



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR  
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

## EAEA PROPOSAL ON KEY COMPETENCES

### Response to the European Commission's consultation

The European Commission has started [a review of the key competences framework](#) that has been in place since 2008. Traditionally, this framework has been situated in the schools unit. Nevertheless, key competences are important for adults as well. To assume that key competences have to be fostered during one's youth and then remain static during the rest of one's life is just as outdated as assuming that once you have learned how to use a computer you'll never again need to learn any digital skills.

From new technologies to new challenges in life, people need to adapt. Additionally, interests, jobs, family situations change so that the need for key competences changes over a life course. Adult education is therefore a key actor for people to strengthen, explore and update their key competences – from language to technological and digital courses, personal development, arts and creativity.

[The European Association for the Education of Adults \(EAEA\)](#) therefore is disheartened that the main discourse on the key competences keeps talking about children and young people. Additionally, the recent call for a policy network for key competences was targeted at schools rather than education providers in general ('The network will promote the key competences approach in the area of school education and the raising of the basic skills levels among children and young people, particularly focusing on underachieving students with inadequate levels of functional literacy and numeracy.')

EAEA calls on the European institutions and especially the European Commission to recognise the importance of the continuous development of key competences for adults and therefore integrate general adult education in the framework.

The framework provides the opportunity to define the competences that people will need in order to manage their lives and the challenges of increasingly complex societies and work places. We believe that the framework should be built on principles that define the European approach to competences:

- a. following a humanistic approach;
- b. setting social inclusion and cohesion as a priority;
- c. enabling democratic societies;
- d. promoting sustainable lives and societies and
- e. endorsing open-minded communities.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/education/calls/2016-eac-S07\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/education/calls/2016-eac-S07_en)



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Based on a number of internal discussions, EAEA proposes the following updates to the framework:

Current framework	EAEA proposal
<p><b>Communicating in a mother tongue:</b> ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions both orally and in writing.</p> <p><b>Communicating in a foreign language:</b> as above, but includes mediation skills (i.e. summarising, paraphrasing, interpreting or translating) and intercultural understanding.</p>	<p><b>Linguistic competence</b> (to include register, forms of literacy etc. as well as 'other' languages)</p>
<p><b>Mathematical, scientific and technological competence:</b> sound mastery of numeracy, an understanding of the natural world and an ability to apply knowledge and technology to perceived human needs (such as medicine, transport or communication).</p>	<p><b>Mathematical, scientific and technological competence:</b> sound mastery of numeracy, an understanding of the natural world and an ability to apply knowledge and technology to perceived human needs (such as medicine, transport or communication).</p>
<p><b>Digital competence:</b> confident and critical usage of information and communications technology for work, leisure and communication.</p>	<p><b>Digital competence and media literacy:</b> confident and critical usage of information and communications technology for work, leisure and communication as well as the ability to understand difference between fact and opinion and how these can be manipulated.</p>
<p><b>Learning to learn:</b> ability to effectively manage one's own learning, either individually or in groups.</p>	<p><b>Learning to learn:</b> ability to effectively manage one's own learning, either individually or in groups.</p>
<p><b>Social and civic competences:</b> ability to participate effectively and constructively in one's social and working life and engage in active and democratic participation, especially in increasingly diverse societies.</p>	<p><b>Social and personal development competences:</b> ability to participate effectively and constructively in one's social and working life, autonomy, ability to develop further in your personal sphere, eg. resilience, health, self-care etc.</p> <p><b>Civic and democratic competences:</b> engage in active and democratic participation, especially in increasingly diverse societies, cultural backgrounds and religions, understand and engage in democratic structures and European values (equality, solidarity...) and understand contexts (cause and effects) of democracy, economy and society; critical thinking, intercultural and interreligious dialogues</p>
<p><b>Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship:</b> ability to turn ideas into action through creativity, innovation and risk taking as well as ability to plan and manage</p>	<p><b>Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship:</b> ability to turn ideas into action through creativity, innovation and risk taking as well as ability to plan and manage projects,</p>



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projects.	creative thinking.
<b>Cultural awareness and expression:</b> ability to appreciate the creative importance of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media such as music, literature and visual and performing arts.	<b>Cultural awareness and expression:</b> ability to appreciate the creative importance of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media such as music, literature and visual and performing arts.
	<b>Sustainable development:</b> natural resource(s) management respecting sustainable development principles; competence of social responsibility such as understanding and participating in group processes, communities; competence of rational resource(s) management, such as understanding financial, economic and ecological contexts.

### More information

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*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 141 member organisations in 45 countries and represents more than 60 million learners Europe-wide.*