



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

ACTIVITY REPORT 2014

GA-23.6.2015-03-01-GE



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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1. HIGHLIGHTS

EVENTS

- Conference on OED – Outreach, Empowerment, Diversity
- General Assembly with a thematic focus on Adult Education and Democracy
- Conference on the theme “Remembering World War I for the Future – Adult Education promoting Peace and Cohesion in Europe” in Sarajevo
- EAEA Grundtvig Award ceremony in Sarajevo
- Workshop on adult education and development cooperation
- EAEA Younger Staff Training

ADVOCACY

- MEP candidates and their views on adult education
- Participation in European Commission’s working group on adult learning
- Participation in Lifelong Learning Week at the European Parliament
- Presentations and inputs at a number of conferences
- Regular meetings with policy-makers

PUBLICATIONS

- EAEA Grundtvig Award Brochure
- Country reports: “Adult Education in Europe 2014: a civil society view”
- RENEWAL publications
- OED publications



OED Conference in June 2014.

STATEMENTS

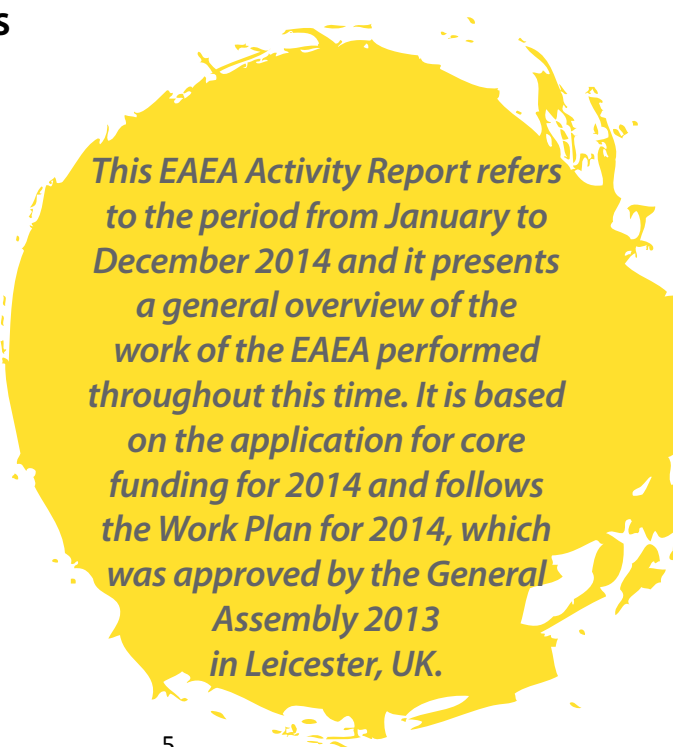
- Response to the European Commission's Communication "Opening up Education"
- Recommendations: PIAAC – A Wake-up Call for Europe!
- Response to the Commission's consultation on Skills and Qualifications
- Response to the European Commission's consultation on Value Added Tax (VAT)
- Recommendations for the improvement of Erasmus+ programme
- EAEA Statement on the Commission's Stakeholder Consultation guidelines
- EAEA response to the EU2020 strategy consultation
- EAEA position paper on TTIP

COORDINATED PROJECTS

- AE-Pro
- AVA
- OED – Outreach, Empowerment, Diversity
- RENEWAL

PARTNER PROJECTS

- AEMA
- BeLL
- EDU-FIN
- ELINET
- Know your lifestyle
- InfoNet III
- ROM-ACT



This EAEA Activity Report refers to the period from January to December 2014 and it presents a general overview of the work of the EAEA performed throughout this time. It is based on the application for core funding for 2014 and follows the Work Plan for 2014, which was approved by the General Assembly 2013 in Leicester, UK.

2. INFLUENCING PUBLIC POLICY

2014 saw the election campaign and start of a new European Commission and European Parliament, the start of the Erasmus+ programme and the move of the adult education unit from Directorate-General for Education & Training (DG EAC) to Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion (DG EMPL).

2.1 MAINTAINING CONTACTS WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND OTHER EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

EAEA has had regular contacts with the adult education unit in the DG EAC. Informal meetings took place throughout the year, and regular exchanges about plans and opinions took place. After the move of the adult education unit to DG EMPL, the same persons are in charge of adult education and EAEA continued its close collaboration with them.

With the election of a new European Parliament, EAEA contacted newly elected MEPs. EAEA was successful at identifying politicians that care for adult education and want to engage in collaboration with EAEA, as with MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen and MEP Julie Ward.

The Commission was represented at the OED – Outreach, Empowerment, Diversity Conference by Paul Holdsworth, Head of Sector “adult education” in DG EAC. At the EAEA Younger Staff Training in December, Martina Ni Cheallaigh represented the Commission to present the EU policies and programmes in adult education.

EAEA joined the new Commission Working Group on adult learning. President Per Paludan Hansen is the main representative, the Secretary-General the substitute.

Via the European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL), the relationship with other units in DG EAC has been reinforced and EAEA has been very active in the stakeholder initiatives.

2.2 LOBBYING FOR LIFELONG LEARNING, ADULT EDUCATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY

2014 saw big changes at the European level. Indeed, 2014 was the year of European elections after which a new Parliament started to work and a new Commission was put in place. EAEA's advocacy for adult education on the European level continued. It also took place through EAEA members at national level.

Before the parliamentary elections, EAEA contacted the candidates, asking some key questions on adult education in Europe. Their answers were made public on the EAEA website. This was a first way to get in touch with future MEPs. After the election results were known, EAEA contacted the MEPs to ask for support concerning the choice of the new Commissioner and also the move of adult education to DG EMPL instead of DG EAC. In this way, EAEA could create closer contacts with several MEPs right from the start of their term.

Another important lobbying action concerned the new Erasmus+ programme. First application rounds started and were completed in 2014. EAEA gathered feedback from its members to address recommendations to the Commission for the improvement of the programme. EAEA and EUCIS-LLL worked successfully together to support this feedback in order to bring the programme closer to the education reality. The Commission sent a detailed answer to the feedback, asking for more feedback from the next round on.

EAEA continued to play an active role in the EUCIS-LLL, Social Platform as well as International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) and the European NGO confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD). Via the EUCIS-LLL Platform, EAEA continues to be represented in the Civil Society Liaison Group of the Economic and Social Committee; whenever education and training are on the agenda, adult education is one of the themes that are being discussed.

EAEA was also very present at EUCIS-LLL's Lifelong Learning Week. Secretary-General Gina Ebner was a speaker at the launch of the Flagship initiative on "Fighting discriminations and inequalities in education and training". EAEA also participated daily in the exhibition dedicated to EUCIS-LLL members' work.

2.3 PLATFORM MEMBERSHIPS

EAEA is a member of the ICAE (see chapter 3.1), EUCIS-LLL (see chapter 2.4) and is currently also an observer at CONCORD. In 2014, EAEA changed its membership status in Social Platform from being a full member to being an associate member, as this is more relevant seeing the focus of the Social Platform. EAEA remains very involved in the work of the Social Platform that is most relevant for the association; EAEA has contributed for example in the Social Platform's position paper on TTIP in its part on social services and education.

2.4 EUCIS-LLL – THE EUROPEAN CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM ON LIFELONG LEARNING



EUCIS-LLL

In 2014, EUCIS-LLL continued to receive core funding from the Commission and was therefore able to continue its office in Brussels and organise various activities.

The following overview presents the main events organised by EUCIS-LLL in 2014 :

- Policy debate “Digital wave: Supporting a cultural shift in learning systems?”;
- Annual Conference on the ET2020 Review: “Addressing Inequalities in Education and Training”;
- CSCG 2nd Citizens Summit – co-organisation of workshop “Power and Democracy”;
- European Education, Training and Youth (ETY) Forum;
- Peer Learning Session on Erasmus+ KA3 actions;
- Lifelong Learning Week “Building Together the Future of Learning”;
- Round table on “Efficient and equitable funding of education: A target beyond reach?”;
- Policy debate on Validation of non-formal and informal learning: “All aboard! How to reach the targeted public?”;
- Seminar on “Inclusive Education: Fighting inequalities in education and training”;
- EUCIS-LLL Seminar – Launch of the flagship initiative on “Inclusive Education. Fighting inequalities in education and training”.

EUCIS-LLL supported the European Commission in the organisation of the third edition of the European Education, Training and Youth Forum, 9–10 October in Brussels, which aimed to bring together various stakeholders in order to discuss key policy developments linked to the Europe 2020 strategy, the strategic framework for European cooperation in Education and Training (ET2020) and the European Youth strategy. The 2014 Forum title was “Future Priorities of the ET 2020 Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training and Synergies with Youth Policy” and it was also an occasion to underline opportunities offered by the new EU education, training and youth programme 2014–2020 Erasmus+.

2.5 STATEMENTS AND OPINIONS

In order to be recognised as a policy actor and significant representative of a civil society sector, an organisation in Brussels needs to take position, present opinions on policies, offer clear perspectives of strategies and produce convincing policy recommendations. EAEA contributed to EU policies with the following papers, recommendations and responses in 2014 (see chapter 9 for more information):

- Response to the EC Communication “Opening up Education”;
- Recommendations: PIAAC – A Wake-up Call for Europe!;
- Response to the Commission’s consultation on Skills and Qualifications;
- Response to the EC consultation on VAT;
- Recommendations for the improvement of Erasmus+ programme;
- EAEA Statement on the EC Stakeholder Consultation guidelines;
- EAEA response to the EU2020 strategy consultation;
- EAEA position paper on TTIP.

EAEA has also taken the topic of the TTIP very seriously, and has written to Commissioner for Trade Cecilia Malmström on this issue, published an official reaction and dedicated an own policy page on the issue in the EAEA webpages.



2.6 RAISING VISIBILITY

In addition to the meetings with policy-makers, EAEA tries to be present at other meetings and/or receives invitations to conferences. These are all opportunities to present EAEA and its viewpoints.

EAEA, i.e. the President, Vice-Presidents, Board Members and Secretariat, were invited to participate and/or do presentations in thematic working groups, conferences and meetings:

- EACEA Infoday: Kick-off meeting of new Grundtvig projects 2014, Brussels (Belgium), 30 January
- Infosession, Erasmus+, adult education by the Belgian French-speaking National Agency, Brussels, 31 January
- EUCIS-LLL policy debate “Digital wave: supporting a cultural shift in learning systems?”, Brussels, 4 March
- Regionalkonferenz “Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung in Niedersachsen”, Hannover (Germany), 26–27 March
- Webinar European Year for Development (EYD2015), Brussels, 24 April
- Fourth International Adult education conference, Iasi (Romania), 28 April–2 May
- CONCORD EPAN Working group, Brussels, 12 May
- ELINET Conference, Budapest (Hungary), 21 May–23 May
- EUCIS-LLL Conference and General Assembly, Brussels, 2–3 June
- OED conference, Brussels, 17 June
- Social Platform Steering Committee Meeting, Brussels, 24 June
- 9th EU Poverty Platform Stakeholders Dialogue meeting, Brussels, 25 June
- Erasmus + Coalition, peer-learning event by EUCIS-LLL, Brussels, 30 June
- Future Forum in Bolzano (Italy), 2–3 July
- Europe+ launch, Brussels, 8 July
- OFAJ/DFJW: Europa-Café: Diskussionstisch “Europa, das DFJW, die Jugend und ich: politische Dimension, Synergien und Perspektiven”, Brussels, 1 October
- Forum on Education and Training, Brussels, 6–7 October 2014
- Asia-Europe People’s Forum (AEPF) conference, Milan (Italy), 10–12 October
- European Commission working group on basic skills, Stuttgart (Germany), 26–27 October
- EUCIS-LLL Lifelong learning Week, Brussels, 8–11 December

3. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

3.1 COOPERATION WITH ICAE AND ASPBAE

EAEA has established a close cooperation with International Council of Adult Education (ICAE) and Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) in order to work together on common policy issues as well as projects, regarding for example climate development cooperation, validation, change, migration, etc.



