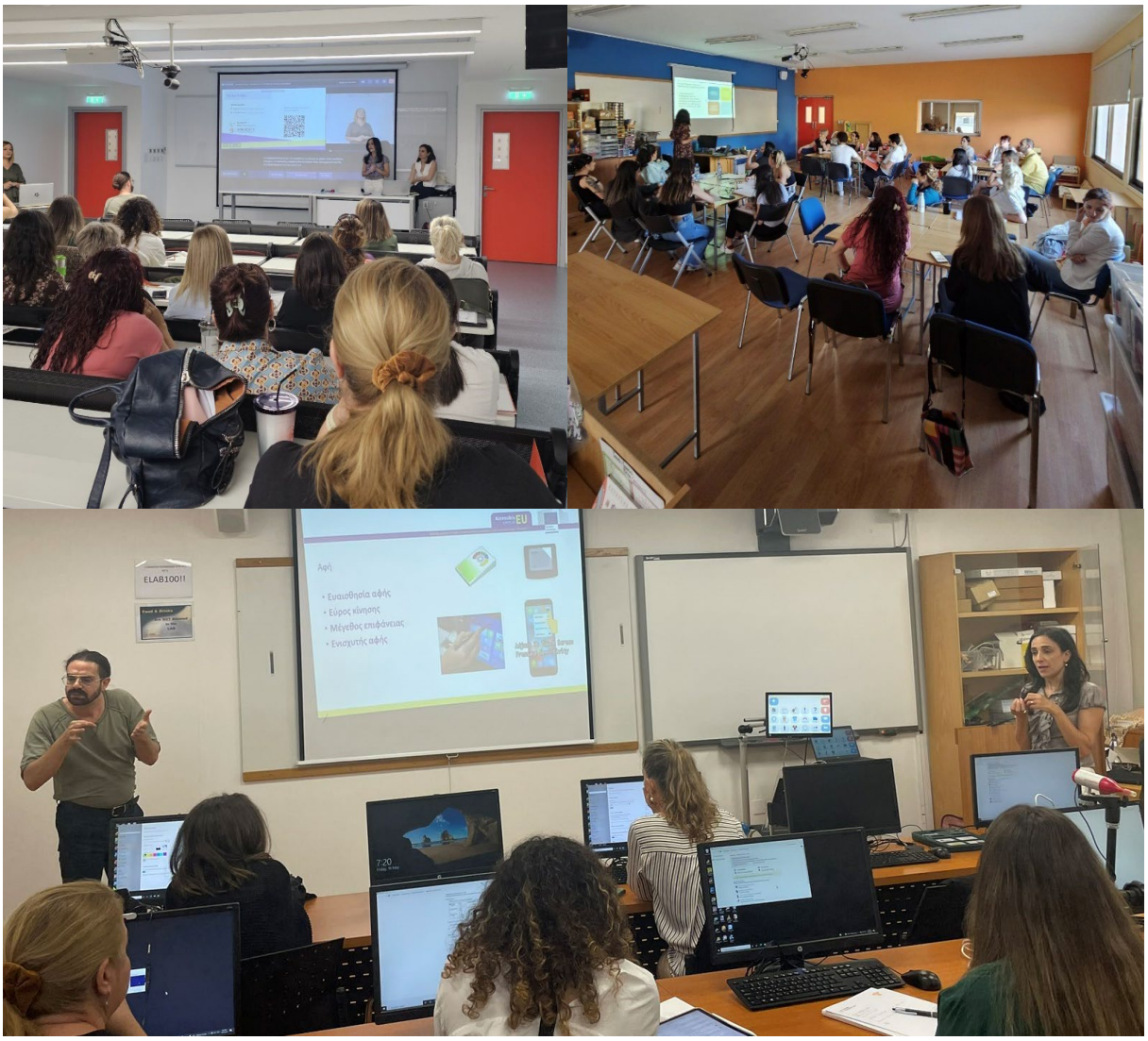
Cyprus

On May 19th, the SKATE Multiplier Event in Cyprus was organized.
96 education professionals and families were introduced to the SKATE project and basis information on AT and Accessibility in Education and beyond. After the plenary session, three parallel workshops took place:

- Workshop 1: Assistive Technology Open Lab

- Workshop 2: Accessible AT enhanced activities in ECEC

- Workshop 3: Captioning and accessible videos



Italy

In Italy the Multiplier Event was split in two days:

🔑 May 22th fourteen ECEC professionals and families learned more about facilitating inclusion for children between the ages of 0 and 6

