

RENEWAL  
STATE OF THE  
ART REPORT  
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION  
OF THE EUROPEAN AGENDA  
FOR ADULT LEARNING



**RENEWAL**  
Regional Networking  
for Adult Learning  
in Europe



Drafting and final editing by:  
Francesca Operti, European Association for the Education of Adults- with the cooperation of the RENEWAL consortium

Project coordination:  
European Association for the Education of Adults, EAEA  
Rue de l'Industrie 10, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

Proofreading:  
Bellis Translations sprl

Design and edition:  
Serena Gamba  
www.serenagamba.com

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# RENEWAL

Regional Networking  
for Adult Learning  
in Europe

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# 1. Introduction to the report

## I. THE RENEWAL PROJECT

### a. Aims

The RENEWAL project aims to strengthen the European Agenda for Adult Learning in the Southern and Central-Eastern regions, namely where participation in AE is low and there is less infrastructure.

This will be achieved by collecting insights on the concept and its impact from the AE representatives and providers in the two regions and giving them the opportunity to discuss the main challenges and 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 will thus facilitate and boost the transfer of innovation and enhance the cooperation of civil society in these two regions.



1: Countries involved in the RENEWAL project coloured by regions.

### b. Outcomes

The project has the following outcomes:

- **A state-of-the-art report** on the implementation of the Adult Learning Agenda in the two regions, containing information about each of the countries concerned and a preliminary analysis of the main challenges, developments and issues.
- **Two regional meetings** which contribute towards the European Agenda by collecting feedback on the state-of-the-art report and drafting recommendations for future mandates for implementation, as well as strengthening the ties within the two regions by providing room for exchange and networking.
- **Two meeting reports** which summarise the main results of the regional meetings and develop concrete messages and recommendations to strengthen the Agenda in the two regions.

### c. Consortium

RENEWAL has three partners:

**EAEA (Coordinator) – BE:** EAEA is a European NGO with 123 member organisations from 42 countries working in the field of adult learning. The main roles of EAEA include the promotion of lifelong learning at European level and the development of practice through projects, publications and training, as well as the provision of information and services on adult learning.



**KERIGMA – PT:** Kerigma is an institution for innovation and social development in Barcelos, Portugal. It is a non-profit organisation whose mission is to promote innovation, training and the social development of the region and its people through social and training activities.



**AIVD – SK:** The Association of Adult Education Institutions in the Slovak Republic (AIVD) is a non-governmental, apolitical, non-profit, voluntary organisation. AIVD currently has more than 50 members which include institutions of adult education and devoted individuals. The mission of the Association is to enhance exchange among its members and promote their common interests in accordance with the needs of Slovakia.



### d. Funding and support

The project is funded with the support of the European Commission, in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme.





## II. THE RENEWED AGENDA FOR ADULT LEARNING AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

The Council Resolution on a European Agenda for Adult Learning<sup>1</sup>, adopted by the Education Council on 28 November 2011, concentrates on increasing participation in adult learning of all kinds (formal, non-formal and informal), whether this be for the purposes of acquiring new work skills, for active citizenship, or for personal development and fulfilment. Special attention is dedicated to poorly qualified and disadvantaged adults, with a focus on developing their basic skills, for example through guidance, validation and access to second chance initiatives<sup>2</sup>.

The Renewed Agenda for Adult Learning builds on the Communication on Adult Learning (2006), and the subsequent Action Plan on Adult Learning 2008–2010. It was adopted to contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy and in particular the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (ET2020) from an adult learning perspective.

The Agenda encourages the countries participating in the LLP to take concrete steps to enhance, intensify and coordinate policies on adult learning<sup>3</sup>. In order to facilitate cooperation with the European Commission and other national stakeholders, such as social partners, businesses, relevant non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations, Member States were asked to designate a national coordinator for its implementation.

National coordinators were invited to present national work plans for the period 2012–14 and were provided with a grant to carry out the activities.

Taking into account the specific circumstances within each Member State, and in accordance with national priorities, Member States were requested, where appropriate with the support of the Commission, to focus on the following areas:

- Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality;
- Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training;
- Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship through adult learning;
- Enhancing the creativity and innovation of adults and their learning environments;
- Improving the knowledge base on adult learning and monitoring the adult learning sector.

At the end of the period, the national coordinators were requested to send reports on the activities undertaken. A second mandate is anticipated for 2015 and most probably a further one for 2016.

## III. AIM OF THE REPORT AND ITS METHODOLOGY

### a. Aim

The following report proposes a preliminary analysis of the main challenges, developments and issues regarding the implementation of the Agenda in the two less-developed adult education regions (Southern Europe and Central-Eastern Europe). It contains an insight into the activities undertaken in each of the countries concerned<sup>4</sup> and how those were perceived by civil society and the adult education providers; it underlines the challenges and needs of the AE providers and civil society in the two regions; and it provides a list of suggestions that could be used for future mandates for the Agenda's implementation. However, this report does not claim to provide a detailed and exhaustive description of what has been happening at the national level in the framework of the Agenda: rather, it should be considered as a snapshot of the opinions and suggestions of some EAEA members and other stakeholders on the European strategy.

The report will serve as the basis for discussion and exchange on how the European Commission initiative could be developed further to strengthen adult education in the two regions. The suggestions contained in the report will be presented to and debated with the national coordinators from the relevant countries and the European Commission in the course of two regional meetings to be held in Bratislava on 15–16 October 2014 and in Lisbon on 23–24 October 2014<sup>5</sup>.

### b. Methodology

The report is drafted on the basis of a survey<sup>6</sup>, which was produced by EAEA with the support of Kerigma and AIVD SK. Its purpose was to deliver an understanding of the respondents' awareness of the Adult Learning Agenda and their opinions on its impact on the adult education sector in their respective countries. Furthermore, it aimed to discover the respondents' views on the existing civil society structures at the national level and the stakeholders' willingness to foster the cooperation within the country and in the two regions. A call for good practice was also included in the survey in order to collect more information on the successful activities carried out by the contributors and foster the transfer of innovation between providers.

The survey was conducted with the support of the software Survey Monkey. It was launched on 5 May 2014 and officially closed on 30 June 2014. The survey was advertised by the RENEWAL consortium using online channels, personalised emails and direct contacts. In some countries, national coordinators and/or agencies were contacted in order to make the survey more visible among civil society and adult education providers.

The total number of respondents was in excess of 200. However, only 129 people completed the survey and validated their contribution. EAEA members were supposed to be the main target group. However, thanks to the broad dissemination, the survey was completed by many other providers and NGO representatives (Graph 1).

<sup>1</sup> Council Resolution 2011/C 372/01: Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning. Official Journal of the European Union C372 of 20.12.2011

<sup>2</sup> European Commission, Grundtvig Compendium 2012

<sup>3</sup> European Commission, Grundtvig Compendium 2012

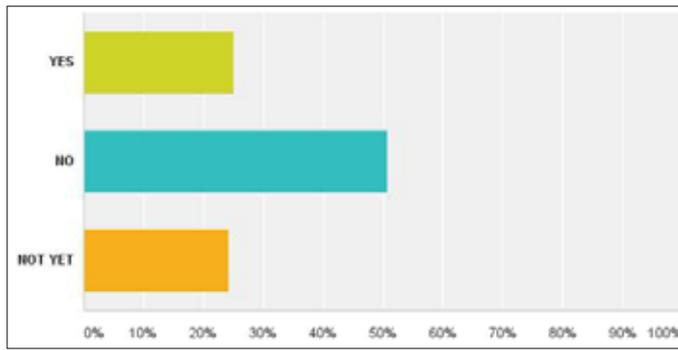
<sup>4</sup> Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Malta, Cyprus and Turkey for Southern Europe; Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Slovenia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Poland for Central-Eastern Europe

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.eaea.org/en/projects/eaea-coordinated-projects/renewal/regional-meetings.html>

<sup>6</sup> Annex 1

#### Q4 Are you an EAEA member?

Answered: 124 Skipped: 5

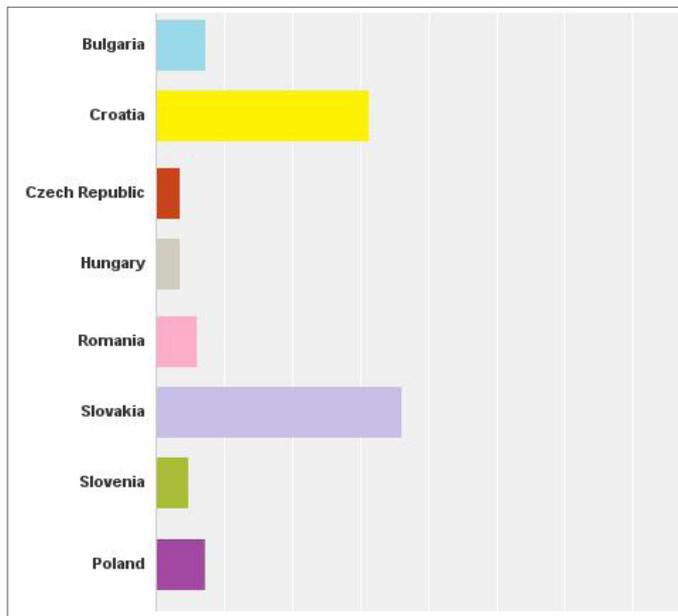


Graph 1: Percentage of EAEA members among respondents

The distribution of respondents among countries is as follows:

#### Q1 Which country are you from?

Answered: 83 Skipped: 0

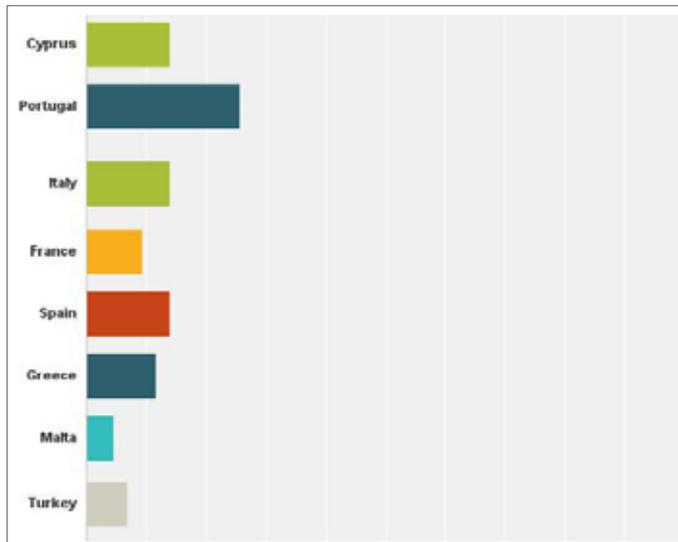


#### CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPE

- BULGARIA 6
- CROATIA 25
- CZECH REPUBLIC 2
- HUNGARY 3
- ROMANIA 5
- POLAND 6
- SLOVAKIA 29
- SLOVENIA 4

#### Q1 Which country are you from?

Answered: 43 Skipped: 0



#### SOUTHERN EUROPE

- CYPRUS 5
- FRANCE 4
- GREECE 6
- ITALY 6
- MALTA 2
- PORTUGAL 12
- SPAIN 6
- TURKEY 3



Respondents are mainly adult education providers (public or private), civil society representatives (NGOs and associations at local, regional or national level) and national or regional institutes and institutions. A few national coordinators are also involved because they are either EAEA members or in contact with EAEA through its communication channels.

Two people per country (when possible) were interviewed in order to deepen the written contribution and gain a better understanding of some statements. The interviewees were selected mainly on the basis of the replies provided and the availability of the contributors. Interviews were conducted via Skype or phone, and only one interview was carried out via email. A list of respondents and interviewees is available in Annex 2.

### **c. Outline**

The report consists of three parts: the first and second chapters provide an overview of the survey responses and the insights collected by the RENEWAL consortium from Central-Eastern Europe and Southern Europe respectively; the third chapter seeks to summarise the main outcomes and suggestions emerging from the previous two chapters.

Each country analysis describes the situation of adult education as it is perceived by the survey respondents and the interviewees; their challenges and priorities; the difficulties and needs of civil society in the country; a snapshot of the respondents' opinions and suggestions on the European Agenda for Adult Learning and its implementation; and the level of interest among respondents in fostering the cooperation within their country and in the respective regions.

The report aims not to present a detailed picture of the implementation in each country, but to give the adult education providers and civil society representatives the possibility to evaluate the strategy so far from their individual perspectives and, most of all, to propose some suggestions for the future.

## 2. Central-Eastern Europe region

### I. INTRODUCTION

The RENEWAL consortium defines Central-Eastern Europe as the region composed by the following countries: Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovenia and Poland.