Katarina Popovic, EAEA Executive Board Member from 2008 to 2014, was appointed Secretary-General of ICAE. Andre Schläfli from Switzerland represents EAEA and the European region in the board of the ICAE as Vice-President. Rene Raya from ASPBAE participated in EAEA's workshop on "Youth and Adult Education



Asia South Pacific Association
for Basic and Adult Education
Learning Beyond Boundaries

for Post-2015 Agenda: Ensuring Public Financing of Education" at the Asia-Europe People's Forum (AEPF): "Towards a Just and Inclusive Asia and Europe – Building States of Citizens for Citizens". After presenting major

trends in youth and adult education in Europe and in Asia, and discussing the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and whether it is a threat to adult education in Europe, participants came up with several recommendations that were included in the conference's final recommendations.

3.2 DEVELOPMENT

What is the role of lifelong learning in development cooperation? Which role could civil society stakeholders in development play in promoting lifelong learning? To discuss these issues, the advisory group on "Adult Education and Development: LLL for all", composed of civil society and EU representatives, met for a workshop on 5 March 2014, at the EAEA Secretariat in Brussels.

“To date, the connection between adult education and development has not been investigated sufficiently. However, the message was clearly understood that adult education and vocational training should play a bigger role in development policy,” said Uwe Gartenschlaeger from DVV International.

Newer developments in the UNESCO show that there has been a shift from primary education to lifelong learning and technical and vocational training and education (TVET). Furthermore, the European Commission (EC) has conducted research on cooperation projects in the TVET field.

Donatella Gobbi from the European Commission’s Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) presented the

Commission’s study TVET and Skills Development in EU Development Cooperation which was released in January 2014. The approach of the EU was a long time focused on academic skills. Lately, there has been a shift towards Skills Development (SD) and Vocational Training and Education (VET). “For the jobs of today and tomorrow – because we live in times of globalisation – skills and competences required in particular occupations play a major role,” stated Ms. Gobbi.



This is not only true for EU countries, but also for developing countries. Since 2012, there has been a “renaissance” of VET and Skills Development.

Implementing VET and adult education policies in development is not an easy task. “VET financing in development is still the weakest link in all current reforms and the sustainability of projects is always a big question mark. Policies still neglect the informal workers, and there is a lack of quality in education, synchronisation with national programmes, and coordination with other donors,” said Ms. Gobbi.

She called for solid evidence-based analysis and information on the Labor Market and VET system in order to better focus the projects. “Early and systematic involvement of social partners and businesses in project formulation and delivery increases effectiveness, ownership, sustainability and impact. Support to local skills development initiatives often prove more relevant and effective,” she stated.

Consequently, development cooperation asks for new strategies, concepts and indicators in TVET and Skills Development. There is need for better and simpler financing, organisation and management of projects, and better quality and access to TVET. “However, taking into account the often difficult political and economic situation in developing countries, these processes need time,” remarked Ms Gobbi.

The advisory group on “Adult Education and Development: LLL for all” was formed in 2012 by EAEA and DVV International. The group targets at establishing a dialogue among education and development stakeholders on the challenges and opportunities for non-formal adult education in the development sector.



Working group at the OED Conference.

4. CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

4.1 OED – OUTREACH, EMPOWERMENT, DIVERSITY – EAEA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

EAEA's Annual Conference 2014 was the final conference of the OED – Outreach, Empowerment, Diversity project. Around 100 practitioners, adult education trainers, education stakeholders and policy makers discussed the OED results in Brussels on 17 June.

The main outcomes of the project – a collection of good practices, the OED Methodological Guidelines and the OED Policy Recommendations – were discussed by the conference participants, during the first part of the event. As a common conclusion, participants and organisers alike agreed that there is a clear need for a stronger focus on OED from the adult education sector and from policy makers.

During a panel discussion, Paul Holdsworth, from the Directorate-General for Education & Training (DG EAC) of the European Commission, Ji-Eun Chung from OECD, Joyce Black, the national coordinator of the UK for the European

Agenda for Adult Learning from EAEA's British member organisation NIACE and EAEA's Secretary-General Gina Ebner discussed how the OED recommendations could be implemented in the future policy agenda.

The panel moderator, Mark Ravenhall, underlined that a concrete roadmap on how to involve disadvantaged groups in adult learning is needed.

Paul Holdsworth highlighted that outreach and empowerment are mentioned in EU education priorities and initiatives, such as the Renewed European Agenda for adult learning. He added that national governments have the responsibility to provide funding for education. Ji-Eun Chung from OECD proposed that there are also innovative ways – such as online based learning or university night courses – that could be used to increase participation of disadvantaged groups.

During the conference the participants were also invited to explore the good practices selected in the project and the methodology guidelines developed by the project consortium. As they learned from the different practices they were also given a chance to have their say in providing ideas for the dissemination of project results as well as sharpening the policy recommendations.

The participants of the OED conference and the consortium members agreed that there is a need for the network – and further actions – beyond the end of the project.



Photo: Helka Repo



Photo: Helka Repo



EAEA also introduced its initiative for promoting a European Year of Adult Learning at the conference.

More information

- Website: www.oed-network.eu

4.2 EAEA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

See chapter 8.1.

4.3 EAEA GRUNDTVIG AWARD

See chapter 8.2.

4.4 WORKSHOP ON ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

See chapter 3.2.

4.5 EAEA YOUNGER STAFF TRAINING

The training “European Adult Education and Lifelong Learning – Introduction for the younger staff”, organised and hosted by EAEA, took place in Brussels from the 2nd to the 5th of December 2014.

Younger staff from various EU countries and also Georgia had the opportunity to hear about the EU institutions and their policies and programmes in the field of adult education thanks to meetings with representatives from the European Commission. Participants also met with civil society representatives from SOLIDAR and EUCIS-LLL.

Together with the colleagues from the first trainings in 2011, 2012 and 2013, we now have a network of about 50 young adult educators who continue to stay in contact with each other.



Photo: Valentina Chanina



Danish Adult Education Association (DAEA) visited EAEA Secretariat in October.

4.6 STUDY VISITS

In 2014, EAEA welcomed several study groups from member organisations in Brussels.

- 17 March: A group of adult educators from Sweden and one from Germany;
- 27 March: Study group from Sweden, Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan;
- 2 April: Study group from Germany, Arbeit und Leben;
- 26 May: Study group from Norway, Career Oppland Association;
- 25 September: Study group from Norway, Norwegian Association for Adult Learning (NAAL);
- 13 October: Study group from Sweden, Educational Association of the sobriety movement (NBV);
- 27 October: Study visit from Denmark, Danish Adult Education Association (DAEA).

5. PUBLICATIONS

5.1 EAEA GRUNDTVIG AWARD BROCHURE

EAEA published a summary of all the received submissions of the EAEA Grundtvig Award, thereby providing an outstanding collection of good practice examples across Europe and outside. The publication is available in PDF format on EAEA website.



5.2 ADULT EDUCATION IN EUROPE: A CIVIL SOCIETY VIEW

EAEA's members wrote together a shadow report of the situation of adult education in Europe. Country reports describe recent developments and future focus in the field of adult education, the impact of PIAAC and member's outlook. The publication is available in PDF format on EAEA website.



6. PROJECTS

Our aim is to be present in European projects of strategic importance with regard to advocacy policy in adult education and lifelong learning. EAEA is requested as a partner in European projects with increasing tendency. An important role that the association takes over in these projects is disseminating projects in development and project results as well as disseminating good practice examples.

EAEA COORDINATED PROJECTS 2014

6.1 AE-PRO – EUROPEAN ADULT EDUCATION (YOUNG) PROFESSIONALS LEARNING PLATFORM



In 2014, EAEA started the three-year project AE-Pro, which builds on the EAEA Younger Staff Training EAEA has organised since 2011. The objective is to allow more young staff in adult education to benefit from the course by providing it online and for free. The project

was created following the success of the training. The online training will contain a large part on the topic of adult education at the European level, and then several topics relevant for younger staff in adult education such as methodology in adult education, etc will be addressed.

The objective of the project is to:

- Increase the knowledge of staff about adult education in Europe;
- Increase the exchange of innovation between adult education staff across Europe;
- Increase the quality of adult education staff and providers;
- Increase the professionalisation (and quality) of adult education staff within and beyond Europe;
- Support exchange between different generations of adult education staff (intergenerational learning), and the learning of experts as well as peers;
- Increase the coordinated use of Grundtvig mobilities.

The network will:

- Provide a comprehensive training course for adult education staff that brings together European developments, peer learning about each others' systems and organisations and European mobility;
- Provide online training on European developments in adult education and learning;
- Create an online peer learning platform;
- Establish a network of trainers and experts;
- Build a sustainable mobility platform for adult education staff;
- Extend the EAEA younger staff network;
- Provide a portfolio for the acquired competences to complement national certification;
- Introduce a mobility charter for organisations hosting mobile (visiting) staff from other countries.

The course has been designed in the following way: a first compulsory part explores adult education at a European level with around six sessions on it. Participants have additionally optional courses. Four modules are available:

- Adult education practice in Europe;
- Adult Education policies;
- Pedagogical approaches/ Non-formal education methods;
- Working with specific target groups.

Participants have to choose two sessions from each module. They are encouraged to take part in the "live sessions" but the sessions will be recorded for those who can't attend the course. The launch of the e-training takes place in April 2015.

The partners met in Brussels for the first Steering Committee meeting on 18–19 February 2014, where partners launched the first phase of the project, outlined



the aims and objectives of the project and provided presentations on: the workplan, the training development, the division of tasks, quality criteria, and the development of an online peer learning platform.



The first Steering Committee meeting took place in Brussels in February.

The second steering committee meeting took place in Leicester (UK) on 5–6 November 2014. The content, methodology and structure of the e-training were decided upon, quality and evaluation were tackled, the learning platform was introduced and the dissemination plan was defined. The partners will meet soon

after the e-training has started, in May 2015 in Sweden.

Project partners:

- Kerigma (Portugal);
- DAEA (Denmark);
- RIO/FOLAC (Sweden);
- NIACE (United Kingdom);
- Adult Education Society (Serbia);
- The Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation – KVS (Finland);
- VHS Saarland (Germany);
- ICAE (Uruguay).

More information

Website: www.ae-pro.eu

6.2 AVA – ACTION PLAN FOR VALIDATION AND NON-FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION

In 2012, the European Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning¹ established that Member States (MS) should have validation systems in place by 2018. The consortium leading the AVA project believes that MS will have to face big challenges (and in some even resistance) while putting in place such systems and thus need to be supported more. Adult education providers and stakeholders can play a major role as they are often the implementing bodies of the validation systems. By analysing tools and methodologies in different European countries and proposing solutions from the civil society perspective, this project wants to contribute to reducing the fragmentation on different levels, namely policy and practice.



As the project consortium believes that validation is one of the key tools and components for lifelong learning to enable people to move vertically and horizontally in their personal lives and careers, it decided to focus on the inclusiveness' potential of the current validation systems. Therefore, in developing the project's results, a particular attention will be paid on the extent to which disadvantaged groups can access the validation systems, to their level of awareness of validation opportunities and the way in which providers and key actors can support them.

