



EAEA STATEMENT ON THE DRAFT JOINT REPORT ON ET 2020

The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) welcomes the draft joint report and the new priorities. EAEA welcomes the renewed focus on lifelong learning systems and the fact that adult learning remains a key part of the ET2020 strategic framework.

We agree that the stronger focus on civic competences and active citizenship is a timely and necessary development and would like to underline that this is not only crucial for children and young people, but also for adults, who are, for example, currently faced with large numbers of refugees coming to Europe. We believe that adult education is key in welcoming and integrating people as well as working with the host populations in order to reduce negative myths and fears of the Other.

While EAEA concurs that adult learning is the basis for upskilling and re-skilling, we would like to underline that adult learning is much more – adult learning is not only the bridge into more formal and/or vocational learning for many, but also a meeting space, the space for personal development, health and well-being, active aging, democratic participation and much more.

EAEA therefore proposes that adult learning remains a key part in all the priorities and that the cooperation between the DG EAC and DG EMPL are strengthened to ensure the implementation of these priorities. Adult education will be an important part of the upcoming skills agenda but has to remain a key component of ET 2020 in all the priorities.

Concerning the specific adult learning priorities laid out in Annex II, EAEA generally agrees but would like to extend them. It is true that workplace learning is a good strategy to reach out to potential learners, but it is only one part. Community and family learning have proven to be very successful in attracting new learners, and should therefore be mentioned as potential ways for access. Additionally, EAEA believes that, in many countries, the need to strengthen the infrastructure for adult learning, through and in cooperation with providers, is necessary.

Whilst the notion of sustainable investment in adult education systems is welcomed, we would caution against relying on private investment, or an increasing privatisation of education. Adult education for the most part reaches the most disadvantaged people, this requires time and is resource intensive but is vital for social cohesion. To equate the outcomes of adult education to other parts of the education system, where the learner cohort is more advantaged, will further undermine the poorly funded adult education system. The likelihood of non-formal education attracting private funds for socially orientated programmes is unlikely. Non-formal education needs sustainable funding in order to deliver on the proposed role of education in "promoting equity and non-discrimination and in imparting fundamental values, intercultural competences and active citizenship" (p.3). Non-formal education is key to achieving this goal and accordingly, should be publicly funded.