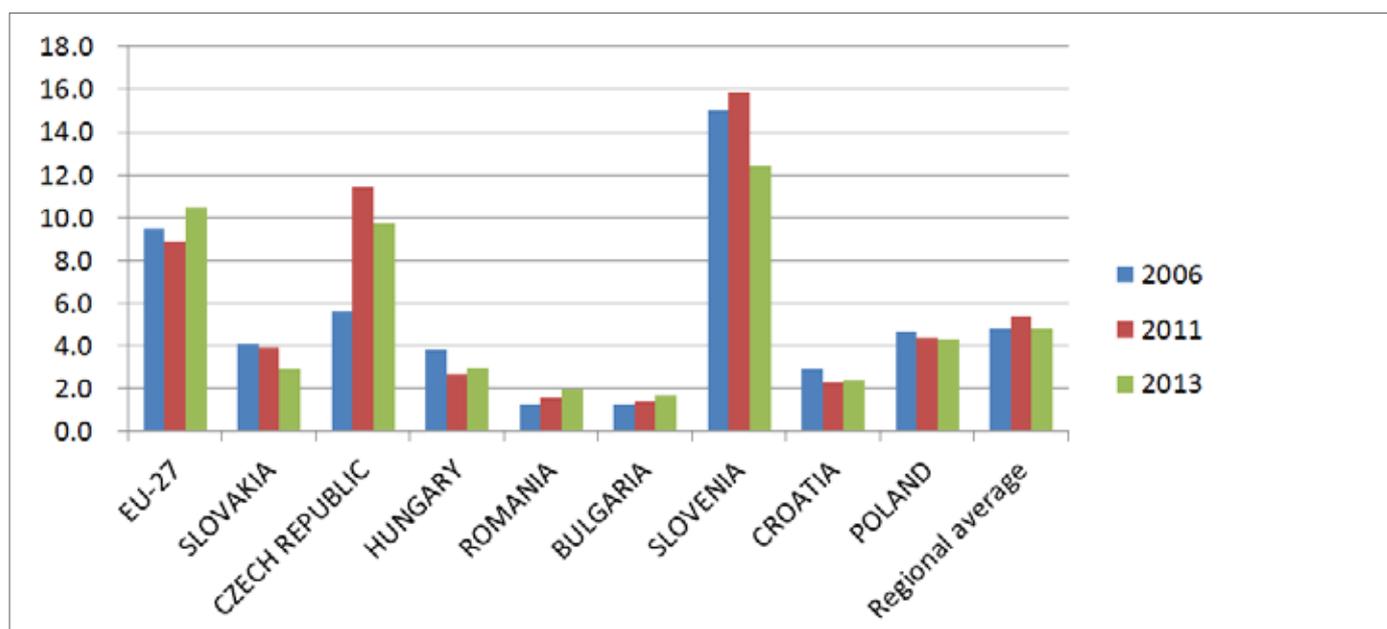
This chapter provides an overview of the main figures on the adult education sector in the region. This exercise will help the reader to better understand the respondents' opinions on the implementation of the Agenda and their needs at the national level. No further analysis is offered, as the aim of the report is not to draft a study on the countries' situations but to collect insights from AE providers and civil society<sup>7</sup>.

The first graph and table present the participation rates in each country from 2006 to 2013 and provide an average for the region for the same period.

Table 1: Lifelong learning, % of the population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training<sup>8</sup>

	2006	2011	2013
<b>EU-27</b>	9.5	8.9	10.5
<b>SLOVAKIA</b>	4.1	3.9	2.9
<b>CZECH REPUBLIC</b>	5.6	11.4	9.7
<b>HUNGARY</b>	3.8	2.7	3
<b>ROMANIA</b>	1.3	1.6	2
<b>BULGARIA</b>	1.3	1.4	1.7
<b>SLOVENIA</b>	15	15.9	12.4
<b>CROATIA</b>	2.9	2.3	2.4
<b>POLAND</b>	4.7	4.4	4.3
<b>Regional average</b>	4.8	5.4	4.8

Source: Eurostat (online data code: trng\_lfse\_01)



<sup>7</sup> For a better understanding of the latest developments in adult education in each country, we would like to invite readers to consult the EAEA country reports, which will be published by EAEA by the end of 2014.

<sup>8</sup> Lifelong learning refers to persons aged 25 to 64 who stated that they

received education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator gives the total population of the same age group, excluding those who did not answer the question on 'Participation in education and training'. Both the numerator and the denominator come from the EU Labour Force Survey.

The following table describes the distribution of non-formal education and training activities by provider and by country in 2011.

Table 2: Providers of non-formal education and training activities, 2011 (%)<sup>9</sup>

	Employer	Non-formal education & training institution	Formal education institution <sup>(2)</sup>	Commercial institution where education & training is not main activity <sup>(3)</sup>	Employers' organisation, chamber of commerce <sup>(4)</sup>	Non-commercial institution (e.g. library) <sup>(5)</sup>	Non-profit association <sup>(6)</sup>	Individual <sup>(7)</sup>	Trade union <sup>(8)</sup>	Other <sup>(9)</sup>
<b>EU-27 <sup>(10)</sup></b>	32.0	17.7	9.8	10.9	3.2	5.7	5.9	5.1	1.0	4.9
<b>Bulgaria</b>	71.8	11.3	2.5	3.9	2.3	5.3	:	1.3	:	:
<b>Czech Republic</b>	40.7	32.6	9.1	3.4	1.3	2.0	1.5	7.1	:	1.6
<b>Croatia <sup>(11)</sup></b>	22.0	24.2	15.6	12.8	5.0	:	3.3	:	:	7.7
<b>Hungary</b>	60.3	12.9	3.7	4.5	7.7	2.7	3.0	4.4	:	0.6
<b>Poland</b>	16.8	53.6	11.9	7.9	1.2	1.5	2.4	1.7	:	2.4
<b>Romania</b>	39.9	35.4	13.6	2.4	:	:	:	:	:	:
<b>Slovenia</b>	19.5	45.7	11.3	3.4	5.9	4.3	5.6	1.7	:	2.6
<b>Slovakia</b>	47.5	25.2	11.0	7.8	1.7	1.3	1.2	2.9	:	1.4
<b>Regional average</b>	39.8	30.1	9.8	5.8	3.6	2.9	2.8	3.2	:	2.7

Source: Eurostat (online data code: trng\_aes\_170)

The last table illustrates the main obstacles to participation in each country.

Table 3: Obstacles to participation in education and training, 2011<sup>10</sup> (%)

	Health or age <sup>(2)</sup>	None within reachable distance	No time due to family	Did not have the pre-requisites <sup>(4)</sup>	Too expensive, could not afford	Lack of employer /public service support	Conflict with work schedule	Did not need it for work	Did not need it for personal reasons	Could not find what was wanted <sup>(6)</sup>	No access to a computer or internet (for distance learning) <sup>(6)</sup>
<b>EU-27 <sup>(7)</sup></b>	8.5	6.1	20.9	4.2	13.2	8.0	18.0	50.0	14.6	8.6	1.6
<b>Bulgaria</b>	3.1	3.8	6.2	2.4	8.9	1.9	7.2	88.8	2.8	2.2	1.4
<b>Czech Republic</b>	7.1	3.7	22.1	2.1	7.6	4.9	11.1	41.6	16.3	7.9	1.2
<b>Croatia <sup>(8)</sup></b>	13.4	32.1	55.5	18.4	60.6	21.0	35.0	:	:	:	:
<b>Hungary</b>	4.6	5.1	6.7	2.3	11.4	4.1	8.2	87.3	1.6	2.0	1.3
<b>Poland</b>	11.6	2.9	21.6	1.8	15.5	5.2	11.8	60.1	13.6	5.7	0.6
<b>Romania</b>	7.5	28.1	30.9	12.9	52.5	30.0	34.7	91.3	19.2	6.0	10.4
<b>Slovenia</b>	6.9	4.2	16.1	1.4	12.6	3.0	13.0	61.8	27.4	6.8	:
<b>Slovakia</b>	6.2	1.4	6.0	0.7	4.7	1.8	4.9	30.0	4.6	2.0	0.5
<b>Regional average</b>	7.3	9.9	19.8	5.0	20.1	8.6	15.3	65.8	11.3	4.7	2.4

Source: Eurostat (online data code: trng\_aes\_170)

<sup>9</sup> (1) Refer to the Internet metadata file ([http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_SDDS/en/trng\\_aes\\_esms.htm](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_SDDS/en/trng_aes_esms.htm)).

(2) Bulgaria: unreliable.

(3) Romania: unreliable.

(4) Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovakia: unreliable.

(5) Slovakia: unreliable.

(6) Croatia, Slovakia: unreliable.

(7) Bulgaria, Slovenia: unreliable.

(8) Slovakia: unreliable.

(10) Estimates.

(11) 2007.

<sup>10</sup>(2) Croatia: unreliable.

(4) Slovenia, Slovakia: unreliable.

(5) Romania: unreliable.

(6) Slovakia: unreliable.

(7) Estimates.

(8) 2007.

## II. COUNTRY ANALYSIS

### I. BULGARIA

#### a) CONTEXT AND PRIORITIES OF THE PROVIDERS

The consortium received five contributions from Bulgaria: four from civil society (Business Foundation for Education, Znanie Association, Saved Future Fund, Innovative Community Centers Association); one from a consultancy (Catro Bulgaria) and one from the State University of Library Studies and Information Technology. Unfortunately only one person was available to be interviewed: EAEA member Gergana Andreeva, from the Business Foundation for Education.

Respondents state that the adult education sector in Bulgaria is not doing well enough. First of all, general participation is decreasing: “This is mainly due to low motivation and shortage of care facilities to combine family and work life,” the Saved Future Fund representative explained. Furthermore, the people who need education the most are not supported adequately by the national level to use the learning opportunities available. According to another respondent, the situation is even worse for rural areas, as “Learning opportunities are more present in the big cities and concentrated in some regions.”

AE providers and civil society are believed to be neither strong nor supported enough by the State. The AE sector is financed mainly through projects, which makes it unsustainable and deprives it of the possibility to plan a strategy in the long term. However, the main challenge perceived by the interviewees is the lack of recognition of civil society as a partner in the field: “This currently prevents us from offering many services to the public and puts us in competition with other types of learning providers.”

Priorities for the adult education sector to be tackled in the short term are listed as follows:

- Sustainability
- Focus on older learners and other disadvantaged groups in society
- Basic skills and key competences
- Awareness raising on the importance of continuing education
- Recognition of competences and validation of non-formal and informal learning

“Due to our history, people are not familiar with the concept of adult learning,” states one interviewee.

#### b) THE ADULT LEARNING AGENDA AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Three out of six respondents report that they are acquainted with the European strategy. Two of them say that they have learnt about it via online resources, one direct from the national coordinator. However, the number decreases when counting the respondents who know their national coordinator (two out of six) and the respondents who have been involved in the Agenda for Adult Learning’s implementation at the national level (one out of six).

The majority of respondents, in any case, believe in the positive impact that the implementation of the Agenda can have on the AE sector in Bulgaria. Contributors who are familiar with it state that the European Agenda can boost participation and increase the quality of the sector.

The interviewee explained that she was invited to a conference in 2014 and expressed a general satisfaction with the event itself. “However, my impression was that we are far from implementing concrete actions.” The interviewee affirmed, “If we want to improve things for real, we need to establish a dialogue among different stakeholders and plan how we can effectively

and efficiently implement the policies we have on paper.”

#### c) COOPERATION

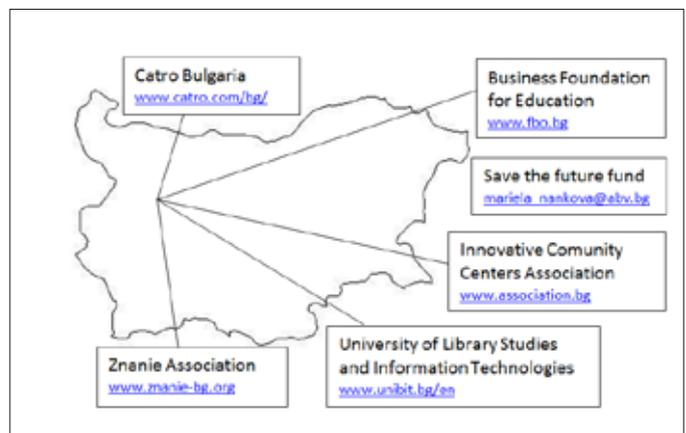
Respondents deplored the lack of central coordination for civil society and adult education providers. According to some of the respondents, this fragmentation makes cooperation difficult even if this exists in different forms both at the national and international levels.

In general, respondents seem to be in favour of fostering collaboration within the country and the region.

“I think we can gain from cooperation from our neighbouring countries as we have many challenges in common,” the interviewee declares.

Topics proposed for such cooperation are the following:

- Lifelong learning strategies, especially on how to increase participation and create opportunities for older learners
- Civic participation in decision-making
- Development of the poorest regions
- Recognition of competences and validation of non-formal and informal learning



## II. CROATIA

### a) CONTEXT AND PRIORITIES OF THE PROVIDERS

The consortium received twenty-five contributions from Croatia. Among the fifteen replies analysed<sup>11</sup>, the majority come from AE institutions, a quarter from national institutions (Ministries and agencies) and a few from business consultancies.

The two people interviewed are Sonja Novak, Open University Osijek, and Gordana Nikolic, Business school PAR.

The main challenges for the adult education sector perceived by the Croatian respondents are the lack of a clear vision for the sector (as well as for each institution) and the low level of support that adult education providers receive from the central level (in terms of facilitation of procedures and provision of in-service training).

The civil society structures are seen as not receiving enough support by the representatives of the associations and providers, as well as not being supportive enough by the national institutions and the business sector. "There is a need for greater involvement of civil society, but it is not possible because of inadequate funding and insufficient application of the EU funds," explains one of the survey respondents.

According to the contributors, the priorities for the Croatian AE sector are the following:

- Strategic planning
- Quality
- Professionalization of staff
- Inter-sectoral cooperation and employability
- More flexibility to meet the needs of the labour market

### b) THE ADULT LEARNING AGENDA AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Twelve out of fifteen respondents reported that they are acquainted with the Agenda. Seven out of fifteen know who the national coordinator is in Croatia. It is important not to underestimate the fact that of those seven respondents, four come from national institutions involved in education and thus learnt about it direct from the source. With regard to involvement in the activities, six stated that it did happen in their case (among them are two from the above-mentioned national institutions). The great majority of respondents consider the Agenda to be beneficial for AE.

According to the respondents, the positive aspects of the initiative include the stimulation of changes in adult education at national level by taking into account specific needs and circumstances within each Member State; the opportunities for networking, exchanging experiences and ideas; and the possibilities for the organisation of coordinated activities in the field.