According to the AVA consortium, validation should be considered as a right. All citizens should be able to participate in validation arrangements, as these often work as a second chance opportunity; increase motivation for lifelong learning and help to bridge the gap between the job demand and supply by recognizing competences acquired outside the formal system.

¹ Council Recommendation of 20 December on validation of non-formal and informal learning. Official Journal of The European Communities, C 398, p.1

The network will:

- Draft and promote a survey addressing adult education providers, validation arrangement providers and analyse the collected results;
- Organise a jour fixe for presenting the results to a wider public (Vienna, Austria, October 2015);
- Organise an expert seminar for debating the main themes and outcomes of the survey (Oslo, Norway, February 2016), after developing an appropriate methodology for it.
- Draft an Action Plan providing key messages and actions targeted at both policy makers and adult education organisations;
- Organise a Policy Debate in Brussels and then further disseminate the Action Plan;
- Produce five articles on relevant issues related to the project's values and aims.

Project partners:

- KERIGMA (Portugal);
- Verband Österreichischer Volkshochschulen (Austria);
- Learn for Life – Dutch Platform for International Adult Learning (Netherlands);
- Asociația "EUROED" (Romania);
- Nordic Network for Adult Learning – NVL (Norway).



The AVA project was officially started in September 2014 and had its internal kick-off meeting in November 2014, in Utrecht, the Netherlands. In the first months of the project's lifespan, the consortium started working on the survey development, which was launched in February 2015.

More information

Website: www.eaea.org/en/projects/eaea-coordinated-projects/ava.html

6.3 OED – OUTREACH, EMPOWERMENT, DIVERSITY

OED is a Grundtvig network coordinated by EAEA which brings together 17 organisations from 14 countries. Its aim is to tackle the need for outreach to marginalised groups for the development of more diversity in adult education, and especially the inclusion of learners' voices, and for the empowerment of its learners to become active European citizens.



The project ended in November 2014 after 3 years of an intense activity. Within the project's lifespan it successfully:

- Provided a collection and analysis of good practice examples from across Europe that tackle the overlap of social inclusion and active citizenship;
- Analysed outreach strategies to marginalised groups and provided information to other adult education institutions on how to organise this;
- Developed empowerment strategies based on good practice and experiences of the network in order to activate learners from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- Improved teaching methodology for diverse target groups that empowers them and published methodology guidelines for trainers;
- Organised a workshop for trainers and experts on the use of the above-mentioned methodology guidelines;
- Provided policy recommendations that will tackle the integration of marginalised groups, their empowerment and participation in lifelong learning;
- Organised a European conference in Brussels to present the results.

As a result, the network improved approaches in reaching out to disadvantaged groups, promoting diversity in organisations, improving teaching methodology, promoting active citizenship by participatory strategies and supporting the development of better policies aimed at integration and lifelong learning.

In 2014 the OED network published the methodological guidelines for trainers and adult education institutions, organised an enriching conference in Brussels (June 2014) and released powerful policy recommendations addressed to



European and national policy-makers as well as to adult education providers.

Furthermore, the OED network published a final brochure titled: 'Engaging New Learners in Adult Education — Short guide for policy-makers and adult educators', which presents useful tips and

recommendations coming from three successful European projects and aims at linking the OED Network results to other innovative practices in the EU.

Project partners:

- Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung (Germany);
- The Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation – KVS (Finland; Partnership transferred from Finnish Adult Education Association in 2013);
- Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V (Germany);
- FOLAC – Learning for Active Citizenship (Sweden);
- International Organisation for Migration Vienna (Austria);
- Educational Disadvantage Centre, St Patricks' College (Ireland);
- HYDRA (Turkey);
- DAFNI KEK (Greece);
- Danish Adult Education Association (Denmark);
- La Ligue de l'Enseignement (France);
- National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (United Kingdom);
- Estonian Non-formal Adult Education Association (Estonia);
- NGO Home of Science and Technology (Bulgaria);
- Movimiento Por la Paz El Desarme y la Libertad (Spain);
- Drom Kotar Mestipen – Roma Association of Women (Spain);
- lernraum.wien – Wiener Volkshochschulen (Austria).

More information

Website: www.oed-network.eu

6.4 RENEWAL – REGIONAL NETWORKING FOR ADULT LEARNING IN EUROPE

The RENEWAL project aimed to strengthen the European Agenda for Adult Learning as well as to enhance the cooperation of adult education civil society in the Southern and Central Eastern regions, namely where participation in adult education is low and there is less infrastructure.



This was achieved by collecting insights on the concept and impact of the Agenda from adult education representatives and providers in the two regions and giving them the opportunity to discuss the main challenges and propose possible developments of the EU initiative. At the same time, by starting such a debate and creating room for stakeholders to exchange experiences and expertise, the project facilitated and boosted the transfer of innovation and consequently enhanced the cooperation in these two regions.

The project addressed practitioners, adult education professionals and policy makers in Europe, with a particular focus on the two regions mentioned. In order to reach the target groups better, the consortium was composed by an international association with a broad membership (EAEA) as well as two partners based in each of the targeted regions which could assist in developing the programme, promote the project and organise the meetings at the national and regional levels (Kerigma, Portugal and AIVD, Slovakia).

The project had the following outcomes:

- State-of-the-art report on the implementation of the Adult Learning Agenda in the two regions. The report contains information about each of the concerned countries and a first analysis of main challenges, developments and issues;
- Two regional meetings which raised awareness within the regions for the European Agenda, strengthened the networking in the regions and collected feedback and recommendations from the civil society;

- Two meetings reports which summarise the main results of both reports and meetings and concentrates on the messages and recommendations to the European Commission and national policy-makers.

The project's outcomes and results are serving as a basis for further reflection on the Adult Learning Agenda and on possible ways to realise effective cooperation within and between the targeted regions. Moreover, through the consortium networks and its communication channels, the debates will have strong echoes at the national and European levels.

RENEWAL was funded by a one-year Grundtvig Accompanying measure grant from the Lifelong Learning Programme (January 2014–December 2014).

More information

Website: www.eaea.org/en/projects/eaea-coordinated-projects/renewal.html



One of the regional meetings took place in Bratislava.

EAEA PARTNER PROJECTS 2014

6.5 BELL – BENEFITS OF LIFELONG LEARNING



Especially in times of economic crises, we need to underline how important adult learning and education are, and need to provide evidence and tools for our arguments, which is exactly what this project intends to do. The aim of the BeLL project was to analyse wider benefits of non-

vocational adult learning in nine European partner countries. The focus is on non-formal adult education, which is usually based on voluntary participation and non-vocational topics. The target groups are active adult learners, highly educated as well as lower educated persons, who have participated in nonformal education courses.

The key idea is to collect comparative data referring on a research framework from an earlier study conducted in Finland in 2008 (Manninen & Luukannel 2008). Previous research on the wider benefits of non-formal adult education have demonstrated that non-formal adult learning can lead to an increase in active citizenship, self-confidence, creativity and motivation for further learning, and contribute towards social capital (social networks and communities), identity capital (self-esteem etc.) and human capital (skills and competencies)².

Comparative data about learning opportunities and wider benefits will help member states to estimate their own situation, as well as to make evidence based decisions about development of provision of lifelong learning opportunities. Empirical evidence gained through this study will help to strengthen adult education in the different countries.

In 2014, the project's final year, the BeLL consortium published the results of the inspiring BeLL research and a leaflet summarising the main results. Furthermore, it organised a final conference in Bonn as well as a policy debate at the European Parliament.

More information

Website: www.bell-project.eu

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- 2 **Manninen, J. & Luukannel, S. 2008.** Omaehtoisen aikuisopiskelun vaikutukset. Vapaan sivistystyön opintojen merkitys ja vaikutukset aikuisten elämässä. Helsinki: VSY.
- Manninen, J. 2010.** Wider Benefits of Learning within Liberal Adult Education System in Finland. In: Horsdal, M. (ed.) Communication, Collaboration and Creativity: Researching Adult learning. Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag.
- Schuller, T., Preston, J., Hammond, C., Brassett-Grundy, A. & Bynner, J. 2004.** The Benefits of Learning. The impact of education on health, family life and social capital. London and New York.

6.6 EDU-FIN – FINANCIAL LITERACY FOR YOUNG ADULTS AT RISK



Financial literacy is especially low among certain demographic groups. One of these collectives is young adults at risk. Most young adults are ill-equipped to deal with ever-increasing financial responsibility. And their lack of financial education is probably one of the causes that reduces their opportunities of being competitive and access to learning and training opportunities. EDU-FIN aims to establish a learning curriculum on financial education based on the

contribution of young adults at risk which will allow meeting their real needs on financial literacy.

The outcomes of the EDU-FIN project will be:

- A comparative study on financial education programmes in the partnership countries;
- A methodology which promotes participative processes with young adults on the elaboration of educational curriculums;
- A curriculum on financial education addressed to young adults;
- National events for the recruitment of young adults for the national work teams;
- A transnational seminar for the dissemination of the methodology and curriculum;
- National seminars for the dissemination of the methodology and curriculum.

The partnership is formed by seven organisations:

- Asociacion de Personas Participantes Agora (ES) – Coordinator;
- Centro Studi e Formazione Villa Montesca – Società consortile a responsabilità limitata (IT);
- University of Warwick (UK);
- EAEA (BE);
- Universitaet fuer Weiterbildung Krems (AT);
- Amalipe Center za mezhduetnicheski dialog i tolerantnost (BG);
- Federation of Cultural and Adult Education Associations (ES).

EDU-FIN has been funded with support from the Erasmus+ programme of the European Commission. The project was officially launched in September 2014, but until the end of the year the consortium only started the preparatory work for the comparative study. The kick-off meeting is held in Barcelona in January 2015.

More information

Website: www.eaea.org/en/projects/partner-projects/edu-fin.html

6.7 AEMA – ADULT EDUCATION MADE ACCESSIBLE

Access to adult education is a key factor for inclusion. However, not everyone has got equal access to adult education. The



existing comparative data shows that people with disabilities are the group with the lowest rates of participation in post- and upper secondary educational settings, with the evident consequences on employment. Even in the EU Action Plan on Adult Learning (“It is always a good time to learn”) people with disabilities are seen as one of the most disadvantaged groups due to their low participation in adult education.

The AEMA Network, consisting of 12 organisations from 11 European countries, aims to change this, by developing a shared network and quality framework on accessibility issues in adult education provision. The network, funded with support from the Grundtvig programme of the European Commission, will reach out to people with disabilities, accessibility experts, disability organisations, governmental organisations, funding bodies and Adult Education providers, with the overall aim of increasing the accessibility, participation, transparency and quality of adult education in Europe.

The outcomes of the AEMA Network will be:

- A list of accessibility criteria based on the real life perspectives of people with disabilities and the achievements of adult education providers;
- A competency catalogue that clearly reflects what experts on accessibility should be able to do in order to support accessibility on the different accessibility domains;
- A one-Stop information portal (AEMAnet.eu). Adult education providers

and experts on accessibility will be able to use an electronic self-assessment system to rate either their level of achievement or degree of competencies. It will also support people with disabilities to identify adult education providers, which meet their specific accessibility needs;

- A system for the recognition of achievements and competencies through the issuing of accessibility quality and competency badges, to build the organisational structure for a one-stop accreditation and support service (Accessibility Check-Points), backed up by sustainable national trust networks, and to ensure sustainable exploitation of project results by elaborating the foundation for a European Quality Network;
- A qualitative and comprehensive “Accessibility Framework”, which include self-assessment tools and corresponding online applications for adult education providers and experts on accessibility.