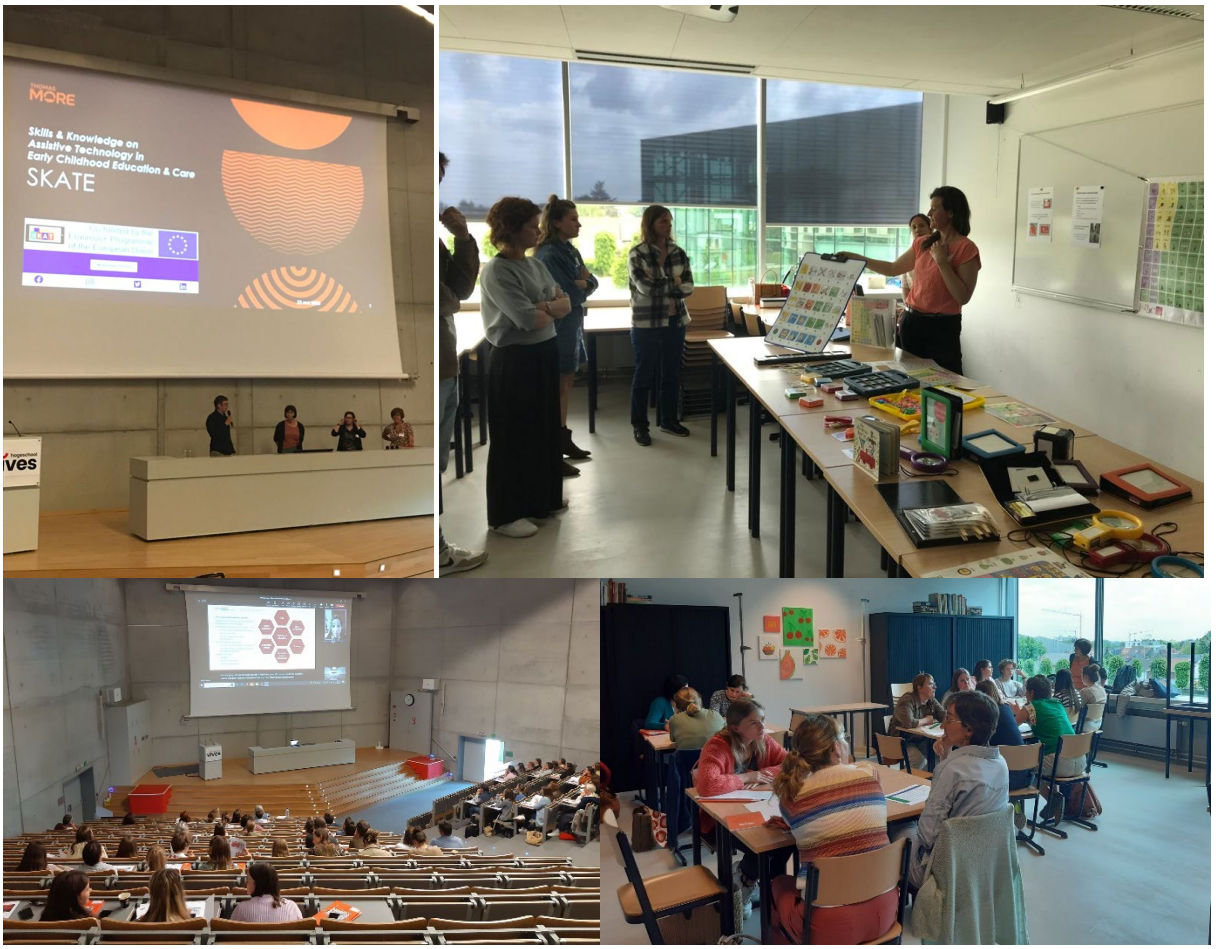
🔑 May 27th twenty-one ECEC professionals and families were introduced to the SKATE tools and methodologies for promoting inclusion with the use of (assistive) technology in Early Childhood Education

Belgium

On May 25th more than 80 teachers, educators and paramedics attended the SKATE Multiplier Event in Bruges, Belgium.