Suggestions for future mandates are the following:

- More communication and promotion (i.e. through a newsletter, dissemination of projects, etc.)
- Increase the involvement of adult education institutions and providers
- Emphasize the promotion of equality, social cohesion and active citizenship
- Improvement of quality and efficiency
- Boost the learning opportunities and the sustainability of institutions in rural areas and small communities

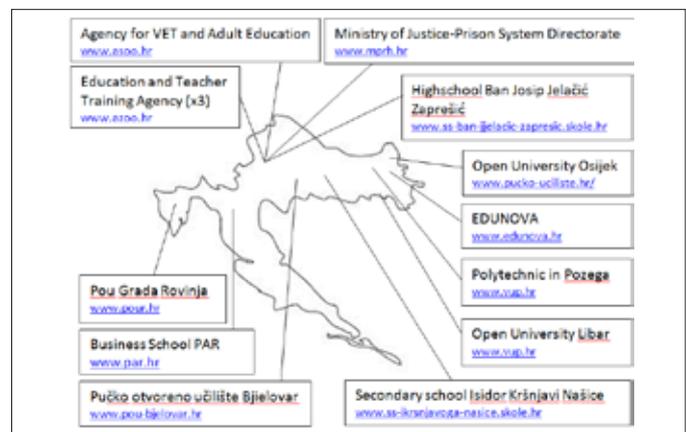
### c) COOPERATION

Cooperation and exchange between providers and with civil society are present at the local level (so-called local partnerships for employment which bring together public institutions, NGOs, social services, etc.) but regrets were expressed that they were not particularly effective. In that regard, there is a desire for more support and encouragement from the central level. Talking exclusively about adult education, respondents affirm that providers are more exposed to forms of competition rather than collaboration. However, there is a general consensus among the respondents on the benefits that improvements to this situation could bring.

With regard to the regional cooperation, the Open University of Osijek representative and some other respondents find a great deal of interest in the possibility of learning more about the adult learning situation and experience of the neighbouring countries.

The following topics for such cooperation were suggested:

- Lifelong Learning Strategies for civil society
  - Local economic and employment strategies (especially concerning NEET and people at risk of unemployment)
  - How to make adult education more attractive and increase participation
  - Nationally standardized procedures in the implementation of quality education programmes focused on individuals' needs.
- Some kind of European support is needed with regard to the lack of information on policies and the opportunity to exchange methodologies.



<sup>11</sup>As the maximum number of replies from each country was fixed at fifteen, the ten contributions judged most incomplete have not been taken into consideration for this report.

### III. CZECH REPUBLIC

#### a) CONTEXT AND PRIORITIES OF THE PROVIDERS

The consortium received two contributions from the Czech Republic, one from Erika Konupcikova at the Czech Association of Institutions for Adult Education (AIVD CZ), and the other from Miroslava Dvorakova from the Charles University in Prague.

The AIVD CZ representative was interviewed.

The main challenge for the adult education sector mentioned by the civil society representative is the lack of sustainability of AE providers and civil society. She recognises the moral support received by the State, but complains about the lack of financial support. The main income in the AE sector is based on European funds, which are not always easy to obtain and manage.

The following priorities for the AE sector are suggested by the interviewee:

- Quality assurance
- Education in age management

#### b) THE ADULT LEARNING AGENDA AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

One respondent out of two was acquainted with the implementation of the European Agenda. She reported that she had learned about it from the Czech national agency. However, neither of the respondents knows who their national coordinator is, and they were neither informed about nor involved in the Adult Learning Agenda activities.

Therefore positive and negative aspects of the Agenda could not be identified clearly by the contributors.

According to the AIVD representative, anything that is organised to promote and help the adult education sector is valuable, but not being involved in the process is considered as a loss – for both sides. “This is especially true considering the difficulties that the sector is facing in the country,” affirms the interviewee.

#### c) COOPERATION

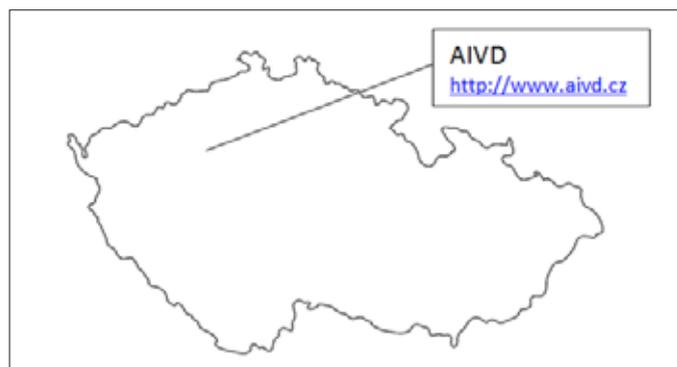
The AIVD CZ representative is interested in fostering the cooperation within the country and within the Central-Eastern Europe region.

The following topics were suggested for possible cooperation at both levels:

- Quality assurance
- Education in age management

“Czech needs are also valid for the region: it could be interesting to explore such topics in more depth with colleagues from the neighbouring countries,” declares the interviewee.

A further suggestion was the deepening of the topic ‘Basic skills’, which seems to be quite neglected by the Central-Eastern Europe region.



### IV. HUNGARY

#### a) CONTEXT AND PRIORITIES OF THE PROVIDERS

The consortium received three contributions from Hungary, one from Janos Szigeti Toth, Hungarian Folk High School Society; the second from Balazs Nemeth, from the University of Pecs I; and the third from Lidia Vinczéné Fekete, Observatory Centre for Educational Development.

The two respondents who are also EAEA members were interviewed.

The main challenges for the adult education sector are believed to be the segmentation of the education policies within the national institutions and the decrease in importance that non-formal learning is experiencing in favour of vocational education and training – this being partly, although not entirely, due to the crisis.

“The main problem in Hungary is that adult education is a competence of the Ministry of the Economy: this connection to the employment sector makes non-formal adult education much weaker in comparison to vocational training,” warns one interviewee.

According to the three contributors, civil society structures are also not strong enough in Hungary: first of all they lack recognition and support from the national level; and secondly they are based on insecure and insufficient funding.

The Hungarian Folk High School Society representative regretted that “Civil society in Hungary is active, but its actions can’t be systematic due to the lack of support.”

In order to improve this situation, one of the Hungarian contributors suggests creating national platforms, composed by AE providers, national agencies and researchers, which can monitor and influence the implementation of adult education policies in the country.

The priorities of the AE sector in Hungary are the following:

- Regional differences and the gap between rural and industrial areas
- Youth (unemployment and early school leavers)
- Older learners

—→ The last three points can be included under the umbrella of the basic skills (PIAAC- skills mismatch)

- Citizenship education
- Quality
- Participation and awareness raising

“Democratic citizenship is very relevant in this critical situation that both the European Union and Hungary are experiencing,” declares one interviewee.

#### b) THE ADULT LEARNING AGENDA AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

All respondents are acquainted with the Adult Learning Agenda. People learned about it thanks to EAEA and through the European institutions’ websites.

One out of three knows the national coordinator and was involved in the Agenda activities. In particular, the representative of the Folk High School in Hungary deplors a lack of communication between those in charge of the Agenda and the civil society representatives. A more bottom-up approach would have been appreciated by the respondents, because this could favour the involvement of the communities and increase the effectiveness of the actions.

Despite this, all of them believe that the Agenda is beneficial for their country.

As suggestions for future mandates, respondents propose more efficient promotion and the fostering of public debates at the

national level – via traditional channels and social media – and forums at the local level. “Learners should also be involved in the Agenda activities, in order for them to explain the benefits of learning,” recommends the Hungarian Folk High School Society representative.

“When planning the implementation actions, particular attention should be paid to civil society needs,” warns another respondent.

### c) COOPERATION

Cooperation among civil society and between them and AE providers does exist in Hungary. However, all respondents state that boosting such cooperation within their country and fostering it in the Central-Eastern region could be of benefit for the AE sector and, in particular, for their respective associations or institutions.

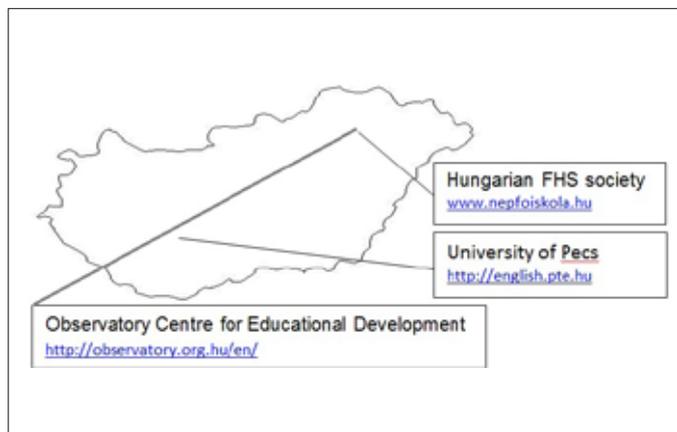
The topics proposed for the cooperation at the national level are the following:

- Transparency,
- Civil society sustainability,
- Involvement in policy design.

With regard to regional cooperation, the following topics are suggested as interesting to be developed:

- Democratic citizenship,
- Awareness raising campaigns and lifelong learning weeks,
- Gap between rural and industrial areas.

By way of support from the European level, one of the interviewees wishes to have more emphasis placed on the importance of AE and its individual and social benefits.



## v. POLAND

### a) CONTEXT AND PRIORITIES OF THE PROVIDERS

The consortium received six contributions from Poland. These are from a mixture of private and public stakeholders which either deal with adult education direct or are involved in Grundtvig projects: the 36.6 Competence centre; Educational centre for intergenerational integration HIPOKAMP; the Institute for Sustainable Technologies (EAEA member); Max tool; the Mine of art association; and the NGO Trainers Association.

The person who was available for the interview is the HIPOKAMP representative, an andragogist working in an adult centre specialising in older learners.

The main challenge she mentions is the lack of recognition of the value of the adult education providers’ work: “Society and policy-makers do not always understand that our activities have a key positive impact on well-being and thus on the future of the community.”

Another difficulty she highlights is competitiveness with the business sector, which offers a high number of learning opportunities for adults that are too closely focused on employability.

Due to the incompleteness of many answers it was not possible to gain a good understanding of the civil society structures in Poland and their needs. Two respondents affirm that there is some form of support for civil society (one refers to support from the EU level in particular). However, this is considered to be insufficient and to involve too much bureaucracy. Lack of organisation and cooperation are also deplored. The interviewee would like more financial support, especially for grass-roots initiatives, as according to her, those are the only ones able to reach out to particular groups in society where education is needed the most.

The priorities for Poland’s AE sector are:

- Awareness raising on the benefits of adult learning for the demographic challenge
- Quality
- Professionalism of staff and trainers

### b) THE ADULT LEARNING AGENDA AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

All six respondents reported that they are acquainted with the Adult Learning Agenda. Almost all of them learned about it autonomously through indirect sources, and the EAEA member learned about it through the EAEA’s information material. Three of them know the Polish national coordinator and one of them reports having been involved in the implementation activities. Half of the respondents state that this initiative has benefits for adult education in Poland.

Among the strong points of this initiative, respondents mention the strengthening of the importance of lifelong learning; the establishment of clear priorities for lifelong learning to be implemented at the national level; the possibility to exchange knowledge and good practice among stakeholders as well as increase the quality of the sector.

Suggestions for future mandates are the following:

- Better promotion of the initiative
  - More transparency in the planning and implementation process
  - More involvement of civil society and AE providers/experts
- “A person to call in order to propose ideas and better cooperation among stakeholders are very much necessary,” confirmed the interviewee.

### c) COOPERATION

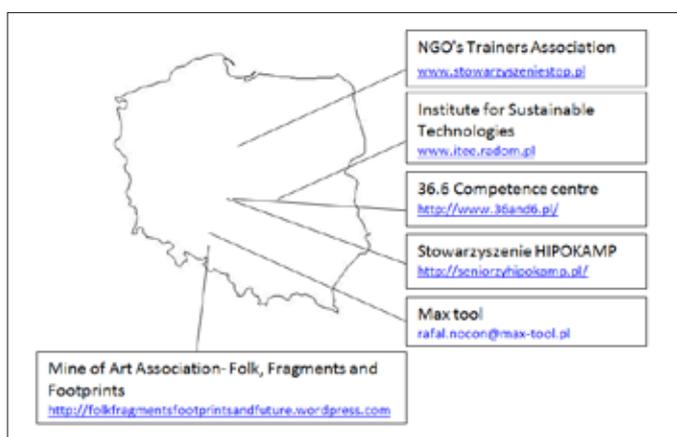
Poland is the only country where the cooperation with and between civil society is not noticeably considered as interesting. Half of the respondents report this, and the other half declares they are not sure whether this could be useful.

However, the interviewee declares: “We have contacts and collaboration with countries in Western Europe, but cooperating with colleagues from the region could be very useful to create some solutions which are a bit more suitable for us.”

The topics proposed for such cooperation are:

- Partnership and professional dialogue
- Age management and opportunities for older learners
- Recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

The support needed from the European level is a better exchange of information and good practice and more political support in advocating for the sector.



## vi. ROMANIA

### a) CONTEXT AND PRIORITIES OF THE PROVIDERS

The consortium received five contributions from Romania. They are from Maria Toia, Romanian Institute for Adult Education (IREA); Carmen Corlateanu, Casa Corpuli Didactic Neamt; Mariana Matache, Asociatia EUROED; Constantin-Mircea Corlateanu, ISJ NEAMT – school inspectorate of Neamt county; and Gabriel Dobrescu, Asociatia pentru educatie si Dezvoltare Durabila.

The first two respondents were interviewed.

The main challenge perceived by the IREA representative for the adult education sector is the lack of awareness regarding the importance of lifelong learning for the general public among professionals and policy-makers: “We need to create a culture for it, and this is not an easy task.”