In 2014 the AEMA network started to work on the first two outcomes and launched the AEMA online portal. EAEA supported the creation of the project’s dissemination strategy and launched a call for projects on accessibility which was instrumental to create a repository of good practice in the project website.

More information

Website: www.aemanet.eu

6.8 ROM-ACT – WIDENING ROMA WOMEN’S ACCESS TO NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING VALIDATION SYSTEMS



The aim of ROM-ACT is to widen recognition of the skills and competences that the Roma and Travellers communities have acquired in formal and non-formal activities. The project’s goal is to encourage adult education centres and civil society organisations to support non-academic Roma women in validation process of informal and non-formal learning.

The ROM-ACT project's innovative approach involves Roma women and invites them to make contributions and recommendations in order to improve the impact and the accessibility of non-formal and informal validation systems.



The outcomes of the project are the following:

- National and European reports on the state-of-art of the inclusiveness of the validation systems in the project partners' countries;
- Validate the non-formal and informal learning of 50 non-academic Roma women;
- Awareness raising campaigns to sensitize public opinion and adult education providers on the potential of validation in relation to disadvantaged groups;
- Lobbying campaigns for national governments with the aim to incorporate the contributions of the project in the non-formal and informal learning validation systems and give policy makers concrete recommendations on how to do it.

ROM-ACT is a three year Grundtvig Multilateral project coordinated by the Romani Association of Women Drom Kotar Mestipen (ES). The consortium is composed by 7 members from 6 countries. EAEA is responsible for coordinating the dissemination and conducting awareness raising and lobbying campaigns at the European level.

In 2014, the ROM-ACT consortium published the national and European reports, supported Roma women in the validation process in the concerned countries and drafted a policy paper which will be useful to carry out the lobbying campaign addressed to European and national policy-makers. ROM-ACT got an extension of the project's lifespan by the agency and thus will run until June 2015.

More information

Website: www.rom-act.eu

6.9 ELINET – EUROPEAN LITERACY POLICY NETWORK



ELINET is a union for organisations engaged in literacy policy-making and promotion in Europe. It aims at improving literacy policies in its members' countries in order to reduce the number of children, young people and adults with low literacy skills in Europe. The network was established in

February 2014 and received a € 3 million grant from the European Commission to complete a two-year work programme. This is targeted to develop evidence-based tools for all actors in the diverse field of literacy locally, regionally, nationally and transnationally, as well as support existing and initiate new activities.

ELINET is made up of 79 partner organisations from 28 countries (of which 24 are EU Member States). The ELINET partners comprise existing literacy networks and national literacy associations, education ministries and national agencies, international organisations (as UNESCO), foundations and NGO's, universities, research centres and teacher training institutions, volunteer organisations and other stakeholder groups working in the field of literacy. The network is coordinated by the University of Cologne.

ELINET follows the European Union High Level Group of Experts on Literacy which was established by the European Commission in January 2011 and reported in September 2012. This group examined how to support literacy throughout lifelong learning, identified common success factors of literacy programmes and policy initiatives, and came up with proposals for improving literacy.

ELINET intends to further expand and deepen the knowledge base of this report by developing:

- Separate Literacy Reports for all 28 countries involved;
- A common European framework of Good Practice in Literacy Policies across all age groups;
- Mechanisms to identify and exchange good practice examples based on this framework.

A major task of the network will consist of developing a strategic concept and corresponding tools for raising awareness about the importance of literacy issues among stakeholders, including policy makers, based on research of best practice examples throughout Europe. Additionally, ELINET will develop and pilot indicators for measuring the impact of awareness raising activities and will investigate funding sources for literacy promotion in order to develop tools and strategies for effective fundraising.

More information

Website: www.eli-net.eu

6.10 KNOW YOUR LIFESTYLE – INTRODUCING SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION IN 2ND-CHANCE EDUCATION



The project has the purpose to introduce global education in the second chance courses, to create an innovative pedagogical approach for discussing sustainable consumption and globalisation with second chance students and to establish a strong thematic network among Adult Education Centres and NGOs about development education. It is a three-year EuropeAid project, with DVV International as project coordinator, and Estonian Non-Formal Adult Education Association, Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE) and the Carinthian folk high schools as partners.

The final aim of the project is to make learners acknowledge the link between local personal consumption and the resulting global impact, and thus give young people the opportunity to look critically at their own consumption and to develop alternative courses of action.

The main outcomes of this project are:

- The development of teaching materials and training opportunities which will provide teachers with the capacity to deal with development education and globalisation;

- The organisation of activities embedded with the second chance course that will involve the students and creation of curriculums;
- A network in which experts not only in specific aspects of development politics, but also in development education or global learning get together and exchange methodologies and good practice.

In 2014 project partners finalised and tested the training material with 2nd-chance education providers in their countries. As disseminator partner, EAEA developed the valorisation plan and supported the coordinator in the development of the dissemination tools. Furthermore, EAEA supported the project coordinator with the organisational aspects of the dissemination workshop which will take place in Brussels in February 2015.

6.11 INFONET III



InfoNet III aims at:

- Providing a comprehensive, constantly growing database (InfoService) with reports (news, articles, background articles, interviews, etc.) related to adult education (currently around 600 articles);
- Providing a thematic information letter (InfoLetter), issued every two months as a PDF file with links to the InfoService database;
- Having a network of correspondents (journalists / experts) all across Europe;
- Cooperating with important organisations and networks.

Around 40 correspondents from all over Europe, working in the field of adult education, create reports about various topics for InfoNet in accordance with high quality criteria, which can also be republished in other media. The product of their work is freely available via an online database in English.

Furthermore, InfoNet distributes a digital newsletter (InfoLetter), focusing on one main theme. In 2013 a close cooperation with the LInE web journal was established that continued all along 2014. As a result, themes of the newsletters are agreed on as well as correspondents contribute to each other's publications

and articles. Each InfoLetter reaches about 7,500 readers, while the interest is increasing. InfoNet III will maintain this service and make further improvements based on the experiences. It covers almost every European country by partnership (29) and some freelance partners. Also innovative elements like a new quality management system, Web 2.0 elements and cross area, country reports about developments outside Europe will be included.

EAEA is a member of the steering committee, editorial board and sustainable working group of InfoNet III as well as contributes with articles on adult education on the European level and leads a work package on European Networking.

More information

Website: www.infonet-ae.eu

LLinE web journal: www.lline.fi

DISSEMINATION CONTRACTS

EAEA offers service contracts for dissemination activities.

6.12 ILEAC – INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING FOR EUROPEAN ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

The ILEAC project aims at giving citizens from different generations the opportunity to reflect on the reasons behind the European integration, to debate on the relevance of EU policies on citizens' daily lives and to initiate an intergenerational dialogue about the significance of the European values and to actively participate in the EU democratic process.



In the framework of the project the consortium organised:

- National seminars: Each seminar will consist of two parts: a general framework on the European functioning provided by experts and "European stories", a

discussion moment where small groups of over-65 citizens will tell life stories and personal testimonies regarding the life in Europe before the beginning of the integration process;

- National interaction workshops: Each partner will organise a one-day workshop in each country, where over-65 adults and under-30 youngsters, will be divided into groups, where each of them will then identify specific issues in their country (or city) and will try to use a EU tool to solve it;
- A European conference (Turin, November 2014).

Each event produced a concrete output:

- A publication which collects stories emerged from the national seminars, offering a transnational point of view that overcome the national individual situations, fostering reflection on the advantages of EU membership and supporting at the same time the preservation of the European memory;
- Online modules which contain the methodology used in the national workshops were created to allow replicating this intergenerational experience on a larger scale;
- Recommendations on how the EU can be more understood by the EU citizens and on the importance of intergenerational learning for our society will be drafted after collecting messages from the European conference.

The project was supported by the Europe for Citizens programme of the European Commission. EAEA was sub-contracted to carry out the European dissemination, create the project logo and support with the organisation of the final conference.

More information

Website: www.ileac.eu

6.13 LIME – LANGUAGES IN MEDIA



LiMe is a language and migration integration project targeted at language teachers and speakers of other languages, especially migrants. The activities have been funded in support from the European Commission and the consortium consists of six organisations from five European countries (DE, ES, IT, PL and the UK). The project

identified strategies to help adult language learners and those who deal with the integration of adults into society to understand the language in context and how the language of media can help learners to develop an understanding of cultural awareness which leads to better integration.

LiMe project outcomes assist the integration of migrant learners into the host community through innovative language and cultural learning resources. These resources specifically take advantage of the contemporary and authentic nature of published media. Both language teachers and migrant learners will find the tools very helpful.

The consortium achieved the following main outputs:

- LiMe Learning Platform: collection of learning resources from media (press, advertisement, radio, television, internet, etc.) for language teachers and learners of DE, EN, ES, IT and PL based on the latest methodologies. Each resource found on the platform includes lesson plans and interactive exercises for the CEFR levels A2, B1 and B2;
- LiMe training package for language teachers, teacher trainers and professionals who work with migrants. It includes: information on the relevancy of media in foreign language teaching and how the teachers can utilise the LiMe platform and learning materials, as well as lesson plans including warm-up and extension activities;
- LiMe Training Course which is based on the training package. The several-day course familiarises teachers with the training materials, learning platform along with the latest methodologies in media-based language learning. At the end of the course language teachers should develop and adapt lesson plans for a media-enhanced foreign language classroom.

The consortium aimed to gain a better understanding of socio-cultural elements of language learning within the media context, as well as, identification of commonalities and differences in countries in order to understand one another's culture, educational settings and to develop a more tolerant society.

More information

Website: www.languages-in-media.eu

7. COMMUNICATION AND MEMBERSHIP

7.1 COMMUNICATION

The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture continues to support the communication officer (through The Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation – KVS), and EAEA is very grateful for this help. In 2014, the implementation of EAEA Communication Strategy continued and in February the renewed EAEA website was launched. The new design is more modern and the structure aims to be clearer. The website remains a valuable source of information on adult education in Europe for our membership and other interested parties.

EAEA continued producing and distributing electronic and printed materials such as the policy statements, press releases, newsletters, the EAEA annual report and the EAEA Grundtvig Award brochure to the membership as well as to stakeholders

and policy makers interested in adult education. EAEA restructured its newsletter services and started to publish a fortnightly EAEA Member News, only available for the members. Daily news updates were provided through social media channels Facebook and Twitter in order to keep a wide audience informed. The EAEA General Assembly, the Annual Conference, study visits and the workshops were all documented, and the results disseminated at all our events and beyond.



Front page of the renewed EAEA website.

8.3 MEMBERSHIP

In 2014, the EAEA membership strategy was further developed to reach out to more organisations and learners throughout Europe and to ensure the satisfaction of the membership with EAEA's services and activities. By defining target countries and regions, implementing a direct mail campaign and meeting organisations at events, new organisations have been approached and involved in EAEA's work.

EAEA membership survey shows high satisfaction rate with member services

From mid-January to mid-February 2015, EAEA carried out its annual membership survey. The purpose of the survey was to examine the overall satisfaction of EAEA members with the services provided and the work done by EAEA in 2014. The questionnaire also included a part on EAEA's thematic focus on the financing of adult education. 27 members out of 123 members answered the survey.

100 percent of the respondents were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with EAEA's provision of up-to-date information on EU policy development about adult education, and 96 percent were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with EAEA's advocacy work on the European level for non-formal adult education and lifelong learning. In comparison to the survey in 2014, the satisfaction with EAEA's cooperation with EU institutions and international and national NGOs as well as the dissemination of project information and results from the adult education sector increased from around three quarters to over four fifth of the participants in the survey.

