



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

Marianne Thyssen
Commissioner-designate

Brussels, 18 September 2014

Adult education in the Skills portfolio

Dear Commissioner-designate, dear Ms Thyssen,

Congratulations on the nomination as Commissioner for Employment, Social affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility! This is an enormously important portfolio, and we look forward to working with you.

The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) is the voice of non-formal adult education in Europe. EAEA is a European NGO with 123 member organisations in 42 countries and represents more than 60 million learners Europe-wide. In Flanders, for example, our members are Socius - Steunpunt voor sociaal-cultureel volwassenenwerk, and the Agentschap Sociaal-Cultureel Werk voor jeugd en volwassenen.

Due to the move of the Skills portfolio to DG Employment, you will now also be responsible for adult education. In this regard, we have some concerns we would like to share with you:

- Non-vocational adult education covers a wide range of topics and many forms of learning: our members tackle basic skills training, prison education, arts, culture and leisure courses, languages, civic education and much more. Our target groups are young adults (including school drop-outs), professionals, unemployed people, migrants and seniors. We believe that adult education is important for upskilling, but also for active citizenship, personal development, families, health, social cohesion and many other areas.
- Adult education is a crucial part of lifelong learning, i.e. the learning pathway 'from cradle to grave' and needs to be recognized as an important sector next to schools, higher education and vocational training.

We therefore ask you, Ms Thyssen, to uphold a strategy for adult education that takes the wider understanding of adult education into account and that contributes to adult education being part of wider lifelong learning policies. We hope that you will insist on a close cooperation and coordination with DG EAC on this issue.

We would be happy to meet with you in order to discuss this further with you and provide more information and background material about (non-formal) adult education in Europe. We thank you in advance!

Yours sincerely,

Per Paludan Hansen
President

Gina Ebner
Secretary-General