They got insight in the results of the SKATE project:

- How can ECEC be made more inclusive?
- Which (assistive) technologies can be used for this?
- Some inspiring examples of good practices from the project
- Experiences with inclusion and (assistive) technology in ECEC in Cyprus
- Hands-on workshops with (assistive) technology
- Practical workshops about the SKATE Competency Framework and SKATE Guidelines



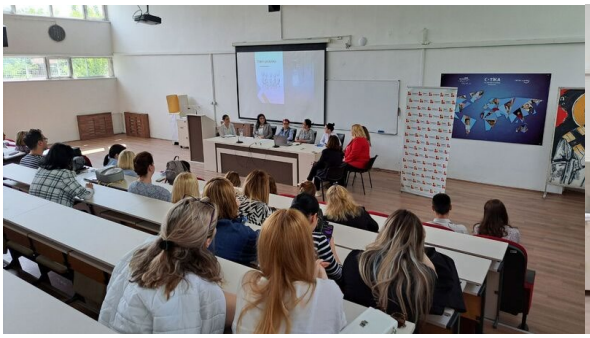
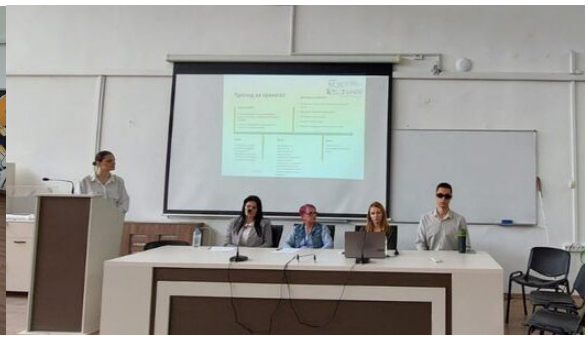
Republic of North Macedonia

In the Republic of North Macedonia the SKATE Multiplier Event took place on May 31st on the Pedagogical faculty of the country. Educators, teachers, parents and other relevant stakeholders learned about inclusion an (assistive) technology in ECEC.

The event had two parts:

- Presentation of the key results of the project

- A panel discussion in which the audience got to know more about piloting the SKATE Learning Programme and implementing the technology-based inclusive classroom activities

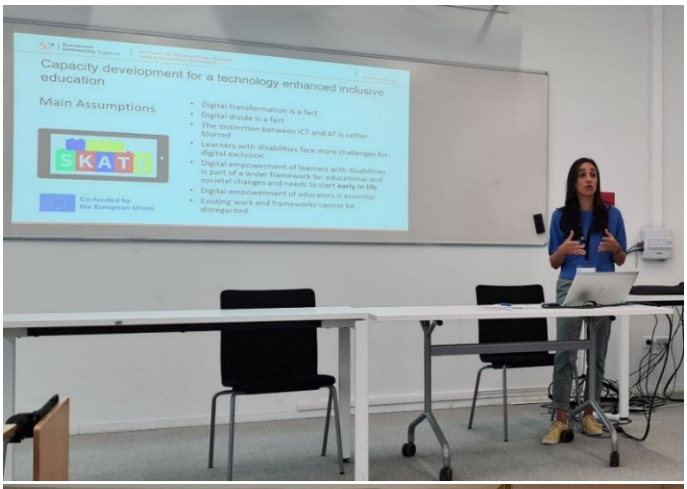
SKATE at the AAATE 2023 Conference

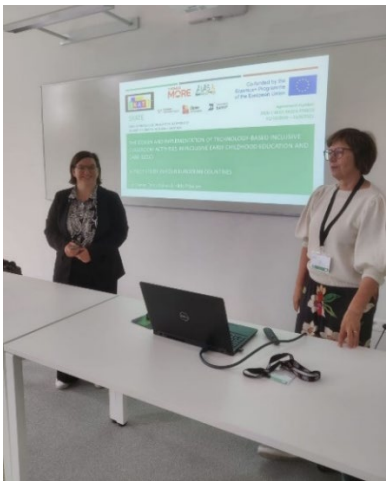
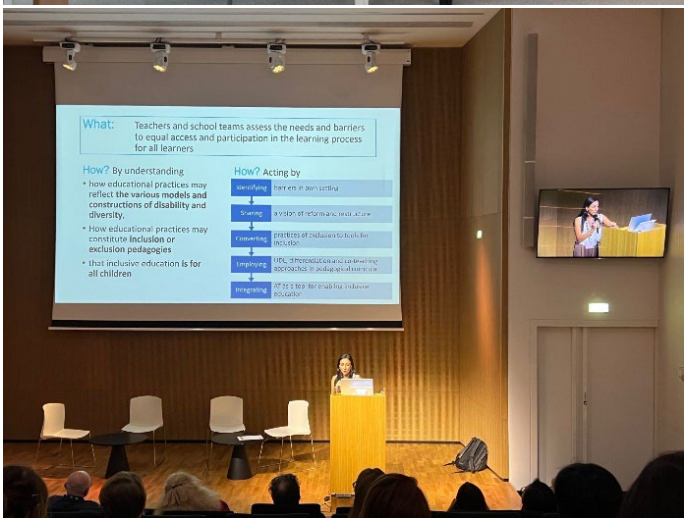
The SKATE project partners were at the 17h International Conference of the Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe (AAATE) in Paris from August, 30th until September, 1st!