For the EAEA members, the most important activities in 2014 were the analysis paper and the recommendations on PIAAC – 83 percent of the respondents said that they found this activity "very good" or "good". The advocacy work on Erasmus+, the policy work on the new European Commission as well as the country reports had similarly high satisfaction rates, closely followed by the campaign on the European elections and the advocacy work on skills. The advocacy work on TTIP was "very good" or "good" for 58 percent of the respondents.

With regard to the level of impact of EAEA's work, the European level was again mentioned as the most important one by 100 percent of the participants. The organisation's level was rated as an important level of impact by 63 percent of

the respondents. As for the national and regional level of impact, most of the respondents had a neutral opinion.

New information services for EAEA members

In 2014, EAEA continued to focus on contacts with the members as well as on increasing the membership, in particular in currently less-presented European regions and countries. At the beginning of the year, EAEA launched a membership survey to measure the satisfaction of its members with its work and to look for areas of improvement. The membership leaflet was translated in a few more languages to reach out to potential new members.

Based on a membership workshop at the General Assembly, an action plan for the EAEA membership was developed with the objective to create stronger synergies between members and a stronger awareness of other members' activities by:

- facilitating members' knowledge of each other;
- making more use of the knowledge that is available in the network;
- stronger underlining the benefits of being an EAEA member.



Among other things, the presentation of the members on the EAEA website has been improved, a separate member section included as well as the communication with and among members increased and better structured.

According to the membership survey, EAEA's information service and being part of a network are the most important key selling points of a membership in EAEA. The EAEA member page at the EAEA website, which received a satisfaction rate of over four fifth of the respondents, was one of the new information services for

EAEA members that were implemented in 2013 and 2014. This page gives EAEA members information on current calls for funding, workshops and events, calls for project partner searches, toolkits, and information about the annual EAEA Grundtvig Award.

As a second measure to provide more information to the EAEA members, a bi-weekly EAEA member newsletter was implemented in autumn 2014. Through this newsletter that is sent by e-mail, the EAEA members receive information about current activities of EAEA, EU policies, events and relevant information from partners and stakeholders. Furthermore, it includes a part on news from EAEA members, which gives EAEA members the opportunity to make their projects, publications, activities and events known to the EAEA network.

As every year, several groups and individuals visited the main office in Brussels and received information about EAEA's activities, its role at the European level and possibilities for members to get involved. The Secretary General continues the regular internal e-mail information service, "News from Brussels", to the members, explaining what is going on at the EAEA Secretariat in Brussels and providing information about latest developments in EU adult education policies.

Members of the Executive Board, the President, the Vice-Presidents, and the Secretary General have been invited to a number of events, conferences, seminars, meetings and discussions. Examples of these events are the annual meetings of the Secretary General with German EAEA members in order to transfer information about adult education policies from the European level to the national level. All representatives of EAEA contributed to making adult education more visible and to promoting the association at different levels.

New and leaving members

As a result of the newly implemented membership strategy, the EAEA General Assembly received and approved many new applications for membership in 2014.

Ordinary membership:

- A.I.S.T. – Associazione italiana di Socioterapia (Italy)

Associate membership:

- Bildungshaus Schloss Retzhof (Austria)
- Agency for Social-Cultural Work (Belgium)
- Innovative Community Centres Association (Bulgaria)
- Association of Czech experts in Andragogy (Czech Republic)
- Une Education Pour Demain (France)
- Protestant and Anglican Network for Lifelong Learning in Europe – EAEE (Germany)
- Istituto di Recerca e studi per l'Educazione e la Formazione - IRSEF (Italy)
- Associazione Solidarci Caserta (Italy)
- Arci solidarietà Caserta (Italy)
- Festival delle città medievali (Italy)
- Folk High School Council (Norway)
- Association for Education and Sustainable Development (Romania)
- Tabula Education Centre (Romania)
- Federation of Cultural and Adult Education Association - FACEPA (Spain)
- Galician Cultural Association of Continuing Learning for Adults – Classrooms of the Third Age of Galicia – ATEGAL (Spain)
- Diversity Challenges (UK)

Members who asked for a change in membership status from associate to ordinary member:

- Hellenic Adult Education Association - HAEA (Greece)
- Association of Adult Education Institutions in the Slovak Republic - AIVD (Slovakia)

The following members, who have not paid their membership fees for more than 3 years, were excluded:

- Adult Education and Lifelong Learning (Armenia)
- MELLearnN-Hungarian Higher Education LLL Network (Hungary)
- Università Popolare Pontina (Italy)
- All-Russia “ZNANIE” (Russia)

The following members left the membership in 2014:

- Iltakoulujen liitto (Finland)
- OLAP asbl - Luxembourg Productivity Center (Luxembourg)
- Societatea Romana Pentru Educatie Permanenta (Romania)

8. ACTIVITIES IN THE ORGANISATION AND THE OFFICES

8.1 EAEA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The EAEA members gathered for the General Assembly held in Brussels on the 18 June 2014, to discuss adult education, democracy and the future actions of EAEA. In the event also a new board member and new member organisations were introduced.

The Director for the Education & Vocational Training at the Directorate-General of Education & Culture in the European Commission, Mr. António Silva Mendes, opened the event by introducing the participants to some recent developments in the EU policy concerning adult education. “The new funding programme for education Erasmus+ offers great opportunities for cooperation and funding for the European countries,” he stated. He encouraged adult education providers to seek cooperation also with new partners outside the education sector.: “The new funding programme provides more possibilities for innovative partnerships.”

EAEA President Per Paludan Hansen introduced EAEA’s flagship initiative for a European Year for Adult Learning. EAEA will be campaigning for adult learning with the theme “the power and joy of learning”. Mr. Silva Mendes welcomed the initiative saying it could be a good way to promote adult education.

Another guest speaker of the event, Professor Licinio Lima from the University of Minho in Portugal, drew attention to the multidimensional features of adult education. He proposed that adult education should not be seen merely as a medicine or tool for economic competitiveness of Europe. “Adult education goes way beyond vocational training and skilling for



New members receive a “welcome package”.



employability and economic competitiveness. Adult education is one of the most relevant contributions to the humanization process of human beings and crucial for democratic improvement, for the quality assessment of democratic practices of citizenship and for bringing more participants to the re-creation of the social world," he said.

EAEA's Vice-President Katarina Popovic said goodbye to the network. Appointed as Secretary General of ICAE, the International Council for Adult Education, in 2014, she left the EAEA Board. As her successor, a new Board member was appointed from Serbia. Maja Maksimovic is a teaching assistant at the Department for Pedagogy and Andragogy in the University of Belgrade and is representing the EAEA member Adult Education Society (AES). "I am excited to become an EAEA board member. I see my role as a messenger who tries to bring up some ideas and needs more visibility in the European discourse," Ms. Maksimovic said.

In 2014, EAEA welcomed 17 new member organisations, resulting in a total of 123 members in 42 countries. At the General Assembly, the new members introduced themselves and received a "welcome package" including their membership certificates.

8.2 EAEA GRUNDTVIG AWARD WINNER 2014

In 2014, EAEA was looking for excellent projects and initiatives from Europe that tackled WWI remembrance and that drew lessons from armed conflicts like WWI in order to promote peace and conflict resolution. Projects were submitted in two categories: *World War I remembrance initiatives* and *Adult education projects that promote peace and conflict resolution*.

2014 marked the 100th anniversary of World War I – a war which changed Europe drastically and shaped the fate of our continent in the 20th century and beyond. EAEA believes that by creating opportunities for mutual learning, reflection and dialogue, adult education can promote peace and cohesion in Europe.

The EAEA Board chose the winners of the EAEA Grundtvig Award 2014. The Book of Plans, Hopes and Dreams won the first prize in the category *“World War I remembrance initiatives”*, and Vygonoshchi Fortress was the winner in the category



The Award ceremony was held on 13 November in the Sarajevo City Hall, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

“Adult education projects that promote peace and conflict resolution”. “Both projects show that small initiatives can have a huge impact on people, communities, and civil society,” stated the jury.

The Book of Plans, Hopes and Dreams was a British-German initiative concentrated on local and European history. It used a writing competition to let the people of today remember people in the time of the war by finding out about them, and setting down their own ideals and stories, to hand on to generations to come. The jury was impressed by the project: “Not only does it raise the interest about the lives of people 100 years ago, but it also brings together younger and older generations to contribute to the project.”

Vygonoshchi Fortress project’s objective was to use a revival of two dug-in guard posts to bring back the memory of the tragic events of WWI, to raise people’s awareness about its consequences and to spark discussion about its effect on the life of modern European countries. The jury found Vygonoshchi Fortress project a perfect example for linking local with global history.

8.3 EXECUTIVE BOARD AND PRESIDENT

The Executive Board and its preparatory body the Bureau (President, Vice-presidents and Secretary-General) are supervising the work carried out in the association. Primarily the Board works on policy level, leaving the running of the association to the Secretary-General. The role division is clearly defined in the constitution of the association.

In 2014, minor changes were made in the Constitution as the General Assembly took place in Brussels. Indeed, some minor issues were unpractical and needed to be updated in the Constitution in order to make the daily work easier. No major changes took place.

The Executive Board aims at supporting adult education issues at transnational as well as country levels: The EAEA Board is rotating its meetings in order to liaise with adult education and lifelong learning institutions in various host countries.



The EAEA Executive Board photographed in Brussels in June 2014.

11–12 February in Paris, France

Meeting in Paris gave the Executive Board the opportunity to meet with the UNESCO and the OECD to discuss the PIAAC results and future collaboration between these international organisations and EAEA.

3–4 April in Athens, Greece

In Athens, the Executive Board did a study visit to the EOPPEP, National Organisation for the certification of Qualifications and discussed validation of non-formal and informal learning as well as certification of adult trainers in Greece and more globally in Europe.

25–26 September in Tallinn, Estonia

The meeting was hosted by ENAEA, the adult education umbrella organisation in Estonia. In Tallinn, the Board met with representatives of the NGO sector in adult education and with civil servants from public authorities and ministries.

12 November in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina

The EAEA Board met in Sarajevo in the framework of the Grundtvig Award ceremony. DVV International hosted the meeting as well as the ceremony.

Board participation in 2014

Board member	BM Paris, 2 days	BM Athens, 2 days
Joyce Black	2	2
Uwe Gartenschlaeger	2	2
Per Paludan Hansen	2	2
Tapio Kujala	2	0
David Lopez	2	2
Mariana Matache	2	2
Katarina Popovic	2	2
Susana Oliveira	2	1
Niamh O'Reilly	2	2
Dennis Wacht	0	2
Amelie von Zweigbergk	1	0

Board member	BM Tallinn, 2 days	BM Sarajevo, 1 day
Gerhard Bisovsky	2	0
Joyce Black	1	1
Uwe Gartenschlaeger	2	1
Per Paludan Hansen	2	1
Tapio Kujala	1	1
David Lopez	2	1
Maja Maksimovic	2	1
Mariana Matache	2	1
Susana Oliveira	2	1
Niamh O'Reilly	2	0
Dennis Wacht	0	0
Amelie von Zweigbergk	2	1

8.4 FINANCES

Concerning the finances, EAEA saw positive and negative developments. We received the one-year operating grant by the EACEA and had substantial income through project work. On the other hand, EfVET reduced its subcontract with the EAEA and we lost some income because a lower number of participants in the younger staff training and no paid study visits. As we were able to combine our main events with project conferences, EAEA managed to save money in some key budget posts. The financial development was therefore more difficult than in earlier years but still stable.

