



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

EAEA welcomes the Skills Agenda – a huge opportunity for Europe

EAEA strongly welcomes the new initiatives “[Skills Agenda](#)”, and particularly the “[Skills Guarantee](#)” published by the [European Commission](#). These ambitious initiatives have the potential to make a real difference in the lives of many citizens in Europe and to create positive changes by upskilling people that really need it. In particular the “Skills Guarantee” is a step in the right direction for adult learning and for low-skilled people. As the Communication rightly says, “most members of Europe’s workforce in the next two decades are already adults today”, which is why a focus on adult education to reskill and upskill people is very much needed.

Skills recognition across borders needed

EAEA agrees with several key points in the initiatives, such as the necessity to increase participation in lifelong learning and to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to attain at least the equivalent level to upper secondary education qualification. In this endeavor, outreach to disadvantaged groups, in particular migrants and refugees, is essential.

We also agree with the necessity to have skills recognised, especially for people who have acquired their skills through non-traditional or informal ways. The focus on the recognition of skills across borders is crucial in times of intense mobility of workers. Opening opportunities for skills recognition and validation to non-EU workers such as migrants and refugees is very relevant. Ensuring continuous skills development of the workforce is necessary to allow people to develop in their careers and to ensure that they have the right skills for tomorrow’s jobs.

Non-formal education is key in learner outreach

EAEA wants to underline the potential of non-formal adult education to reach out to and empower learners. Therefore the importance of its provision and of its recognition needs to be even more strengthened in the Communication. Non-formal education is only mentioned through the lens of skills recognition, not as a provider of learning opportunities and a facilitator of life skills acquisition that needs to be supported. While we understand the emphasis on workplace learning, we would like to highlight that this is only one area for reaching out to potential learners. The EAEA-led Grundtvig network [Outreach – Empowerment – Diversity](#) has identified a large number of interesting outreach initiatives in non-formal adult learning that can serve as inspiration.

EAEA misses an emphasis on skills such as critical thinking, problem solving or learning to learn (which are best acquired through non-formal education and learning) and proposes that these should be strengthened in the planned adaptation of the key competences framework.

Coherent competence policy through linking the strategies

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EAEA would like to strengthen even more the understanding of learners not only as workers / employees but also as citizens, parents, voters, consumers, etc. It is crucial to understand the needs of the whole person on the one hand but also society on the other. In this context, we would like to see a close link of the Skills Agenda with other Commission strategies. Recent elections have clearly shown that the level of education is closely related to the voting behaviour of individuals. EAEA therefore proposes to link the new Skills Agenda closely with the [Paris Declaration](#) and to put a particular focus on civic, democratic and intercultural competences in the adaption of the key competences framework.

In order to implement the Skills Agenda and especially the Skills Guarantee, investments will be necessary. We call on all member states and stakeholders to take this challenge seriously as the only thing that will be more expensive is not to invest in the learning of Europeans.

EAEA confirms that adult education civil society and providers are ready to contribute and to participate in making the Skills Agenda and Skills Guarantee a success.

EAEA will soon publish a more detailed policy statement, after a more thorough analysis of the Communication.

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