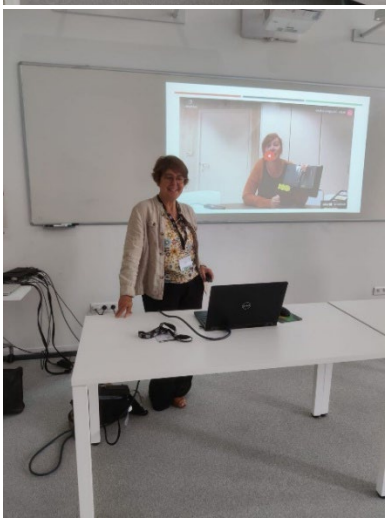
The consortium presented:

- The Design and Implementation of Technology Based Inclusive Classroom Activities in Inclusive Early Childhood Education and Care: a Pilot Study in Four European Countries.
- The SKATE Competency Framework.

And the SKATE project was acknowledged during the presentation of the UNICEF guide '*The use of Assistive Technology in Inclusive Education: A guide for teachers and school teams*', by Katerina Mavrou. The SKATE Competency Framework and the SKATE Guidelines have been adopted and adapted for the development of the guide, together with some previous research work in the field of assistive technology in education, and SKATE is a core element in the content of the guide.



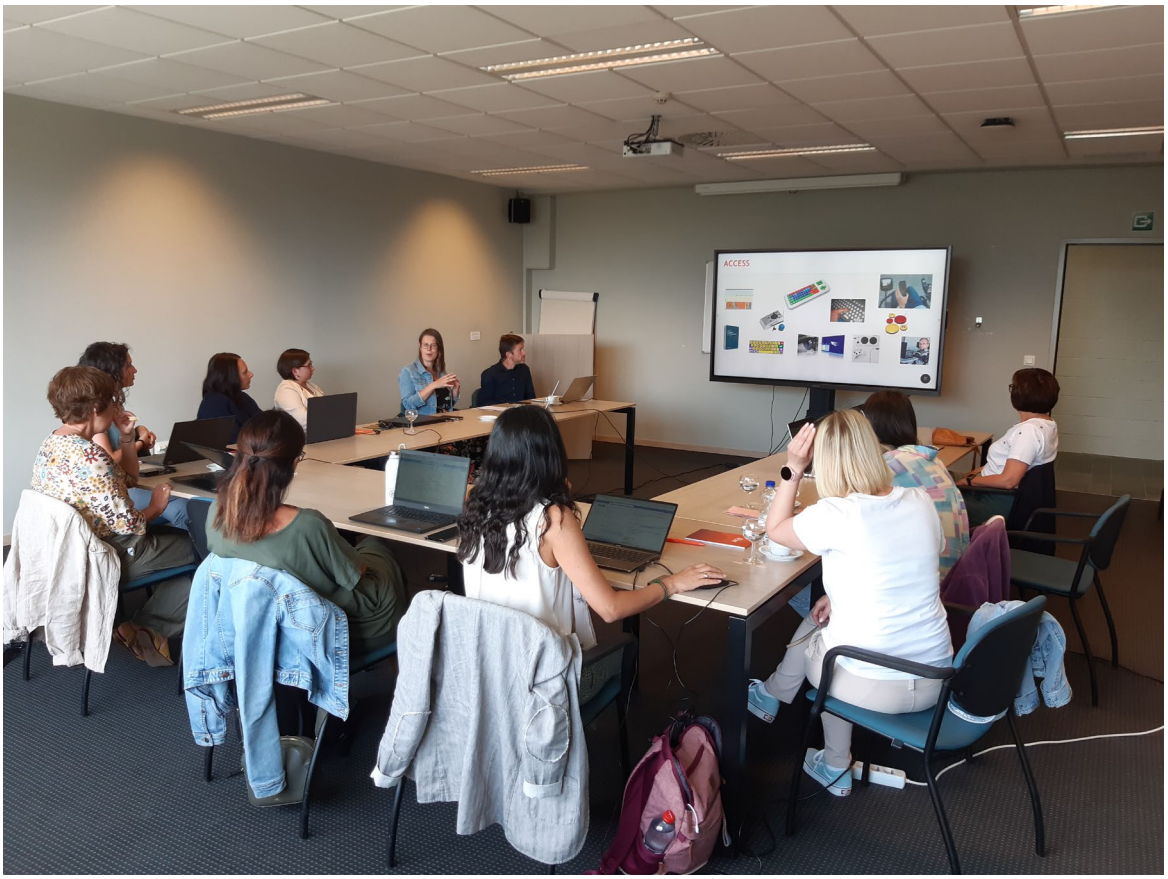


SKATE team came together for the last time!