Contributors describe the civil society structures in Romania as unsustainable as well as receiving inadequate support from the national level. Civil society receives funding through various projects and programmes, mostly European, which are, however, insecure and insufficient. In that regard, respondents highlight a fragmentation of competences among the national institutions that creates confusion for the sector and does not allow a comprehensive and coherent strategy for adult education. On top of that, civil society deplores a lack of recognition from the national level which leads to a lack of involvement in the policy-making process.

“Between civil society and policy-makers there should be not only cooperation, but a real partnership for adult education: it should be evident that we should work for the same purpose,” asserts one interviewee.

As priorities that should be tackled in the short term in the country, the interviewees list the following:

- Basic skills
- Quality assurance
- Train the trainers
- Access to learning opportunities for disadvantaged groups (especially in the rural areas).

Concerning this last point, the IREA representative declares: “There is a legal framework to create lifelong learning centres in such areas (a regional law issued in 2011). However, the initiative has to come from the local authorities and so far I have no knowledge of any centre being put in place.”

### b) THE ADULT LEARNING AGENDA AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Four out of five respondents report that they are familiar with the Agenda and two of them (the EUROED representative and the IREA representative) know who the national coordinator is. The IREA representative attended the launch conference, but otherwise none of the respondents was involved in the activities organised in the framework of the Agenda's implementation.

With regard to the potential that the initiative has, the two respondents who are acquainted with the Agenda implementation have very different views: on the one hand the initiative is considered as beneficial because it increases policy effectiveness in the field of adult learning, it raises awareness regarding learning opportunities, and it reaches out to specific target groups (the poorly skilled, seniors and employees); on the other hand, the respondent was unable to express an opinion as not enough actions were undertaken in that regard.

As suggestions for the next mandate, our Romanian colleagues

indicate better communication between the national coordinator and the AE stakeholders as well as greater involvement of civil society in both the planning phase and the implementation phase. “It will probably help if the European Commission could make it mandatory for the national coordinator to work with other NGOs and other organisations dealing with adult education,” proposes one interviewee.

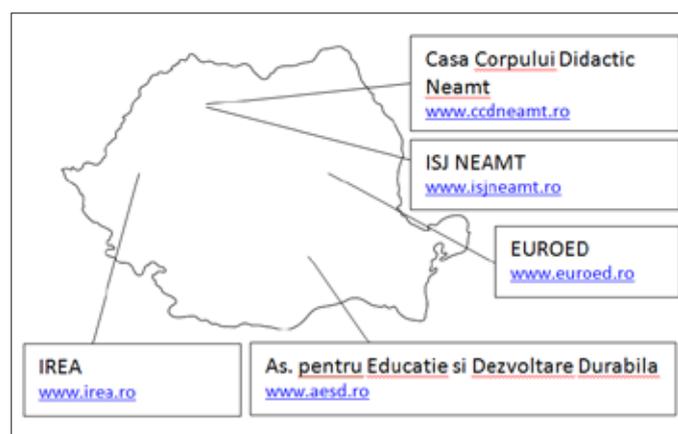
### c) COOPERATION

More than half of our Romanian colleagues state that they would be interested in enhancing the cooperation among civil society within the country and the region, whereas two of the respondents are not sure about the usefulness of such cooperation.

Concerning regional cooperation, the IREA representative affirms: “It’s important to consider some challenges as regional ones and reflect on the economic development of the region.”

As topics to be developed for such cooperation, respondents mentioned the following:

- Partnership for Adult Education
- Civil society involvement in policy-making
- Quality assurance
- Basic skills
- Diversification and personalised learning opportunity



## VII. SLOVAKIA

### a) CONTEXT AND PRIORITIES OF THE PROVIDERS

The consortium received twenty-nine contributions from Slovakia: seven from the education civil society, nine from adult education providers and four from national and regional institutions<sup>12</sup>.

The two people interviewed are Klaudius Silhar, AIVD SK, and Peter Szovics, IBE NBS n.o.

According to the interviewees, the main challenge for the AE sector in Slovakia is the lack of recognition that adult education has among policy-makers and the general public. Furthermore, the AE sector is believed to be not sustainable and there is a lack of a clear strategy at the national level.

Civil society does not receive enough support in Slovakia according to the survey respondents. Funding is mostly project-based and thus insufficient and insecure. According to some respondents, the bulk of the support for AE comes from the international level (mainly EU funding, under the former Lifelong Learning Programme) instead of the internal one. However, representatives of the AE providers report themselves satisfied with the support for their daily work obtained from civil society.

A suggestion for greater involvement of civil society in local and regional activities, organised by other education sectors or policy-makers, was also brought up. According to one respondent, the smaller you are, and the further you are from the industrial cities, the less opportunity you have to develop your activities.

In the short term, respondents would like to see the following priorities tackled:

- Clearer definition of adult education
- Awareness raising and recognition of the importance of adult learning
- Openness and transparency
- Qualifications and recognition of learning outcomes
- Learning opportunity for older people and age management

“If AE providers and civil society are not provided with a financial instrument to stimulate people to participate in adult learning, participation in Slovakia will remain low, especially among the groups that need it the most (unemployed, disadvantaged groups, etc.),” warns the AIVD representative.

### b) THE ADULT LEARNING AGENDA AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Fifteen out of twenty respondents claim to be acquainted with the Adult Learning Agenda. Twelve respondents out of twenty report that they know the national coordinator and eleven that they were involved in the initiatives of the Agenda. The main civil society associations (AIVD SK and the association of the Slovakian third age universities) have not been engaged in the implementation process.

The majority among the respondents believe in the positive character of the Agenda. However, two respondents stated that the Agenda is not beneficial for Slovakia and six respondents are not sure about this (UNDECIDED).

<sup>12</sup> Only twenty replies have been considered as established by an internal rule of the consortium.

Among the strong points of the initiative, respondents listed the possibility to raise awareness about AL in Europe, increase the quality and efficiency of the sector and increase access to and participation in adult education.

Suggestions for future mandates are instead the following:

- More information, promotion and transparency
- Focus on the benefits of adult learning
- Facilitate cooperation and exchange between sectors (non-formal, formal and VET)
- Provision of more exchange and learning opportunities for AE providers and civil society
- Nomination of regional contact points
- Better link with the ESF and the European Agenda

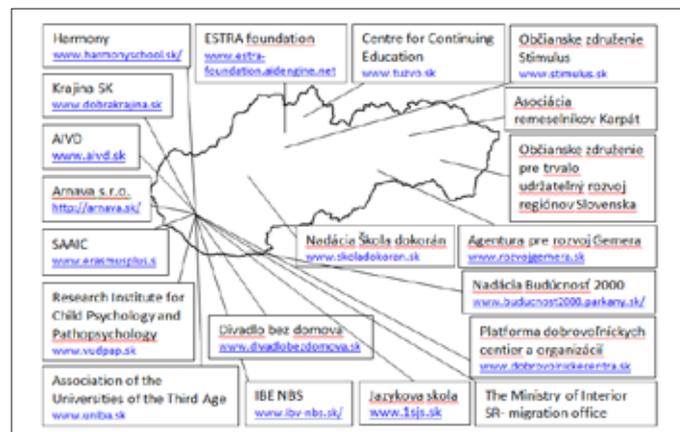
### c) COOPERATION

Cooperation with civil society in Slovakia is considered very difficult, in particular due to political reasons: “Decisions or calls published and promoted without transparency can generate a competitive feeling among organisations which is then hard to put aside when starting cooperation,” warns one interviewee.

However, respondents are very interested in boosting the cooperation with civil society in their country and within the region.

As topics for such cooperation, respondents propose the following:

- Strengthening of the civil society and its sustainability (especially in rural areas)
- Awareness raising and ways to increase participation
- Exchange of methodologies and innovative practice
- Quality assurance
- Validation and recognition of competences
- Professionalization of trainers and staff
- Civic education and conflict mediation



## VIII. SLOVENIA

### a) CONTEXT AND PRIORITIES OF THE PROVIDERS

The consortium received four contributions from Slovenia: Tamara Jare from the Slovenian Third Age University; Matej Cepin from the Socialna academia; Andrej Sotosek and Zvonka Pangeric Pahernik, from the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, who was appointed as national coordinator for the implementation of the Agenda. Although the respondents were not very numerous, they represent different realities of the adult education sector in Slovenia (national association, small NGO and national institution).

The first two were interviewed as Slovenian stakeholders; the latter two as representatives of a national institution, a member of EAEA and also national coordinator for the implementation of the Agenda.

When interviewed, the three stakeholders refer to very different difficulties and needs for the adult learning sector: the main challenge pointed out by the representative of the Third Age University is to demonstrate the importance and value of the adult education activities carried out by the association. Creating cooperation between formal and non-formal learning providers is also believed to be a difficult task, which, however, is believed to be very beneficial by the interviewee. “Despite the fact that we have the same goals, I just too often believe there is not enough cooperation between the formal/non-formal sector and public and private institutions,” she states.

In contrast, the NGO representative stated that the main difficulty for them is the financial and political instability, which does not allow them to follow the political developments. “If you want to build a sustainable environment where organisations could work in the longer term and where adults would feel the need for education, you definitely need more money, political will and tradition,” he insists.

Priorities that should be addressed according to the respondents are:

- Outreach and awareness raising
- Illiteracy (functional, health, ICT and financial)
- Employability and development of key competences
- Citizenship education
- Infrastructures and cooperation between different actors (through a pluralistic approach)
- Lack of regional meeting to exchange good practice and discuss common problems
- Cooperation between different education providers
- Gap between theory and practice (which could be filled by organising small groups to discuss and learn how to implement)
- Fostering volunteering

### b) THE ADULT LEARNING AGENDA AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Three out of four contributors state that they know the Agenda and are convinced of its beneficial character for Slovenia. However, the contributor who reports not being acquainted with the Agenda mentioned activities organised in this framework as good practice (Learning parades). Asked about the impact of this initiative, he says that “Learning parades are good projects in terms of making organisations and projects visible. It is only for one day but it certainly delivers an outcome, both for adults shaping a culture for AE and for AE organisations recognising their work.”

All respondents know who the national coordinator is, but only the SIAE representative (actually the national coordinator)



reports being involved in the Agenda's activities. This was explained by the national coordinator's choice to exploit the existing network in place for the LLL week, in order to be sure that the activities organised could have a definite impact.

Positive aspects of the initiatives listed by the respondents are the promotion and recognition of the sector; the awareness raising regarding the necessity to work further; the target groups to which the Agenda is addressed; the opportunity to network and exchange; the focus on quality and recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning; the possibility to create connections between non-formal learning, vocational training and formal education.

Contributors indicated the following as negative aspects:

- Lack of focus on older learners
- Lack of communication/involvement from the national coordinator

"Information is crucial: there are people who have great ideas, but can't propose them because they're not involved in formal networks and they don't get access to the information," the Third Age Universities representative warns.

Contributors also listed some suggestions for future mandates. From the EU level, the SIAE representative would like to see adult education policies more mainstreamed in national policies, and more investment could be imposed (foreseen for different sectors) for the adult learning sector. Furthermore, he proposed that the recognition and validation of skills could be put on the top of the national governments' agenda.

The Slovenian national coordinator proposes instead that the focus be placed on the implementation of the Agenda on annual leading themes (that could be addressed/explored at either the regional or European level). As the national coordinator believes that the regional level is particularly important, she likewise imagines the possibility to deliver joint regional products that can/should then be shared with the other European regions.

### c) COOPERATION

The NGO representative stated that for them it is difficult to maintain systematic cooperation with the public institutions due to the lack of structure and support from the national level. Sometimes the reason could also be recognised in the use of a top-down approach, which does not allow enough interaction between actors from different levels. He pointed out that for them, international cooperation is possible only through European projects funded by the European level.

The Third Age Universities representative stated that cooperation with NGOs is very satisfactory: a constant exchange through workshops and other events is in place [organised by the centre of NGOs in Slovenia], where good practice, methodologies and funding opportunities are shared.

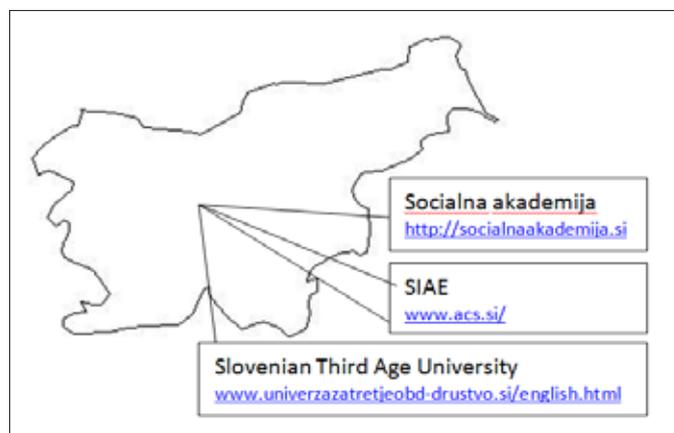
The SIAE representatives describe their cooperation with NGOs as present in different forms (projects, events, etc.) and always considered enriching from both sides. However, they declare that due to financial restrictions this has not always been possible on a long-term, regular basis. "It would definitely be beneficial to make it wider and deeper," they affirm.

All the interviewees describe regional cooperation as potentially very helpful. The following topics were proposed for such cooperation:

- Professionalization of experts and providers
- Illiteracy (functional, health, ICT and financial)
- Gap between theory and practice (which could be filled

by organising small groups to discuss and learn how to implement)

- Include learners' voices in the AE providers' activities and lobbying actions



### 3. Southern Europe Region

#### I. INTRODUCTION

The RENEWAL consortium defines Southern Europe as the region composed by the following countries: Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Malta, Cyprus and Turkey.

