

SUMMIT

Spring 2009

EAEA input for the Employment summit of May 7 2009 and the Commission's forthcoming contribution to the June European Council

- Lifelong learning is an investment. Now is the time to implement the plans such as establishing national systems of lifelong learning. Through campaigns and efforts from all stakeholders we can create a lifelong learning culture in Europe. This needs strong partnerships on national, regional and local levels, an involvement of government, social partners and civil society. Non-formal adult education can play a crucial part in reaching and teaching adults.
- Now is a good time to implement the European Commission's Action Plan for adult learning, and especially the 3rd key action: Increase the possibilities for adults to go one step up and achieve at least one level higher qualification. Member States should explore the possibility of setting national targets increasing the skill level of the target population (see the Adult Education Initiative (1997-2002), the largest ever investment in adult education in Sweden)
- EAEA asks the Commission and member states to investigate how learning opportunities could prepare those most at risk of long term unemployment to meet new challenges both in the work place and in their personal lives. Benchmarks could be set in relation to the percentage of unemployed people participating in education (incl. non-formal learning) and training.
- EAEA suggests that member states establish a guidance service that helps adults in vulnerable employment situations to plan their careers and gain an insight into any further education and training that might increase their employability in a new economic environment, which includes the recognition and validation of their skills and experiences. It may mean redirecting systems to meet the needs of particular target groups in partnership with social partners and adult education organisations.
- In addition the further development of adult education services addressing key competences may be required to help people develop generic skills such as literacy, numeracy, use of ICT, problem solving and social skills etc. This could be part of an activation model at a time of increasing unemployment. Also, for vulnerable groups the combination of basic education and vocational training, i.e. embedded learning has been proven successful and can contribute to employability.
- The barriers to learning should be examined by the member states. In particular several member states restrict unemployed peoples access to learning since enrolment in a course may be seen as limiting a person's chance to get a job.
- Consultation with potential learners (as well as examining labour market needs) is required if programmes are to be designed that motivate people to learn.
- Modular approach to the programs of education and training (which gives the possibility to adapt to the labour market needs, to individualize the learning/training program and make specific combination for each individual, enabling also different dynamic of the obtaining skills and certificates for everyone).
- Member states can create jobs in the third sector / civil society organisations, which will contribute to more employment and active citizenship at the same time.