8.5 STAFF

The EAEA staff continues to grow and we are very happy to see full office spaces. In March 2014, Tania Berman (France/Luxembourg), previously working as the Membership Officer, became EAEA's Policy Officer as Ricarda Motschilnig (Austria) left the organisation. Raffaella Kihrer (Austria) joined the team as a Membership and Events Officer. Thor Rutgersson (Sweden) worked as Grundtvig Assistant from autumn 2013 to spring 2014.

Communications Officer Aura Vuorenrinne (Finland) left for maternity leave in November 2013 and was replaced by Helka Repo (Finland) until the beginning of October 2014.

We'd like to thank Ricarda, Thor and Helka for their work and great collaboration with EAEA!

The EAEA staff in 2014:

- Gina Ebner, Secretary-General
- Tania Berman, Policy Officer
- Francesca Operti, Project Officer
- Raffaella Kihrer, Membership and Events Officer
- Valentina Chanina, Office Manager
- Aura Vuorenrinne/Helka Repo, Communications Officer



8.6 BOB SCHOUTEN FUND

The Bob Schouten Fund, established in 1981 in commemoration of the international work of Bob Schouten, the longstanding first Secretary of the European Bureau of Adult Education, aims to 'assist workers in adult education to make themselves familiar with international aspects of their work by studying Adult Education abroad in one of the countries of Europe'. In 2014, the participation of one younger staff member from Georgia in the Younger Staff Training was covered by the fund.

9. ANNEX – POSITION PAPERS, OPINIONS, STATEMENTS

9.1 RESPONSE TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S COMMUNICATION "OPENING UP EDUCATION"

The EAEA welcomes the Communication of the European Commission on 'Opening up Education: Education Innovative teaching and learning for all through New Technologies and Open Education Resources', a European Agenda to bring digital opportunities and contents in education and training. EAEA would like to draw attention to a few key points regarding the digital revolution in education.

Teachers' digital competences must be assured

EAEA agrees with the Commission that there is a great need to improve the digital competences of teachers in adult education. Digitally supported or technology-enhanced learning is becoming more and more regular in adult education.

Trainers and facilitators have to be very competent in using new technologies, the internet and electronic devices for training and learning. Non-formal adult education in many European countries is based on freelance teachers and facilitators, teachers working in institutions, and in many cases even volunteers. This requests cross-sectorial and cross-institutional strategies to improve the digital competences of trainers and facilitators.

Examples from Scandinavian countries show how a good mixture of a top-down and a bottom-up policy has led to a raise of competences of trainers and teachers in adult education, independent of their age and gender. We are convinced that through European programmes (Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020) and complementary national programmes success can be reached.

OERs as complementary learning material

The importance of Open Education Resources (OERs) and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) for adult education is evident. OERs support flexible learning

and the permanent innovation in the non-formal adult education sector which very often is transferred to the formal sector. The challenge is how OERs can be adopted and integrated into existing curricula and methodologies in adult education, and how high quality can be secured.

The current independent users of OERs and MOOCs offered by universities tend to be highly educated males with general interest in the topic who are not looking for formal accreditation. We believe that the most valuable use of OERs in adult education will happen in a blended learning context, which still includes support, coaching and face-to-face meetings. While OERs can support flexibility and self-directed learning, many learners still prefer structure and the social aspects of course situations. OERs have to be seen in complement to the existing, so-called traditional, learning materials.

Ensuring access: Infrastructure and skills

A growing number of people use electronic devices, especially smart phones and tablet PCs, in their activities and learning. However, the usage and accommodation to new technologies vary. 'The early adopters' use the internet and electronic devices for learning nearly everywhere. At the same time many people do not have access to the internet due to a lack of good broadband connection, of cost-free public hotspots or of electronic devices. There are also a growing number of people with skills to use the internet who cannot afford high communication costs. Therefore an infrastructure of accessible internet points, for example in community adult education centres and libraries, where also support is available, is enormously important.

The recently published PIAAC study shows an increasing need to equip adult learners in using new technologies. The capability of using new technologies is important for improving individual employability and for reducing risks on the labour market. More and more governmental services can be accessed through the internet and participating in society will soon depend on ICT access and competence. We see a need to develop a framework of competences for teachers and adult learners combining the learning-to-learn ability with ICT and civic competences. This needs to be accompanied by wide-reaching initiatives to train people with at least basic skills in ICT.

Best results from interest-driven learning strategies

Theory and practice of adult learning show that intrinsic motivation is the best driver for successful and sustainable learning. A policy on improving the competences in using new technologies has to focus on and to start with the interests of adult learners. An interest-driven strategy takes into consideration the manifold needs and interests of adult people in their different phases of life. From a didactical point of view it is necessary that learning objects have to be adapted to adults' experiences and expectations and put the learner at the centre.

Recommendations

EAEA underlines the necessity to promote the following aims in non-formal adult education.

Supporting teachers' competences

- Complementarity of OERs and traditional learning materials, and co-operation of learning providers, teachers and facilitators with publishers and other producers of educational content for adult education.
- Development of European Train-the-Trainer modules to improve the competences for digitally supported learning.
- Testing of appropriate didactical formats for Train the Trainer modules, including Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).
- Development of andragogical learning formats to improve the problem-solving competences for different target groups in adult learning.
- Consequent development of EPAL and support of Communities of Practice (CoP) and support of face-to-face meetings of experts to deepen the exchanges of experiences among teachers and facilitators in adult education.

Developing digital learning tools

- Adaption of Open Educational Resources (OERs) based on adults' needs, realities and interests, not only based on school, work or university orientation.
- A clear classification of OER (meta-data) to enable the search for appropriate learning tools for different target groups and to secure quality. Internet learning tools have been classified in the Poliglotti4.eu-project, in which EAEA participated.

- Development of digitally supported learning formats for people with low educational attainments.
- Promotion of OER development in the learners' languages (not primarily English).
- A European-wide solution for the copyright question of using resources from the internet.

Access to ICT competences

- Lower communication costs in order to assure the participation of people with low income to participate in digital society and economy.
- Provision of computer and internet access and support at community adult education centres and libraries.
- Development of broadband infrastructure (especially for remote areas) which can be used by learning institutions, companies and individuals to support the bring-your-own-device strategy.
- Construction of more cost-free public hotspots all over Europe.
- Development of a frame of competences for teachers and adult learners combining the learning-to-learn ability with ICT and civic competences.

9.2 RECOMMENDATIONS: PIAAC – A WAKE-UP CALL FOR EUROPE!

Based on the PIAAC results, EAEA recognizes three scenarios that Europe faces unless these issues are tackled. We see adult education having a key role in overcoming these challenges and thus offer a set of recommended actions.

1. Scenario: Europe of unequally skilled adults

PIAAC shows that in average 20 % of the EU adult population have low literacy and numeracy skills. Literacy as a continuum is the most significant foundation for an active participation in a rapidly changing society. Urgent action is needed to improve literacy across Europe and prevent the divide between generations.

EAEA recommended actions

- Increased public investment in adult learning! Public investment in adult education and learning is crucial especially for those who left initial education

without any qualifications and those who are living in poor households.

- Campaigns underlining the personal and social benefits of non-formal learning! We call on all politicians, policy makers, social partners and companies to reflect on European-wide and national campaigns to promote lifelong learning across Europe. The campaigns should underline the social benefits of adult education, such as improved health, social cohesion, higher self-esteem, active citizenship and wellbeing.
- Cooperation between different stakeholders! In order to tackle the European-wide problem of low literacy among persons of all ages, close cooperation between governmental and civil society organisations is needed to raise awareness, develop appropriate measures and make use of the synergies of all social actors. A number of actors need to contribute more to adult learning in Europe:

a. Social partners: Both employers' and employees' representatives can be a driving force in the education and training of workers.

b. Companies: Skilled workers, whose competencies are kept up-to-date and who have a chance to develop professionally within their company, are the main assets of firms. Companies that invest in training and education have a much higher chance to survive and prosper in the competitive markets today.

c. Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs): Investing in training is often a challenge for SMEs (limited time, personal and financial resources). EAEA would like to underline that there are many good practice examples for solutions to such problems. We propose an increased and strategic dissemination of these good practices among SMEs. Even and especially for SMEs, education and training can make a big difference for their competitiveness.

2. Scenario: Europe of socially excluded groups

PIAAC found that in most countries, immigrants with a foreign-language background have significantly lower proficiency in literacy and numeracy than native-born adults. Low educational attainment combined with poor proficiency

in the language of the host country can hinder integration into the society. PIAAC also shows a close relationship between the information processing skills and age. Europe thus faces a threat of socially excluded groups.

EAEA recommended actions

- 'One size does not fit all' approach! Learning offers should be tailor-made so that they are relevant to the groups concerned. Different under-represented groups may need special measures to attract them back to learning (e.g. migrants, older people, prisoners, etc.). Innovative and successful projects set up to attract particular groups are often short lived because of short-term funding and the methodologies not being mainstreamed.
- Attention to older learners! Special attention should be paid to the age groups of 50 + when it comes to adult learning. In the future, Europeans will live and work longer, therefore more efforts, support, knowledge, outreach and funding are needed so that older people can and will participate in learning. Research also shows that liberal adult education helps to reduce healthcare costs.
- Ensuring that adults can go "One step up"! We call for an initiative that will qualify a certain number or percentage of the population to secondary-level schooling. It is essential that possibilities for adults to go one step up in terms of qualifications become a permanent feature of adult education and training, so as to enable social mobility and the growth of competence, particularly for individuals with low qualifications.

3. Scenario: Europe of passive citizens

The biggest difference in competences across age groups is in digital competences, especially among older learners. In order to ensure active citizenship and the participation of all groups, especially as Europe gets ready for the next elections, it is in the interest of democracy and European cohesion that we boost the access to adult education.

EAEA recommended actions

- Provide access to and skills for ICT! We call for future E-inclusion through collaboration and education with the pedagogy to recognise individual needs as key ingredients. With the ever-increasing use of computers and "smart devices",

a significant number of citizens are becoming isolated for lack of access, lack of knowledge or for disinterest. Adult education can bridge the digital divide.

- Structural support for non-formal adult education providers! Non-formal adult learning often works better for many learners because it can be much more flexible in responding to learners' needs and interests than formal education. Strengthening non-formal adult education can increase participation and drive learning motivation (see the example of the Nordic countries). Participating in learning activities can provide a stable time framework, a community, a chance for re-orientation, a safe place, a new challenge, social recognition, and end up being an important tool for empowerment.
- Real lifelong learning systems in Europe! More exchanges and more equality between formal, non-formal and informal education and learning should be supported. The integration of informal and non-formal learning in National Qualification Frameworks is a crucial development. EAEA recommends setting up an integrated system with an emphasis on recognition of prior learning as well as individual education and training courses.

9.3 RESPONSE TO THE COMMISSION'S CONSULTATION ON SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

The European Association for the Education of Adults welcomes the initiative of the European Commission to promote a "European Area for Skills and Qualifications". EAEA agrees that a lot of work remains to be done to, for example, create more coherence between instruments. Nevertheless, both the questions of the survey as well as the background document give the appearance of a number of technical challenges. EAEA believes that a more strategic and comprehensive "European Area of Learning" is necessary to face the challenges of Europe.

EAEA believes that all kinds of learning for adults need to be supported and promoted – formal, non-formal as well as informal learning. We also believe that successful policies and initiatives can only be implemented successfully by bringing a wide range of stakeholders on board. The consultation mentions businesses, but social partners are key players as are civil society organisations.

European member states need to provide and fund learning opportunities

In Europe, according to OECD's PIAAC study, 20% of the adult population has low basic skills – including literacy, numeracy and digital skills. It is urgent that Europe faces this issue by providing and funding learning opportunities for adults to master basic skills. In terms of digital skills, if skills to use computers need to be taught, also computers and Internet access need to be largely provided.

