



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR  
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

## **EAEA STATEMENT: ADULT EDUCATION CAN PLAY A KEY ROLE IN THE CURRENT REFUGEE CRISIS**

Europe is facing a humanitarian catastrophe. European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) asks political leaders to show solidarity and strong leadership to respond to the current refugee crisis. The Association points out that adult education providers and civil society organisations provide fundamental support to respond to the arrival of refugees and to their long-term inclusion in their host countries.

The current refugee crisis in Europe brings to the light the fact that more solidarity is necessary among Member States of the European Union. EAEA calls for more political courage from all EU Member States to welcome refugees and provide them with the appropriate help upon arrival. Also the cooperation between the EU Member States and Non-EU countries that are affected, like Macedonia and Serbia.

EAEA stresses that adult learning is a part of the solution both for the refugees and for the host countries. It can help refugees integrate into their host countries. Adult education institutions provide e.g. language and citizenship courses that support refugees upon arrival. They can also play an important role in providing refugees information on their options and rights. Adult education institutions also organise intercultural meetings for new arrivals and locals. It is important that the original population understands who the refugees are, where they come from, why they have fled, what their status as refugees means and entails and what it means for the society to welcome new inhabitants. On the other hand, these meetings allow refugees to understand the local culture better.

EAEA stresses that education for tolerance and respect is very much needed at a time in which messages and acts of xenophobia are increasing all over Europe. Here again, non-formal adult education plays a crucial role. It promotes active citizenship, intercultural competences and fundamental values, and enables people to engage in a social change of society that leads to more solidarity, e.g. by forming civil society alliances and platforms.

Also civil society organisations have played a major role in the crisis. They have managed to support the refugees with food, with shelter, with linguistic and administrative support and with activities, where state support has been lacking. EAEA underlines that their work needs to be better recognised and supported.