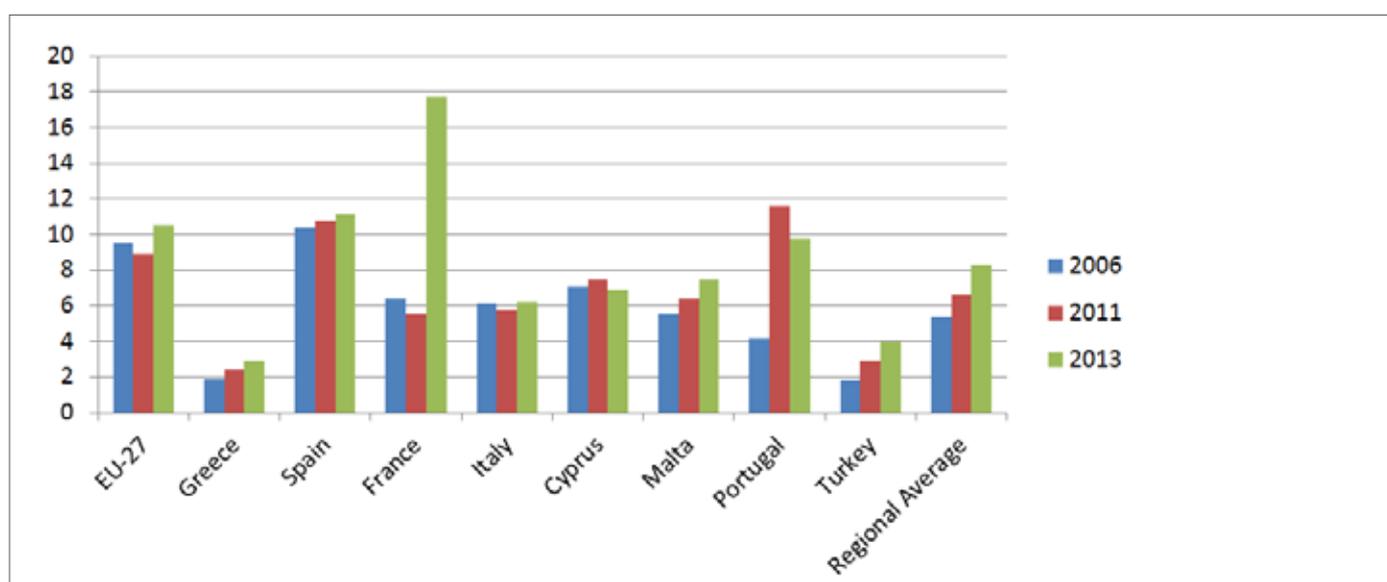
This chapter provides an overview of the main figures on the adult education sector in the region. This exercise will help the reader to better understand the respondents' opinions on the implementation of the Agenda and their needs at the national level. No further analysis is offered, as the aim of the report is not to draft a study on the countries' situations but to collect insights from AE providers and civil society<sup>13</sup>.

The first graph and table present the participation rates of each country and provide an average for the region from 2006 to 2013.

Table 1: Lifelong learning, % of the population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training<sup>14</sup>

	2006	2011	2013
<b>EU-27</b>	9.5	8.9	10.5
<b>GREECE</b>	1.9	2.4	2.9
<b>SPAIN</b>	10.4	10.8	11.1
<b>FRANCE</b>	6.4	5.5	17.7
<b>ITALY</b>	6.1	5.7	6.2
<b>CYPRUS</b>	7.1	7.5	6.9
<b>MALTA</b>	5.5	6.4	7.5
<b>PORTUGAL</b>	4.2	11.6	9.8
<b>TURKEY</b>	1.8	2.9	4.0
<b>REGIONAL AVERAGE</b>	5.4	6.6	8.3

Source: Eurostat (online data code: tsdsc440)



<sup>13</sup> For a better understanding of the latest developments in adult education in each country, we would like to invite readers to consult the EAEA country reports, which will be published by EAEA by the end of 2014

<sup>14</sup> Lifelong learning refers to persons aged 25 to 64 who stated that they received education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator consists of the total population of the same age

group, excluding those who did not answer the question on 'Participation in education and training'. Both the numerator and the denominator come from the EU Labour Force Survey.

<sup>15</sup> (1) Refer to the Internet metadata file ([http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_SDDS/en/trng\\_aes\\_esms.htm](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_SDDS/en/trng_aes_esms.htm)).



The following table describes the distribution of non-formal education and training activities by provider and by country in 2011.

Table 2: Providers of non-formal education and training activities, 2011<sup>15</sup>

Employer	Non-formal education & training institution	Formal education institution <sup>(2)</sup>	Commercial institution where education & training is not main activity <sup>(3)</sup>	Employers' organisation, chamber of commerce <sup>(4)</sup>	Non-commercial institution (e.g. library) <sup>(5)</sup>	Non-profit association <sup>(6)</sup>	Individual <sup>(7)</sup>	Trade union <sup>(8)</sup>	Other	
<b>EU-27<sup>(10)</sup></b>	32.0	17.7	9.8	10.9	3.2	5.7	5.9	5.1	1.0	4.9
<b>Greece</b>	19.2	15.9	8.4	6.3	:	:	6.3	13.1	:	19.0
<b>Spain</b>	14.4	13.5	9.5	16.1	6.9	22.4	5.9	3.4	3.8	:
<b>France</b>	33.4	23.4	2.7	6.8	1.6	3.7	14.3	7.5	0.8	4.1
<b>Italy</b>	31.7	11.1	11.0	8.0	8.0	7.7	4.9	3.6	:	13.3
<b>Cyprus</b>	23.6	22.2	7.7	14.7	4.8	15.5	3.9	6.1	:	:
<b>Malta</b>	36.7	17.7	18.7	8.1	2.6	6.2	5.7	3.9	:	:
<b>Portugal</b>	46.6	18.6	7.1	7.0	2.2	2.8	5.2	1.9	1.0	7.4
<b>Turkey<sup>(11)</sup></b>	26.4	27.0	7.3	3.2	2.8	25.4	3.8	3.6	:	:
<b>Regional average</b>	29	18.7	9.1	8.8	4.1	12.0	6.3	5.4	1.9	11.0

Source: Eurostat (online data code: trng\_aes\_170)

The last table illustrates the main obstacles to participation.

Table 3: Obstacles to participation in education and training, 2011<sup>16</sup>

	Health or age	None within reachable distance <sup>(3)</sup>	No time due to family	Did not have the pre-requisites <sup>(4)</sup>	Too expensive, could not afford	Lack of employer/public service support	Conflict with work schedule	Did not need it for work	Did not need it for personal reasons	Could not find what was wanted	No access to a computer or internet (for distance learning)
<b>EU-27<sup>(7)</sup></b>	8.5	6.1	20.9	4.2	13.2	8.0	18.0	50.0	14.6	8.6	1.6
<b>Greece</b>	18.3	10.4	39.3	10.4	28.4	5.7	23.2	42.2	21.7	21.3	2.5
<b>Spain</b>	5.6	2.3	30.7	3.2	6.6	7.5	20.5	11.5	21.6	4.7	0.6
<b>France</b>	5.1	6.3	6.5	4.5	11.6	14.1	15.7	78.6	5.8	9.8	1.9
<b>Italy</b>	8.7	10.3	31.8	5.1	22.2	4.8	25.0	14.8	17.0	13.9	3.0
<b>Cyprus</b>	5.7	5.0	36.3	2.4	15.7	3.9	19.3	69.1	10.2	6.2	:
<b>Malta</b>	4.4	1.4	17.7	1.6	6.9	2.3	19.1	:	7.9	1.9	:
<b>Portugal</b>	3.8	6.2	5.0	0.9	5.5	1.3	1.6	2.9	24.4	:	:
<b>Turkey<sup>(8)</sup></b>	14.8	28.8	57.9	47.5	42.9	9.0	20.1	:	:	:	:
<b>Regional average</b>	8.3	8.8	28.2	9.5	17.5	6.1	18.1	36.5	15.5	9.6	2

Source: Eurostat (online data code: trng\_aes\_176)

(2) Greece: unreliable.

(3) Greece: unreliable.

(4) Malta: unreliable.

(5) Greece: unreliable.

(6) Greece: unreliable.

(10) Estimates.

(11) 2007.

<sup>16</sup>(3) Malta: unreliable.

(4) Malta: unreliable.

(7) Estimates.

(8) 2007.

## II. COUNTRY ANALYSIS

### I. CYPRUS

#### a) CONTEXT AND PRIORITIES OF THE PROVIDERS

The consortium received five contributions from Cyprus: one from civil society (Klitos Symeonides, Cyprus Adult Education Association) and four from national institutions (three from the Cyprus Ministry for Education and one from the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus, which is the national coordinator for the ALA implementation).

The main challenge for the adult education sector perceived by the civil society representative is the sustainability of its organisations/activities. Financial support from the national level is considered as not sufficient. Furthermore, the crisis has exacerbated the situation.

On the same topic, institutional respondents have different views. Two of them believe that civil society in Cyprus is rather weak because of a lack of support. One of them affirmed that because of this, civil society lacks the capacity to provide sufficient support for the Ministry's activities. The national coordinator believes, conversely, that the voice of civil society has become stronger in recent years and that currently several initiatives are encouraging its involvement. In particular she quotes: the development of the NQF, the development of the mechanisms for the validation of non-formal and informal learning, and the initiatives of the Cyprus Youth Organisation, as well as the newly appointed Volunteering and NGO Commissioner who facilitates the coordination and cooperation of the Volunteer Movement with the Local Government. However, she believes this cooperation could be more effective if Cyprus had a comprehensive Action Plan on Adult Learning and if the involvement of all the relevant stakeholders (including NGOs and civil society) was better defined and implemented within a concrete and clear framework.

Due to the unavailability of the civil society representative, it was only possible to interview a representative from the Ministry. However, this person has been involved at first hand in the implementation of the Agenda in Cyprus and was able to provide us with an interesting overview of the activities organised by the national coordinator. According to the interviewee, the priorities that the Adult Education sector has in the country are the following:

- Need for a clear strategy plan
- Awareness raising vis-à-vis the general public and systemic outreach actions to disadvantaged groups
- More funding and expertise invested in training the trainers (in particular for target groups such as youth and second chance schools)
- Recognition of competences and validation of non-formal and informal learning

"One difficulty we have is to outreach people who need education opportunities the most and convince them about the benefits of adult learning" – CY1

#### b) THE ADULT LEARNING AGENDA AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

All five respondents report that they are acquainted with and involved in the EC initiative. While the respondents from the Ministry and the national coordinator unsurprisingly learned about it direct, the representative from civil society cited EAEA as the first source of information.

The interviewee explained how the Agenda was implemented in Cyprus: the main outcomes are two big conferences

attended by more than one hundred participants. Interesting workshops on how adult educators can cope with the demands of the population, and contributions from Ireland, Norway and Greece were included in the programme. According to the Ministry representative, these latter activities have been very much appreciated by the participants. In parallel to this, peer learning activities, media campaigns and regional Information Days were organised across the whole country, in order to promote the adult learning opportunities in the different areas. "Luckily Cyprus is a small country," the interviewee replied when asked about the scope of the stakeholders reached by those activities. "After the first difficulties, we managed to individuate the majority of providers and civil society working in the field and invite them all to join."

In order to make good use of such an exercise, a guide collating educational and training opportunities and a comprehensive list of providers was drafted to help the trainers and management staff to disseminate their learning offers to the general public and facilitate networking among stakeholders in the field. Great attention was paid to transparency, with stakeholders being invited to the regular meetings about the Agenda implementation and an enriching website being set up which contains important resources and material but also an action plan regarding the initiative and useful information on upcoming events.

Among the strong points of this initiative, the civil society representative listed the possibility to network with other stakeholders, to disseminate and promote learning opportunities and to foster the coordination of actions in the field. The Ministry representatives and the national coordinator highlighted the following strong points: implementing actions which raise awareness and boost participation; fostering the debate on adult learning and getting it on the policy agenda; improving the quality of programmes and increasing cooperation among stakeholders.

A weak point of the implementation of the Agenda was the fact that this initiative coincided with the worst point of the financial crisis (March 2013) and some political changes in the country, which added some days to the initial plan (February 2013).

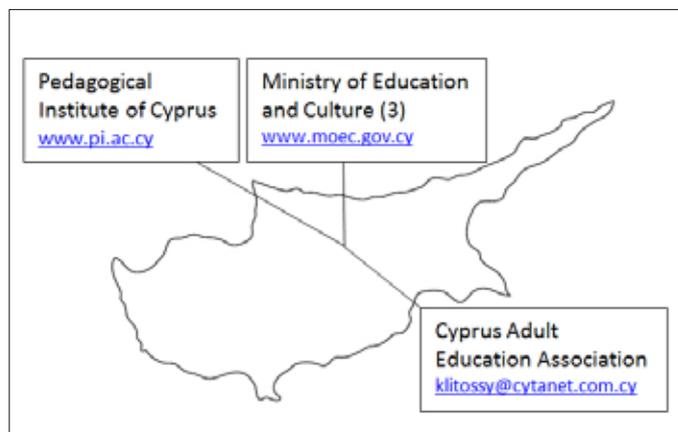
The following changes were proposed for future mandates:

- More comprehensive strategies to reach poorly skilled adults and disadvantaged groups
- Better distribution of tasks: sub-contracting should be possible for more tasks in order to allow more emphasis on policy issues
- Stronger involvement of NGOs
- Enhancement of the link between the Agenda and national policies and measures on AE
- Less bureaucracy: "Initial funding should be available without the need to apply for it" – CY3

#### c) COOPERATION AND SUPPORT

Three out of five respondents declared that more cooperation with civil society in the country could be beneficial. The majority of the national institutions' representatives proposed the enhancement of the cooperation between policy-makers and civil society as a topic for such cooperation. The sustainability of the civil society structures was indicated by the civil society representative as being a sensitive topic which needs to be further explored. Cooperation within the region (countries

with similar needs/difficulties) is seen as important, but the exchange with the Nordic countries is also considered as potentially very enriching.