Learning opportunities must be learner-centered (centered on their needs) and easily accessible for all – concerning the location, the schedule and the frequency of the course. Non-formal adult education has proven its efficiency when it comes to teaching basic skills to adults, especially to the ones that were not keen on following courses in a formal education system.

Key competences are crucial

Transversal skills and especially key competences are another concern. In order to manage jobs and lives, key competences are crucial and should be part of any European strategy on education and training. EAEA would like to illustrate this with an example: with the increasing availability of OERs (Open Educational Resources), “learning to learn” is a necessary key competence that needs to be fostered. These key competences will be very valuable for the learner in his/her job and also in his/her personal life as a citizen and as an individual. EAEA therefore continues to value the key competences framework. EAEA agrees that reference frameworks can be helpful in understanding learning progress and outcomes but underlines that they need to be learner-centred.

Guidance on learning opportunities for all

Guidance and counselling are crucial elements of a global lifelong learning strategy. They should be provided to everyone and a focus on guidance and counselling on learning opportunities, whether it has a professional or personal purpose, should be offered to everyone, including the elderly. We agree that a streamlining of different initiatives can help simplify access.

Evaluating the learning process

While EAEA agrees that the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) could be useful for recognizing learning outcomes from third countries, we would like to draw the attention to the fact that the development of EQFs in many European

countries is concentrating very much on the formal system. Competences and skills that have been acquired in non-formal learning might therefore be undervalued.

Learning outcomes

EAEA supports the shift to learning outcomes in order to understand acquired skills and competences better. Nevertheless, we do see the danger that this development might lead to the neglect and undervaluation of learning processes. Indeed, in non-formal adult education, the learning process, as well as the learning environment, plays a big role in the learner's experience. The BeLL study (bell-project.eu) shows that many benefits for learners actually derive from the learning process (such as more social contacts and a wider social network).

Recognition and validation

Concerning the question on whether recognition and validation frameworks should be developed for adult education, EAEA wishes to underline that this is not a simple 'yes' or 'no' question. We believe that validation and recognition systems in Europe need to be flexible so as not to formalize nonformal and informal learning. These forms of learning have proven to be efficient and have also been very successful, for example, at reaching people that have had bad experiences with the formal system.

We believe that learners should have the right to have their non- and informal learning recognized but any criteria or procedure would have to be developed with a strong input from the non-formal sector in order to avoid creating new inequalities between different forms of learning (e.g. the 'validated' and the non-validated' for example).

EAEA would like to warn of a development that, in the future, might differentiate between learning provision that is 'within the framework' and one that is 'outside the framework'. EAEA pleads for the recognition, support and promotion of all kinds of learning never mind its relation to respective frameworks.

9.4 RESPONSE TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION CONSULTATION ON VAT

The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) is worried about the planned review of Articles 132-134 of the VAT Directive. While EAEA recognises that VAT legislation on public bodies and tax exemptions in the public interest suffer some incoherencies across Member States - which may go against the requirements of a true single market - it would nevertheless like to bring to the Commission's attention a number of concerns which its members have expressed about the likely negative impact that the removal of the VAT exemption would have on their activities. EAEA is also sorry that the Commission only concentrates on the alleged obstacles that are the result of the exemptions of public bodies (Art. 13 of the VAT Directive) without referring to the positive aspects of these exemptions, for example the fact they enable public bodies to respond to the needs of all, namely the most vulnerable members of the population. This exemption is also in keeping with Protocol 26 on services of general interest, including the guarantee of high levels of quality, safety and affordability. In the context of these discussions, EAEA sees an urgent need for special consideration to be given to the activities carried out by educational, cultural, sports for all and youth non-for-profit organisations which play an essential role at the local level in promoting and ensuring social inclusion among society's potentially more vulnerable groups.

In a number of countries, adult education in the public interest is exempt from VAT. We believe that a change in that might have a long-term negative impact on the economic performance of Europe. Europe needs, and will need in the future, highly competent citizens that can work and innovate in a technology rich environment as well as navigate their personal and civic development in increasingly complex societies. This demands access to learning. This also means that those who are less and least likely to participate in learning need to be encouraged to learn and have free and/or very cheap possibilities to join (adult) education. An introduction of VAT would undermine this. We believe that it is essential that people in Europe have access to learning opportunities – barriers to adult education are already very high, and financial reasons are a key barrier to learning.

We would like to refer to two sources that will illustrate that point:

The European Education and Training 2020 strategy has set a target of 15% of adults participating in lifelong learning. Currently, the participation rate has been decreasing and stagnating around 9%. Member States will need to make an enormous effort to reach this target.

The recent PIAAC results published by the OECD also underline that 20% of Europeans do not have the basic skills to live full and productive lives. This is alarming and needs to be tackled through adult education.

Increasing the costs of adult education will hurt governments (who, in most cases, will provide support at least for basic skills training), adult education providers but also the European citizens who will not be able to find affordable adult education provision.

A basic provision of adult education is necessary for Europe in economic, social and civic terms and we plead to keep the tax exemption for the (adult) education sector.

Questionnaire

Q1: General evaluation of the current rules (see point 3):

What is your evaluation of the current VAT regime as regards the public sector (including special rules for public bodies, Article 13, and tax exemptions in the public interest, Article 132-134 of the VAT Directive)?

Many of the current exemptions are still essential to the continued existence of non-for-profit organisations and other public bodies in the public interest. Non-for-profit organisations complement the work done by public authorities. Specific exemptions should be kept, as they enable public bodies to carry out services of general interest for citizens more efficiently.

Educational, cultural, youth and sports for all non-for-profit organisations have a key function as facilitators of social cohesion within EU societies and are instrumental in helping Member States face the challenges outlined in the Europe

2020 Strategy of tackling social exclusion, addressing new social realities as the EU emerges from the crisis. It is reported that some 80 million European Union employees, unemployed persons, particularly the young unemployed will need to update their skills and qualifications to enable them to improve their employment prospects and find gainful employment. The target date for a substantial increase in employment of these people is 2020. Role of non-formal education – popular education and adult education – in reaching out to these specific groups is essential and should be undermined by the negative effects of VAT reforms. Such services should remain accessible for all. The PIAAC report stresses the need to understand and promote the personal and social benefits of non-formal education in civil society. In addition it states that there is a need for coherent lifelong learning systems with programmes offering non-formal education to the next levels as these work better for most adult learners. This is why they are recognised as a public good and benefit from VAT exemptions in most EU countries. These services are addressed to the most disadvantaged, increasing competitiveness in the sector would have very negative results in terms of access as activities would focus on the ones who already benefit from better educational levels (i.e. increased fees). The long-term costs for Europe will be much higher than the short-term gains notably in terms of social welfare (wider benefits of learning).

Furthermore, these organisations often have limited funding sources and rely heavily on the initiative of their volunteers to generate the income they need to cover their basic running costs. The removal of exemptions for VAT on income sources generated by their small-scale fundraising initiatives would impact greatly on them since it would place an administrative burden on the individual volunteers who provide the backbone for their activities. Dealing with administrative tasks could have a detrimental effect on the engagement and motivation of volunteers to participate and on the perception of the EU's role among the general public. Such initiative that might deter volunteers would run counter to the spirit of the 2011 European Year of Volunteering and in particular to the commitments taken by Vice-President Reding to double the number of volunteers to 200 million in Europe.

Since in this period of budget constraints, local governments tend to rely more and more on these organisations to offer activities and support to their target groups of vulnerable citizens, the consequences of removing the tax exemption

would be harmful to the public interest.

What are in your opinion the main problems of the current rules?

In some countries non-for-profit organisations, because many of the services that they provide, are either exempt under EU law or are outside of the scope of VAT because they are provided free of charge. In both cases this means that the organisation cannot charge VAT and so cannot recover the VAT on its expenditure. This inability to recover the VAT that is spent on purchases reduces the resources that they have available to spend on their charitable purposes. This has been a long-running issue for the sector, particularly in a time of general recession when non-for-profit organisations are under pressure from government to increase the level of front-line services that they can support and offer. Organisations as foreseen in article 132 and 133 should be exempted from VAT.

Are there any distortions of competition (output and input side)? If so, how and in which sector do they occur?

Article 133 sets specific conditions to respect to be exempted from VAT. EAEA believes that this is sufficient. Furthermore it is in line with the legislation in force which grants “the essential role and the wide discretion of national, regional and local authorities in providing, commissioning and organising services of general economic interest as closely as possible to the needs of the users” (Protocol 26 annexed to the TEU and TFEU).

Are the problems identified only of a national nature or do they constitute an obstacle to the smooth functioning of the Internal Market?

VAT legislation on public bodies and tax exemptions in the public interest suffer some incoherencies across Member States which may go against the requirements of a true single market, however more important obstacles exist. Focusing on article 13 is a very narrow approach and could have very negative consequences for the European social model.

It is also important to respect the cultural diversity and historical traditions of the various Member States with the existence of very specific organisations and relations with public authorities in the education, training, youth and sports for all sectors (adult education in the northern countries, popular education in the South, etc.). Any initiative to apply a one-size-fits-all solution to streamlining VAT would demonstrate a lack of understanding of the diversity of organisations in the EU

and of their very different capacities, revenue sources and ways of functioning. It would also do little to mitigate the negative perceptions which exist among many citizens and at the grass-roots level towards the EU and might lead to further negative appraisal of what the EU can really bring to its citizens.

9.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME

The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) asked its members to send feedback on the new Erasmus+ programme, with a special focus on the experiences with the application procedure.

General Remarks

- **Participation of Third Countries**
Many of our members in the European Neighbourhood countries see adult education as a way to interact with the EU, they are interested and often enthusiastic about European policy developments in lifelong learning and are keen to contribute to the further development of adult education and vocational training. It is therefore a pity that the participation of Third Countries has been severely limited. EAEA therefore proposes a more accessible participation of European Neighbourhood countries in Erasmus+.
- **Coordinate better between NAs**
The information and the standards coming from different National Agencies differ considerably. We therefore propose a stronger standardisation in the information, selection and administrative procedures.
- **Create a 'European pot' at the EACEA**
EAEA was planning to apply for two strategic partnerships but after discussing the financial situation of the Belgian agencies, we decided to propose only one with a reduced budget. It does not make sense for European associations to apply at the national level as our projects tend to be truly European in both scope and content and generally do not relate directly to the Belgian lifelong learning system. So far we do not know whether our project has been approved, but we would not be surprised if it was rejected because of a lack of connection to Belgium.

EAEA therefore proposes a separate pot to be administered by the EACEA which European associations can apply to.

- Larger-scale projects for adult education

There are some issues that are of key European importance for adult education, active aging and the participation of low-skilled adults, to name but two. Unfortunately, Erasmus+ does not foresee any larger scale projects for adult education any more, which unfortunately also limits the impact of the sector. EAEA therefore proposes the introduction of larger scale adult education projects along the lines of the knowledge alliances for higher education and the sector skill alliances in vocational training.

- Introduce an information campaign to potential applicants in countries with low participation

Some countries have both low participation rates of adults in lifelong learning and a low participation rate in Erasmus+. EAEA therefore proposes a targeted information campaign about the possibilities of Erasmus+ in these countries.