After three years, this Erasmus+ project unfortunately came to an end. During the last physical meeting at the Thomas More campus in Geel, we looked back on the project and looked to the future.

Some of the conclusions after the transnational meeting and project:

👉 Great results and materials that can be used by ECEC settings to create digital inclusive learning environments.
👉 Amazing collaboration between International partners: Mobilab & Care, Dominiek Savio, AIAS Bologna Onlus, European University Cyprus, Open the Windows.
👉 Best practice and expertise exchange between four European countries.
👉 Lots of motivation and new project ideas to promote inclusion and (assistive) technologies.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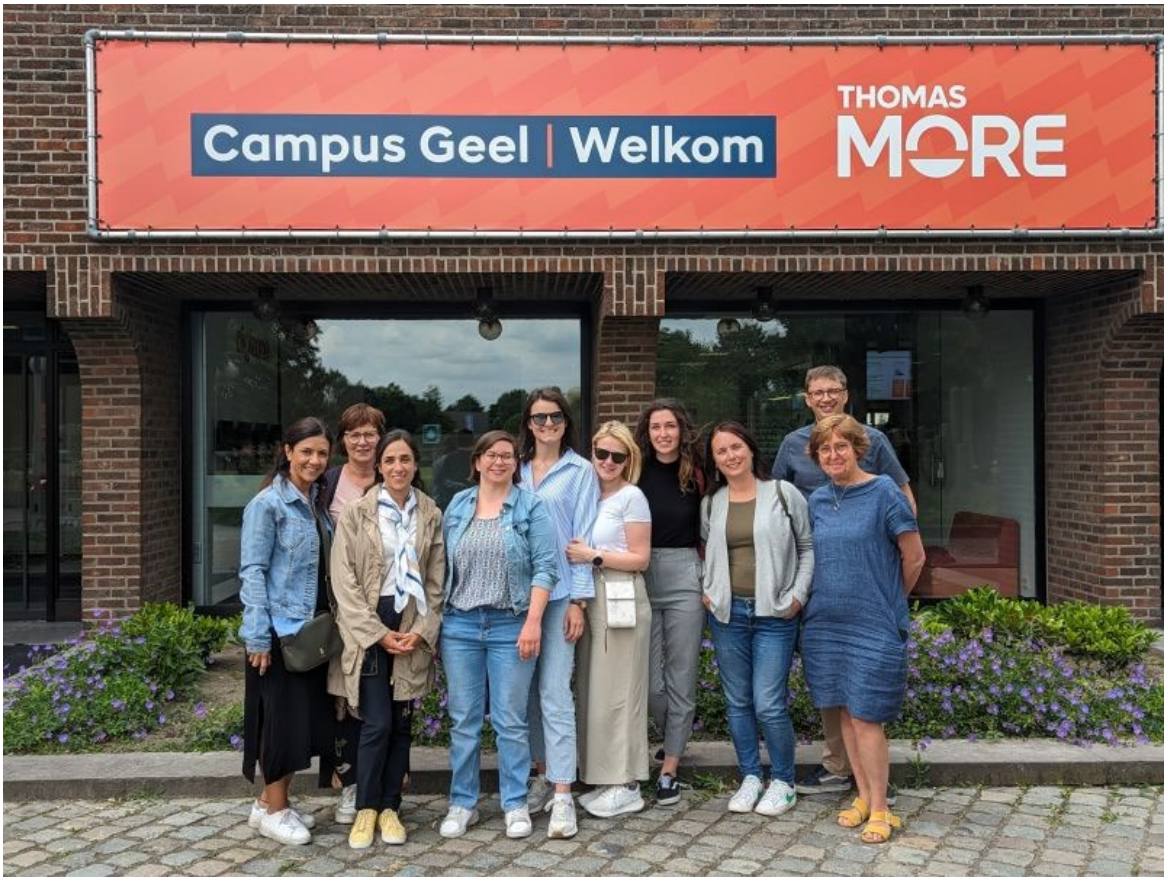
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Thank you for following the SKATE project and good luck with implementing the SKATE tools in your setting. If you need help, e.g., SKATE trainings, don't hesitate to contact us: skate@thomasmore.be

We hope that this project will be a stimulus for the correct implementation of (assistive) technology from young age to facilitate inclusion of all children

Check out our socials!