## II. FRANCE

### a) CONTEXT AND PRIORITIES OF THE PROVIDERS

The consortium received four contributions from France: two from civil society (La Ligue de l'Enseignement main office and the association Une Education pour Demain) and two from adult education providers (the regional office of La Ligue de l'Enseignement in Bourgogne and CRP Beauvoir).

The two civil society representatives were interviewed.

The main challenges for the adult education sector indicated by the respondents are the lack of a clear definition for adult learning and the low level of recognition of the importance of the work done by the AE providers and their representatives.

"When talking about adult education, people understand vocational training and learning for employment. We need to establish a clear definition and promote this concept broadly," affirms the La Ligue representative.

Civil society is considered as not supported enough by the central level. Financial support, when present, is provided by project-based funding and not coordination activities. This is identified as the main reason for the difficulties encountered so far in contributing on a stable basis to the policy-making process and in raising awareness of the importance of adult education among the general public.

"Awareness raising is something we do through our daily work, we don't need help for particular actions but structural support for us to be able to carry them out," explains one interviewee.

Respondents listed the following priorities for the AE sector in the short term:

- Facilitate the bottom-up approach and exchange between stakeholders
- Foster diversity and innovation in the methodologies
- Adult education for democracy

### b) THE ADULT LEARNING AGENDA AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Three out of four respondents reported that they are acquainted with the Agenda. None of the respondents learnt about it direct from their national coordinator, who is known only by the La Ligue Bourgogne representative. All respondents got information through online resources and thanks to EAEA.

One contributor reports being involved in the implementation of the Agenda.

"We don't have any contact with the national coordinator, at either a functional or a systemic level," declares one interviewee.

With regard to the beneficial character of the initiative, the AE providers are positive about it, while the two civil society representatives do not express a clear opinion.

Strong points of the Agenda mentioned by the respondents are the possibility to create connections between stakeholders and improve the providers' knowledge and practice.

As suggestions for future mandates, respondents mentioned the following:

- More information and transparency on the process
- Better cooperation between policy-makers and civil society in all the phases of the implementation
- Focus on civic education

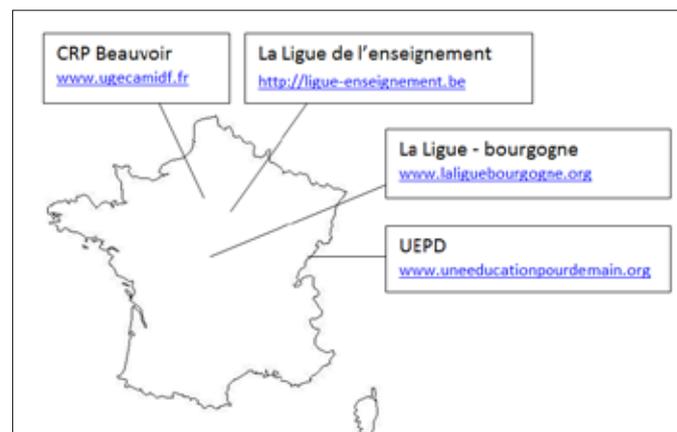
### d) COOPERATION AND SUPPORT

French respondents are involved in some kind of networks at the national or international level, but are interested in fostering the cooperation with civil society within their country and in the Southern region.

Topics for such cooperation could be:

- Better definition of adult education
- Sustainability of the civil society structures
- Key and basic skills
- Inter-sectoral cooperation
- Languages as a barrier for exchanging and cooperating

European support is demanded by some of the respondents, both in terms of the provision of clear and useful information and for raising the profile of civil society and AE providers vis-à-vis national policy-makers and authorities.



### III. GREECE

#### a) CONTEXT AND PRIORITIES OF THE PROVIDERS

The consortium received six contributions from Greece, all of them from civil society or from adult education providers (Hellenic adult education association - HEAE, YWCA of Greece, DAFNI KEK, Kane -Social Youth Development, ANTIGONE, Education centre of the municipality of Samos).

The two people interviewed are George Koulaouzides, from HAEA, and Vassiliki Tsekoura, from DAFNI KEK.

The main challenges perceived by the majority of the Greek respondents are the shortage of financial support and the lack of recognition. Funding is almost exclusively provided by European or international programmes, which are by nature project-based and thus intermittent and unsafe. According to one contributor, the scarcity of funding undermines the quality of the sector as it does not allow the increase of professionalization of AE staff and trainers. Two of the respondents (ANTIGONE and Education centre of the municipality of Samos) feel supported by and cooperate with the municipal and national institutions.

Priorities for the AE sector in Greece are the following:

- Making the AE strategy visible to and understandable by society (learning should be seen and understood as an individual benefit)
- Recognition of the value of civil society and adult education providers' activities and establishment of a genuine dialogue with policy-makers in order to plan a long-term policy strategy
- Civic education in order to foster citizens' engagement in society
- Focus on employability while keeping the non-formal approach (by developing innovative methods to increase learners' entrepreneurship, social competences and language skills)

#### a) THE ADULT LEARNING AGENDA AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Five out of six respondents report that they are acquainted with the Adult Learning Agenda. However, three out of six know who the Greek national coordinator is and one was involved in the implementation activities organised in the country.

Respondents declare that they learnt about the Agenda through EAEA and via online resources. The two interviewees report having been invited to an event in their respective regions which was very well organised and brought together a lot of people. Nonetheless, they have heard nothing more about the Agenda since then.

The general feeling among the respondents, however, is that the Adult Learning Agenda implementation is potentially beneficial for the country, in particular, because it could help the mapping of the adult education providers in the EU and foster their professionalization. Two respondents say that due to the low participation rate in, and awareness of, adult learning in Greece, any action undertaken to help the sector is potentially good and will help to improve citizens' lives.

The two interviewees mention as weak points the focus on experts and traditional players and thus the lack of involvement by the grass-roots level as well as basic publicity of the activities in place. Talking about one of the events organised in the framework of the Agenda's implementation, one interviewee states that the methodology of the activity was quite academic; participants wished for more opportunities to network and to develop innovative methodologies and practice.

As suggestions for future mandates, the respondents proposed:

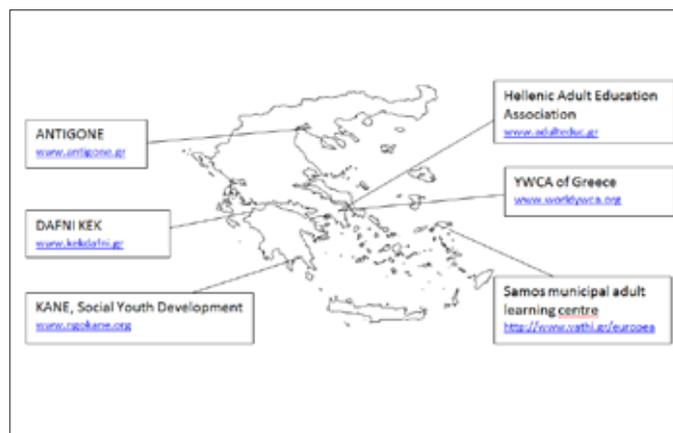
- More opportunities for professionalization of trainers and staff
- More emphasis on priorities such as financing adult learning, quality, reaching out to specific target groups and validation
- A particular focus on civic education which would allow critical thinking, reflection on tolerance, non-discrimination and multiculturalism
- Foster democracy in the sector

#### b) COOPERATION

The cooperation between civil society within the country and the region is seen as interesting by five out of six respondents. One contributor deplored the fact that, even if some forms of cooperation exist, they lack continuity and are more about practical needs than about the development of methodologies and exchange of innovative approaches. This situation is apparently due to political reasons and lack of resources: therefore, it requires more openness from the actors involved and stronger support from the institutional level.

Topics proposed for such cooperation are the following:

- Recognition and validation of skills and competences
- Exchange of expertise and collaboration
- Methodologies for increasing participation
- Quality
- Foreign languages and ICT courses



## IV. ITALY

### a) CONTEXT AND PRIORITIES OF THE PROVIDERS

The consortium received six contributions from Italy. All respondents are civil society representatives (CNUPI; Arcisolidarietà Caserta; NGO Cooperazione Paesi Emergenti; EdaForum; Festival delle città medievali; IRSEF). Four out of the six are EAEA members (three of whom joined in 2014).

The first two in the list were interviewed.

According to the respondents, the main challenge facing the AE sector in Italy is the bad distribution of funding: the bigger or more highly accredited agencies and institutions receive the majority of the financial support available, which undermines the diversification of the offer. At the same time, some funding channels are considered not to be exploited enough by the national and regional institutions (in particular those coming from the EU). The crisis has contributed to this situation, on the one hand by decreasing the funding, which led to the decline in demand, and on the other by channelling it along the routes considered by the majority to be more useful for employability. “There are no funding possibilities for learning offers based on the development of life skills – everything is very much focused on technical or easily acquirable skills, such as ICT and languages,” the Arcisolidarietà Caserta deploras. Furthermore, a lack of civil society coordination at the national level was a cause for regret. This leads to a strong need for standardisation of procedures and sharing of practice and methodologies.

“A common methodological language is needed in Italy: many providers are a little bit left to their own devices, and tend to develop autonomous methodologies and practices, which are not always good in terms of quality,” warns one interviewee. According to one interviewee, this is caused by the process of regionalisation of the sector: “The regional competence for adult education should be rethought, because lifelong learning is a national matter and the strategy should be planned at that level.”

Even though in Italy there are some services and a legal framework for civil society, the structures in place are considered by the survey contributors to be inadequate. Another weak point for the country is the absence of a long-term strategy which could allow policy-makers and AE stakeholders to study/implement an integrated policy programme for the sector.

The priorities of the AE sector in Italy are the following:

- Drop-out and second chance education
- Basic skills
- Recognition of skills and validation of non-formal and informal learning
- Professionalization which leads to the training of the trainers
- Quality

### b) THE ADULT LEARNING AGENDA AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Three respondents out of six report that they are acquainted with the Agenda. One learnt about it from EAEA, another one by browsing the EC websites and the third one through the LLP Grundtvig projects and infodays.

Two out of four respondents know the Italian national coordinator, and nobody was involved in the Agenda activities. This is probably the reason why half of the respondents are undecided on the beneficial character of this initiative. The others declare that it is helpful to enhance adult education, raise awareness and defend the sector by giving it stronger

recognition from the EU level.

Suggestions for future mandates are the following:

- Involvement of the areas that have not yet been involved
- Increase the focus on validation of skills and foster the re-employment of adults

Increasing communication with, and the involvement of, civil society was proposed for future mandates.

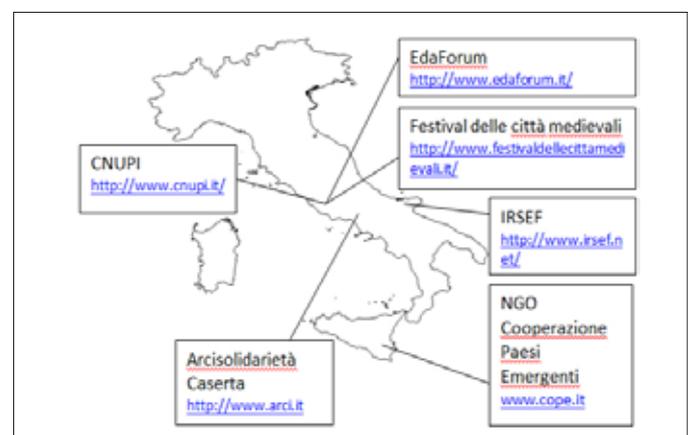
“We are operating mainly with disadvantaged groups and thus we could make a real contribution towards achieving the Agenda’s priorities,” as one interviewee pointed out.

### c) COOPERATION

Some of the respondents seem to be isolated from the rest of the stakeholders, while others are more involved in networking and structures. However, all of them are very interested in boosting the cooperation within their country and within their region.

Topics proposed for such cooperation are:

- Dialogue and cooperation between stakeholders and relevant actors
- Validation and recognition of life skills
- Increase the design and testing of quality evaluation and assessment models centred not only on performance issues, but also on initial motivations and learning outcomes
- Train the trainers
- Cooperation and exchange with AE organisations in order to learn from each other
- Competitiveness and sustainability and their impact on quality
- Wider benefits of learning (health, etc.)
- Unemployment



## v. MALTA

### a) CONTEXT AND PRIORITIES OF THE PROVIDERS

The consortium received two contributions from Malta: one from Mario Azzopardi, Directorate for Lifelong Learning, and the second from Antoinette Cassar, Paulo Freire Institute. The first is a national institute, which was also appointed as national coordinator for Malta; the second is an institute founded by the Jesuits in Malta.

The main challenge for the adult education sector is that there is not enough support. The interviewee representing the Paulo Freire Institute requested more support for the providers in order to increase the learning offers. This support should be mainly financial, as many organisations are nowadays forced to work with volunteers in order to continue their daily activities. This is particularly evident after the increase in demand for adult education from Maltese citizens. While expressing satisfaction with this, she mentioned that “This raises problems for the providers as it is becoming difficult to accommodate all the requests.”

Both respondents stated that civil society has a good structure in the country, which has been growing and getting stronger in recent years. However, according to the Paulo Freire Institute representative, there is still room for improvement.

In that connection, the Paulo Freire Institute representative deplores a tendency to underestimate the work that civil society does. This is true especially as far as the general public is concerned and thus it would require more actions aimed at raising awareness among Maltese citizens.