Mobilities

- Enable umbrella organisations to apply for all their members

In a number of European countries, umbrella organisations either at the national or the regional levels represent the interests of their members. It would make sense that these umbrella organisations actually apply for mobilities for their membership and then administer them. In the preparation for Erasmus+, we were also told that this was intended by the programme and would actually simplify mobilities both for adult education organisations and the National Agencies. EAEA informed its members accordingly. Some umbrella organisations actually tried to go ahead but then were told that they had to identify a limited number of members (=partners) and would have to fill in separate European development plans for every one of them. For umbrella organisations to really become involved, there needs to be the possibility to apply for all their members. EAEA therefore proposes a widened and simplified opportunity for umbrella organisations to apply for and on behalf of their members.

- Lack of course overview

The Grundtvig/Comenius database of courses was not perfect, but it

did provide the possibility to search for courses that had been approved. EAEA members see a lack of offer that has been validated. We therefore propose that an at least minimal validation takes place and that courses can then be advertised in one place.

- At least a 2nd (if not 3rd) deadline is necessary
EAEA proposes at least one more deadline per year for mobilities.
- Are conferences learning activities?
Some of our members were informed by their NAs that conferences are not covered by mobility grants, others not. EAEA therefore proposes that conferences are seen as learning activities and can be part of mobilities across Europe.

Strategic partnerships

- Simplify the form
The fact that we are now operating under a 'one size fits all' approach has led to the fact that application procedures have become more complicated – it seems to be a step back. EAEA therefore proposes to concentrate on the key information about the planned project and simplify the questions in the form.
- What's an intellectual output?
It is absolutely unclear what an intellectual output is. EAEA therefore proposes a clearer description and guidelines what is actually meant by an intellectual output.
- Rethink the management fee urgently
The administration fee of 1.000 Euro per month is applied across Europe and is valid for any strategic partnership, whether it plans intellectual outputs, dissemination activities or not. For a simple strategic partnership with some mobilities, especially if it is coordinated in a country with lower salary levels, this seems sufficient. If one wants to do a project with a number of activities in a country with high salary levels, then this is almost impossible. (We do understand that the former 25% co-financing rate has been included in the lump sum, but this goes very much beyond 25% - it is more like 50–75%). The lump sum is meant to cover all administration, all management and all dissemination and exploitation! EAEA therefore urgently proposes to adapt the administration fee according to country / region and number of activities.

- Rethink dissemination / exploitation for financing
All dissemination and exploitation activities are meant to be covered by the management fee. As dissemination and exploitation are meant to be crucial elements of the project, there needs to be a budget for any products that can support and promote the dissemination. Whether it is leaflets or videos or articles or a website, this needs to be financed. EAEA therefore proposes the introduction of a separate budget for dissemination / exploitation.
- Participants with less than 99 km
Participants who travel to an event also have costs and will need to be taken into account when organising. EAEA therefore proposes a small amount for them.
- Lack of preparatory visits
Preparatory visits have disappeared although these were the occasions when partners could get to know each other better and really work out how to work together and how to best structure the project. While the form makes it obvious that inexperienced partners are welcome, the lack of this opportunity makes it much more difficult for a partnership to work efficiently. EAEA therefore proposes the reintroduction of preparatory visits.
- Definition of “extraordinary costs”
There is no definition of extraordinary costs, just a budget line. It would be worth to have space to justify these costs and explain their added value in the project. These are also possible important costs for dissemination, but no further explanation is given. EAEA therefore proposes a wide and clear definition of this budget post.

9.6 EAEA STATEMENT ON THE COMMISSION’S STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION GUIDELINES

EAEA welcomes the initiative by the Commission to strengthen stakeholder consultations by developing Stakeholder Consultation Guidelines. EAEA believes that, properly implemented, the guidelines can contribute to improving and reinforcing civil dialogue between civil society and policy-makers. At the same time, EAEA wants to underline that more is still needed to reach a true civil

dialogue with policy-makers.

It is essential for the quality of the consultation's answer that the timing of the consultations is carefully established. Indeed, European NGOs need sufficient time to consult with their members at the national, regional and local level in order to receive input from organisations working on the ground and give an answer that truly embraces a bottom-up approach.

It is important to establish the timeline of the consultation according to the period of the year when it is launched (summer holidays, very busy time of the year, etc.) to the length of the consultation (how much time stakeholders will need to answer it). Also, the schedule has to take into consideration how much the topic is already developed, as this will also have an impact on how much time stakeholders will need to give a valuable input to it.

Although the European Commission underlines that expert groups are not part of the consultation, we believe that this is a crucial part of transparency and participation. If transparent and clear consultation guidelines are important, it is also vital that the same rules apply to expert groups. Yet, the procedure to create the expert groups is not transparent. Expert groups often take place in an unorganized way, choosing experts from a pool of known people, in a way that often looks arbitrary, and often at the last minute. Improving the consultation guidelines must also mean improving the rigour of the expert groups guidelines, especially if it is true that expert groups' input is given more importance than wider consultations.

Furthermore, stakeholders' responses rarely receive an answer. After answering a consultation, it is often difficult for them to assess whether their arguments were listened to and had an impact and in particular, if they are the ones that influenced the process. However, it is important for stakeholders to know whether their input was taken into consideration and had an influence on policy processes. Adequate feedback should be provided for each consultation answer sent to the European Commission. It is a crucial step for the accountability of EU Institutions.

EAEA also agrees with Social Platform and its argument that "a consultation is only a part of civil dialogue. Consultation is in fact just the second step on a scale from minus one to five that assesses the quality of civil society involvement. Step

minus one is exclusion and step five is full partnership. While partnership is not always desirable, - especially for civil society that acts as a watchdog and critical voice- dialogue (step three) should always be an aim. A meaningful dialogue means that civil society is involved in all stages of a policy cycle: agenda-setting, policy definition/decision making, implementation, evaluation and reformulation. It includes EU institutions a) accountability and responsiveness, b) political will and openness to make a difference, c) transparency and clarity, d) equality and inclusiveness, e) sustainability and structures, f) recognition of the role of CSOs and g) an on-going process, with involvement at all stages of decision-making.”

If EAEA welcomes the new guidelines, it is essential to see how they are (and will be) implemented. Indeed, when significant issues, such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) arise, it is not understandable from a civil society point of view that such consultation guidelines are not implemented immediately and that civil society representatives do not have the same access as industry representatives. Therefore, in order to establish a true civil dialogue, it is crucial that the scope of the guidelines is broad and is systematically implemented.

9.7 EAEA RESPONSE TO THE EU2020 STRATEGY CONSULTATION

For EAEA, Europe2020 means an important paradigm shift: the strategy has recognised education as a key priority, which EAEA has always appreciated. EAEA has always supported the idea of sustainability, inclusion and ‘smartness’ associated with growth.

However, EAEA questions the dominance of “growth” in the European debate. We believe that Europe should be built on rights, justice and democracy rather than a purely economic model. EAEA believes that Europe needs to look for alternatives to growth. Also, throughout the crisis, austerity measures and economic measures have become more important than the reduction of poverty, more inclusive societies, more adult education and a more sustainable planet. EAEA calls on the European institutions to (re-)focus their attention to the well-being of people and planet, including a strong push towards a ‘learning Europe’ that will reinforce active

citizenship, personal development and employability through adult education.

Targets and flagship initiatives

EAEA would like to draw attention to the fact that the OECD in its PIAAC results demonstrated a lack of basic skills across Europe. Additionally, the BeLL (Benefits of Lifelong Learning) study³ showed that non-formal, liberal adult education has a number of highly important benefits. It also revealed that people with low educational attainment profit most from adult learning. EAEA therefore believes that it is absolutely necessary for Europe to push for progress in adult learning and that this can be achieved by either presenting an appropriate target (broken down into national targets due to the large diversity in this area in Europe) or a flagship initiative that will contribute to progress.

This target or initiative should focus on under-represented groups in lifelong learning and under-represented countries, because there is enormous diversity in Europe concerning who participates in learning and who does not. There is geographic diversity that demonstrates high participation rates in Northern Europe and far less in Southern or Central and Eastern Europe. Additionally, those who already have high education levels are most likely to participate in adult learning. A target or initiative that focuses on under-represented groups therefore has enough flexibility to really have an effect. EAEA believes that we need a 'Learning Europe' with an emphasis on under-represented groups. The lack of learning in Europe has a negative impact on participation in society, on social exclusion, but also on Europe's competitiveness.

Stakeholder involvement

Stakeholder involvement, and in particular civil society involvement, has to be improved and strengthened. Whereas we welcome the consultation on "Stakeholder's consultation guidelines", current news show that for a topic such as TTIP, only some stakeholders were consulted, and civil society in particular has been left behind closed doors. Such guidelines are only adequate if they are respected especially in the event of such important negotiations as the TTIP.

In order to improve stakeholder involvement in the field of education, EAEA asks for a structured dialogue in education, which we believe is the best way to integrate stakeholders in the strategies in this area.

EAEA also demands regular support for civil society organisations, both at the national and at the European level. This is crucial to ensure that civil society can support the implementation of EU strategies.

Tools to achieve smart, sustainable growth

The current EU2020 strategy contains some laudable goals, however in reality it does not tackle the underlying structural weaknesses of the EU economy because in practice it is subordinate to the pursuit of GDP growth. A truly balanced strategy should give far greater priority to achieving longer term objectives of increased wellbeing, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. As sustainable development contains three interrelated dimensions: environmental, economic and social that are present in the Europe 2020 strategy, the focus of the review should be to promote greater wellbeing.

Therefore we support greater public investment in appropriate research, lifelong learning, environmental and social improvements and other areas that contribute to a long-term development towards a more sustainable Europe.

9.8 EAEA POSITION PAPER ON TTIP: EDUCATION IS A PUBLIC GOOD AND HAS TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE TTIP NEGOTIATIONS

EAEA is deeply concerned by the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations and its possible consequences. EAEA wants to firmly underline that (adult) education is a public good and asks the European Commission and the Member States to exclude (adult) education from the negotiations.

The TTIP negotiations have so far taken place behind closed doors, and civil society positions have not been included. The TTIP is a very bad example of stakeholder involvement of in key EU developments - we demand a stronger involvement of civil society organisations that represent European citizens' interests.

From information that other organisations have leaked and/or commented, EAEA knows that the documents so far say that “services supplied in the exercise of governmental authority” will be excluded from the negotiations. This formulation is dangerous and weak, as it opens the floor to various interpretations and even contradicting interpretations. EAEA agrees with ETUCE’s argument that “proposed exceptions would apply only to services that are provided on a non-commercial basis and not in competition with other suppliers. In other words, if any part of a country’s education system is provided on a commercial or for-fee basis, or if private schools operate, education may not benefit from the general exclusion. In education systems throughout the EU some elements of fees are common, e.g. students fees and school books.” This clearly means that the phrasing of the exception is inadequate and insufficient. It has to be formulated in a different way.

We have also been informed that adult education (e.g. literacy courses, but also other general and vocational provision) is part of the negotiations. We strongly oppose this inclusion – the European benchmark on adult education has decreased and stagnated instead of growing, which shows that it is already difficult to provide affordable adult education for learners. In many countries, this can only be achieved by very cheap, free-lance trainers or through volunteers – any added pressure through US companies would further undermine the provision of adult education.

EAEA also agrees with ETUCE that the “negative list approach” is dangerous and should be replaced by a “positive listing”. Indeed, the latter is much clearer and will not lead in the future to conflicting interpretations. Other trade agreements have chosen this approach in the past that should be the one of all trade agreements, as it is safer for all parties and will avoid potential future disputes.

EAEA asks the European Commission and the Member States to entirely and formally exclude education and furthermore all public services from the negotiation on the TTIP. EAEA also supports the statements of other organisations that asked for the exclusion of education and public services from the TTIP and underlined that education is a public good and cannot be dependent on commercial and trade agreements.



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