According to the contributors, priorities for the countries are the following:

- Basic skills
- Civic education
- Participation and awareness raising

### b) THE ADULT LEARNING AGENDA AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Both respondents are familiar with the Adult Learning Agenda and its implementation: the Directorate representative because the institution where he works is the national coordinator of Malta, and the civil society one because she has close contacts with the Ministry.

The Agenda is perceived as a positive initiative and both respondents were involved directly in the activities. However, the Directorate representative explained the main problems encountered in the process: “Due to internal bureaucratic procedures and change in Government following the general election, we started working on the EU Agenda very late. Moreover, there was internal restructuring of the Directorate with a lot of mobility of personnel.”

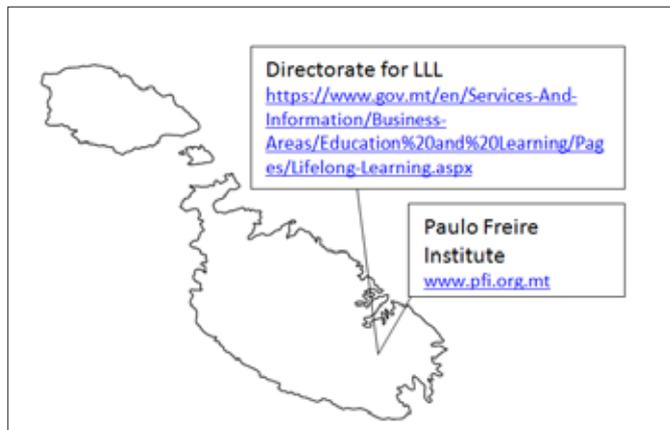
Nevertheless, the initiative has many positive aspects according to the respondents. First and foremost, it encourages adults to keep on learning and shows that it is never too late to learn. Secondly, and more specifically, it allows activities that were not possible before because of the shortage of funding: these are the training of Adult Educators; the setting up of network groups; and the opportunity to bring in foreign experts to address our Adult Educators.

Concerning suggestions for future mandates, the RENEWAL contributors propose more publicity and more involvement of the AE providers, in order to make the initiative even more effective and able to reach out to people who really need the learning opportunities. Billboards and flyers are suggested for this purpose.

### c) COOPERATION

Respondents are interested in fostering the cooperation within their country and within their region. Topics proposed for cooperation are the following:

- How to encourage participation and awareness raising
- How to meet the needs of different organisations
- How to offer tailor-made courses



## VI. PORTUGAL

### a) CONTEXT AND PRIORITIES OF THE PROVIDERS

The consortium received twelve contributions from Portugal. Respondents are either education providers (Kerigma, Escola Profissional Amar Terra Verde, EPAR, Alsud, Cinel, University of Coimbra) or civil society representatives (ANPEFA, Ass. Portuguesa de Gestão das Pessoas (x2), Sol do Ave, Cruz Vermelha Portuguesa). The representatives from Kerigma and the Escola Profissional Amar Terra Verde have been interviewed.

Respondents expressed their worries about the fact that the AE sector had suffered a serious recession in the last three years, during which some valuable initiatives had ceased to exist. A stronger political commitment is required both at the national and at the regional/local level. "In practical terms, I think there are good intentions with regard to adult education. However, the effects resulting from fragmented politics seem not to have great outcomes," asserts one interviewee.

"It is important to invest in joined-up policies and dynamics in order to change mentalities: there is, still, a lot of difficulty in turning lifelong learning into a reality," according to the Escola Profissional Amar Terra Verde representative.

Civil society is seen as quite supportive by some AE providers, but there is a general consensus on the fact that civil society structures are not given enough support from the central level (however, an exception is identified in the official agency) and do not receive adequate funding. "When structures do exist, they are sometimes subject to constant changes and it is difficult to maintain a dialogue," declares one respondent.

According to the respondents, the main priorities for adult education in Portugal are:

- Raise awareness of the importance of lifelong learning
- Basic skills, both at the policy level through a clear strategy and at the providers' level through piloting experiences
- Validation and recognition

"In Portugal we don't have any programme able to reach people who have a low literacy level: every activity in that sense is key and very welcome," affirms the KERIGMA representative.

### b) THE ADULT LEARNING AGENDA AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

All respondents declare themselves to be familiar with the European strategy. The majority of people learned about the Adult Learning Agenda through online resources, and some through EAEA's communication channels. However, the number decreases when considering the people who know who the national coordinator is and the number of organisations/providers involved in the implementation activities. Respondents generally believe in the Agenda's potential benefits for the country, but some of them are quite disappointed with how it has been implemented so far: not enough visibility was given to the initiative and few activities were organised for the AE stakeholders. The Kerigma representative, supported by some other contributors, describes her involvement as taking part in a local and a national workshop and contributing to an internet portal with a project and good practice.

The following were cited as strong points of the initiative: the potential for awareness raising, the focus on disadvantaged groups, and the possibility to foster the debate in the field and to share good practice and methodologies. Furthermore, the possibility to work for a common aim and the opportunity to create a concrete link with the EU policies was very much

appreciated.

For future mandates it was proposed to make it more visible and accessible to civil society (also small and local-based) and citizens in general (using a contextualised and understandable language). "Civil society's involvement is fundamental, because the targets of the politics are the citizens, directly or indirectly," states one interviewee. Broader coordination between different stakeholders (i.e. private companies, formal education and VET as well as citizens' associations) was also recommended by some respondents. Linked to that, different respondents suggested carrying out systematic evaluations on the impact of the initiative in order to evaluate its capacity in terms of outreach and diffusion. Furthermore, according to some respondents, it would be beneficial for the sector if more activities could be dedicated to the exchange of knowledge and experiences among AE providers. A tool to be exploited for that purpose could be the existing online portal, which should be properly enriched. Speaking about the content of the implementation activities, a broader focus is proposed by one interviewee who believes that targeting elderly and disabled people is not representative enough for the entire AE sector.

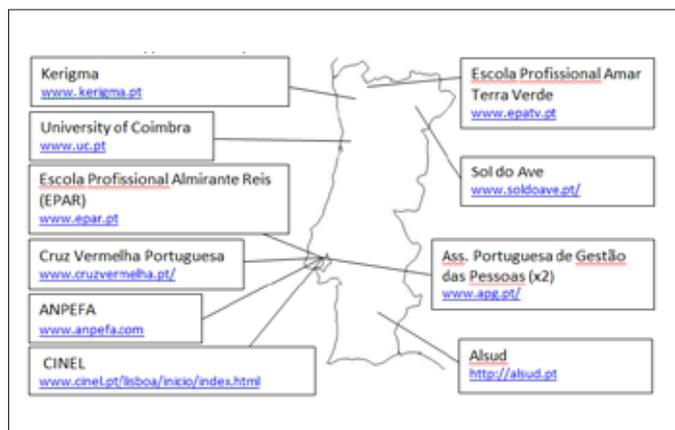
### c) COOPERATION

Respondents agree on the fact that the cooperation with civil society in Portugal and in the Southern Europe region could be interesting and useful. Topics for such cooperation are the following:

- Accreditation of skills and competences
- Better conditions for adult trainers
- Partnership and cooperation (at national and European level)
- Strategic planning for the sector
- Employability

With regard to Portugal, some respondents insist on the need for this cooperation to be wide-ranging and also embrace the small, local organisations which are closer to the population and thus more able to create a connection with them. A concern regarding the feasibility of national collaboration is brought up by one respondent, who mentions a failure in making an informal discussion group into a more established network due to a lack of will and/or shortage of resources.

By way of support from the EU, respondents call for better support in raising Member States' awareness regarding the need to invest in lifelong learning and more transparent and constant funding systems which can provide concrete support for AE actors.



## VII. SPAIN

### a) CONTEXT AND PRIORITIES OF THE PROVIDERS

The consortium received six contributions from Spain: these are from two adult education associations which are also EAEA members (ACEFIR and FACEPA); an adult education centre based in the centre of Spain (CEPA 'Castillo de Consuegra'); a consultancy dealing with education (Grupo EQ5) and a foundation called Fundación CV Pacto Empleo.

The two EAEA members were interviewed.

The main challenge for the adult education sector mentioned by the respondents is the lack of consistency in the financial and structural support received from the policy-makers. "Adult education is not a priority," declares one interviewee.

Organisations are forced to work with volunteers to continue their activities, which is not acceptable with regard to their values and sometimes also undermines the quality of the services that they would like to offer. Furthermore, "The financial situation of providers has got even worse because of the crisis," writes one respondent.

Another difficulty for the AE stakeholders is the absence of a clear definition of adult education. "We need a clear definition in order to make the policy-makers plan strategy which is coherent with the sector," warns one interviewee.

The following priorities are listed by the Spanish contributors:

- Definition of the concept and recognition
- Basic skills
- Train the trainers and professionalization of the staff
- Civic education and participation in society
- Democratisation of the sector

"Learners and participants should be capable of expressing their opinions and suggestions to improve the adult education courses and institutions, and also be involved in the advocate work of the AE institutions," affirms the FACEPA interviewee.

### b) THE ADULT LEARNING AGENDA AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Four out of six respondents report that they are acquainted with the European Commission initiative. Half of those who are familiar with the EC initiative are EAEA members (ACEFIR and FACEPA). Both of them learnt about it through EAEA and other online resources, but only the ACEFIR representative knows who the Spanish national coordinator is. Two respondents report being involved in the implementation of the Agenda.

This was not the case for ACEFIR and FACEPA and their respective networks: "We are engaged in many networks and in constant contact with key stakeholders: nobody we know told us to be involved in such an initiative," declares one interviewee.

Despite this, people believe that this initiative has some potential benefits, mainly in terms of raising awareness of adult education.

For future mandates, respondents wish to receive more information and to be engaged in the planning and implementation of the activities. Also, more concreteness and openness was proposed for the future, especially by taking into account the learners and their needs while deciding which

activities to implement. As regards the AE providers and civil society, one suggestion is to increase the activities, especially those which allow the exchange of experience and knowledge and foster cooperation with other European countries (see below). Some contributors highlight the fact that appointing a national institution as coordinator is a bit contradictory considering that education in Spain is managed at the regional level.

### c) COOPERATION

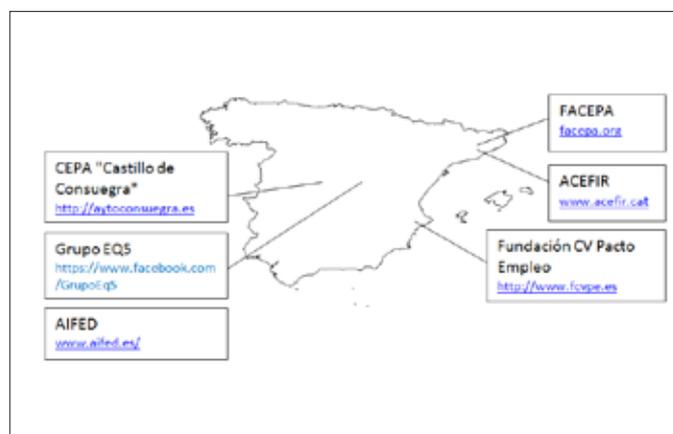
A few respondents are involved in national and international cooperation, mainly through European projects and funding.

"We don't have any idea what is happening in other Spanish regions and there are few or no structured opportunities<sup>17</sup> for exchange organised from the central level," deplores the ACEFIR representative. In general, too much bureaucracy and shortage of resources are identified as the main reasons for this.

All respondents are in favour of boosting the cooperation within their country and within their region. "If we were able to cooperate, we would have the possibility to change something for the better and have a higher impact on the well-being of society," states one interviewee.

Topics proposed for possible cooperation are the following:

- Democracy, participation and empowerment
- Equity and social inclusion
- Migration and cultural and linguistic minorities
- Basic skills
- Train the trainers
- ICT
- Unemployment (among young people in particular)



<sup>17</sup> The interviewee refers to an intranet at the disposal of the providers to enable them to be in contact with each other.

## VIII. TURKEY

### a) CONTEXT AND PRIORITIES OF THE PROVIDERS

The consortium received three contributions from Turkey: one from Nilgun Sonez, from Sile Adult Education Centre, the second from Arzu Ozyol, Hydra project and Consulting Co. (EAEA member), and a third from Gulbin Okur, Bursa tradesman and craftsman chamber union.

Contrasting views are proposed by the respondents while describing the civil society structures: the AE Centre representative feels the civil society structures are neither supported by the national level (in particular the Ministry) nor supportive enough for her daily work, while the chamber union representative believes that those are helpful for his work.

In order to compensate for this lack of institutional structures, providers try to cooperate within the country. However, according to the AE centre representative, such cooperation leaves a lot of room for improvement.

The main priorities of the AE sector in Turkey are the following:

- Train the trainers
- Exchange good practice/innovative methodologies within the country and with other countries
- Raise awareness through festivals and exhibitions

### b) THE ADULT LEARNING AGENDA AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

One out of three respondents seems to be familiar with the European Commission initiative and knows who the national coordinator is. The Bursa tradesman and craftsman chamber union representative reported having learnt about the implementation of the Agenda via the European Commission's website, while searching for other information.

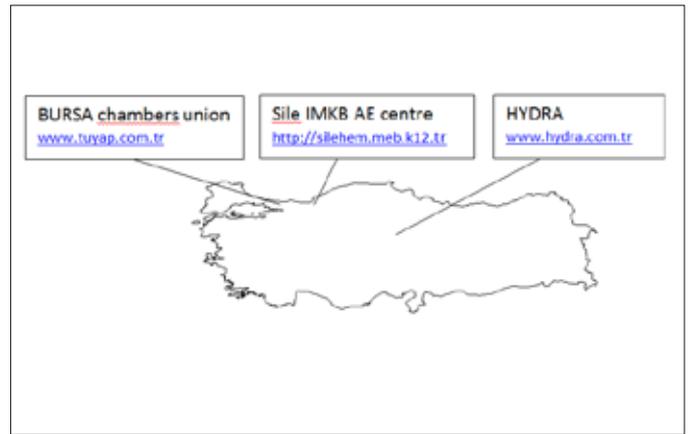
According to him, the Agenda implementation has a positive impact because it raises awareness of adult education strategies among those organisations that were previously not acquainted with it. Furthermore, it gives the national coordinator the opportunity to map the providers in the country and create a network around lifelong learning.

However, better communication and involvement of the adult education stakeholders was suggested for future mandates, because "As a person who was working in adult training issues for 10 years and has a network at local-national-international level I had not heard about the programme before I searched for information for another project"- TK2. Another proposal for future mandates is to foster exchanges of practice and methodologies among Turkish providers and/or between them and providers from other countries.

### c) COOPERATION

All respondents described as potentially very interesting the cooperation between civil society within their country and within their region. Topics proposed for such cooperation are:

- Cooperation and exchange between providers and civil society
- Sustainability
- Professionalization
- Entrepreneurship and empowerment



## 4. Conclusion

### I.MAIN MESSAGES

On the assumption that it is rather difficult to summarise the complex and diversified data illustrated in the country analysis, the purpose of this chapter is to present the main messages coming from the RENEWAL survey's respondents and to propose some preliminary suggestions<sup>18</sup> for the next mandates of the agenda's implementation.

#### 1. Acquaintance with the European Agenda for Adult Learning

The majority of the survey respondents report that they are acquainted with the Agenda. Comparing the two regions, there is somewhat more knowledge about it in Southern Europe. Even though the prevalence of people who know about the Agenda is a fact, we are not certain about around 20% of the respondents, as they refer to European adult education policies in general or to the European funding provided for projects or the EPALE platform in the back-up questions (strong and weak points of the initiative).

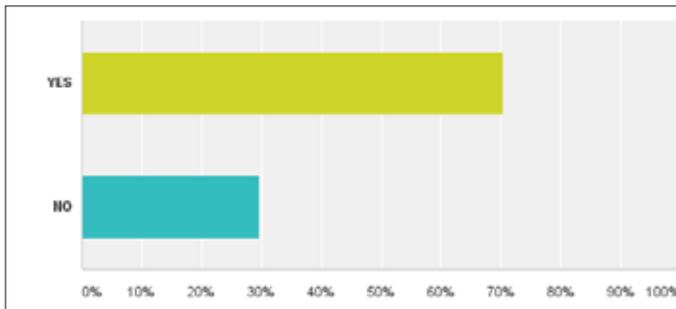
*Graph 1: All respondents*

*Graph 2: Central-Eastern Europe region*

*Graph3: Southern Europe region*

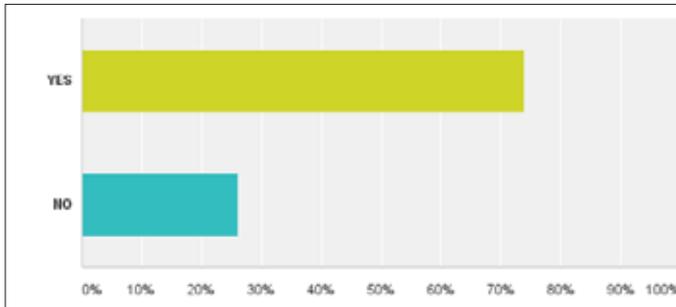
#### Q7 Have you ever heard about the European agenda for adult learning?

Answered: 81 Skipped: 2



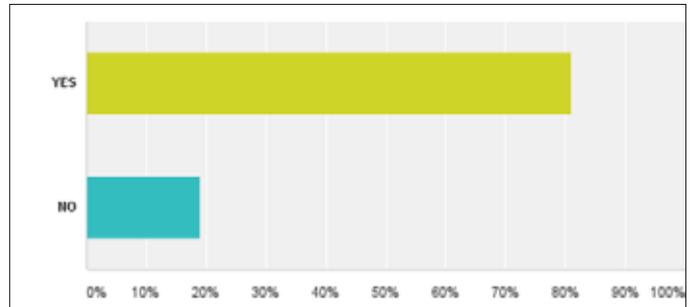
#### Q7 Have you ever heard about the European agenda for adult learning?

Answered: 123 Skipped: 6



#### Q7 Have you ever heard about the European agenda for adult learning?

Answered: 42 Skipped: 1





## II. Positive character of the initiative

Respondents in general believe that the Agenda is a positive development. However, it is not always clear whether respondents refer to concrete and actual benefits or potential and hypothetical ones.

Indeed, there are quite a number of cases where people declare that they find the Agenda valuable despite not being familiar with it. In this regard, the following quote<sup>18</sup> is quite meaningful: “Due to the low participation rate in and little awareness of adult learning, any action undertaken to help the sector is potentially good and will help to improve citizens’ lives”.

In some countries improvements on the agenda’s implementation are needed as a number of people who are familiar with the European initiative believe that it did not fulfil their expectations in terms of outcomes and impact.

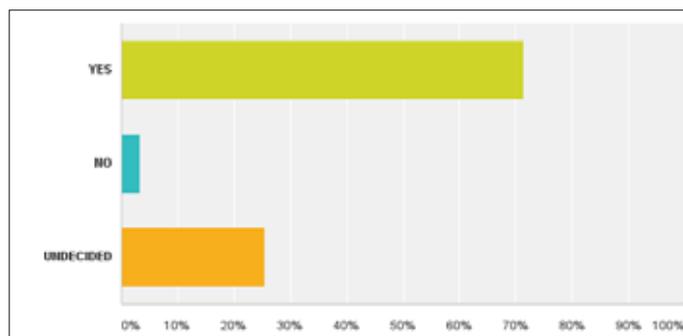
*Graph 4: All respondents*

*Graph 5: Central-Eastern Europe region*

*Graph 6: Southern Europe region*

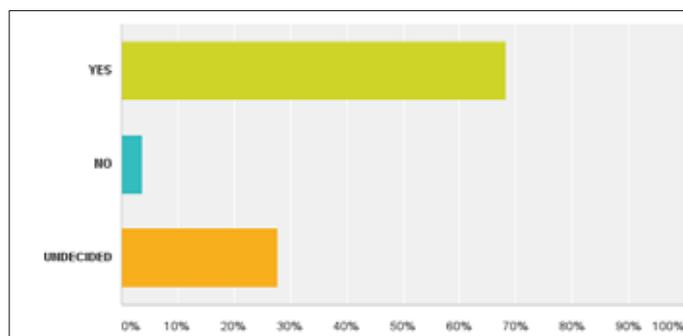
### Q9 Do you think that Agenda is beneficial for the Adult education sector in your country?

Answered: 122 Skipped: 7



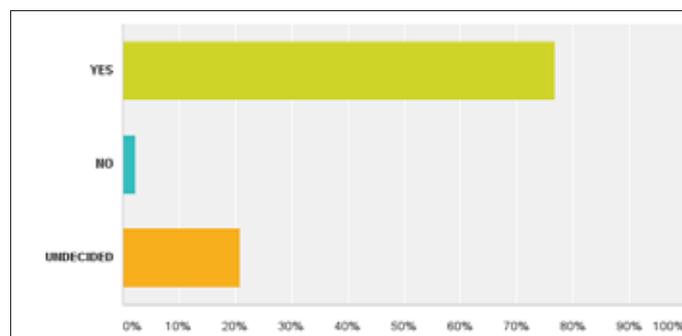
### Q9 Do you think that Agenda is beneficial for the Adult education sector in your country?

Answered: 79 Skipped: 4



### Q9 Do you think that Agenda is beneficial for the Adult education sector in your country?

Answered: 43 Skipped: 0



<sup>18</sup> Greek respondents – learn more on page 33-34



### III. Knowledge of the national coordinators

50% of the total of respondents know who the national coordinators are. However, there is a significant difference between the two regions<sup>19</sup>: in the Southern European region respondents report more often that they know the responsible person / organisation for the implementation of the Agenda in their countries. It is important to mention, however, that the interviews prove that among those who know the national coordinators, only a few have had direct contacts with them. These insights provided by a limited number of contributors are backed up, though, by the question relating to the source of information on the Agenda: the majority of the survey respondents learned about the Agenda through online resources and thanks to EAEA.

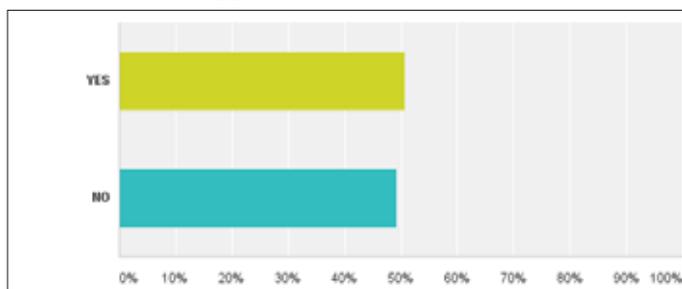
Graph 7: All respondents

Graph 8: Central-Eastern Europe region

Graph 9: Southern Europe region

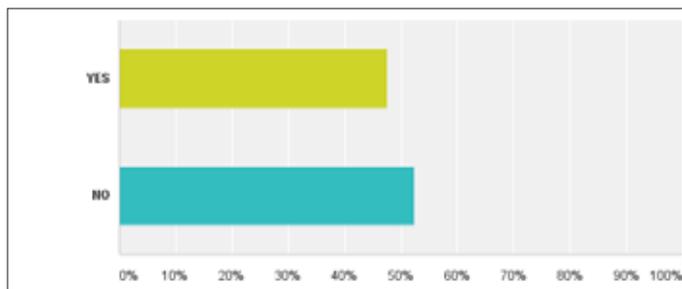
#### Q10 Do you know who your national coordinator is?

Answered: 122 Skipped: 7



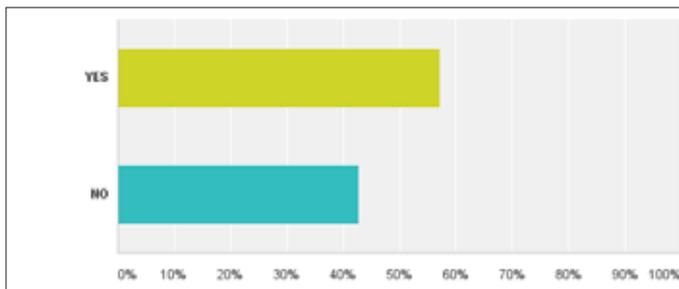
#### Q10 Do you know who your national coordinator is?

Answered: 80 Skipped: 3



#### Q10 Do you know who your national coordinator is?

Answered: 42 Skipped: 1



<sup>19</sup> Graph 8 and 9



## iv. Involvement in the implementation of the Agenda

With regard to the involvement of AE providers and civil society in the implementation of the Agenda, the majority of respondents report not having had the chance to participate. This is slightly more often the case in Central-Eastern Europe, even though this may be due to the larger number of respondents.

Civil society engagement is particularly low in the initial phase of planning and promotion of the activities. In particular, some national civil society representatives from the sector deplore the fact that they were not actively involved in the organisation of activities such as workshops and conferences to which they have been invited. This picture is in contrast with the text of the Council resolution adopting the Agenda<sup>20</sup>: “The Council of the European Union (...) invites the Member States to ensure effective liaison with the relevant ministries and stakeholders, the social partners, businesses, relevant non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations, with a view to improving coherence between policies on adult learning and broader socio-economic policies.”

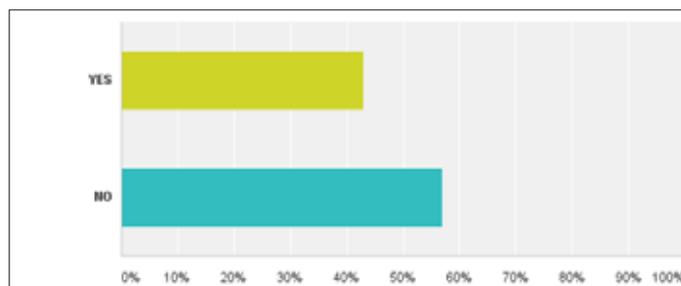
*Graph 10: All respondents*

*Graph 11: Central-Eastern Europe region*

*Graph 12: Southern Europe region*

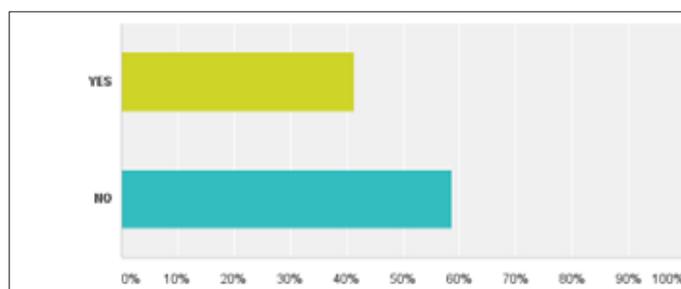
### Q11 Have you been involved in the Adult Learning Agenda activities?

Answered: 123 Skipped: 6



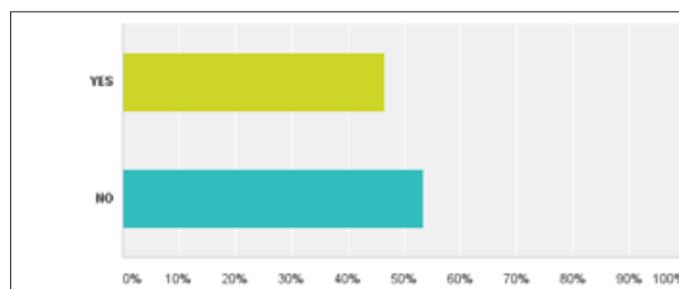
### Q11 Have you been involved in the Adult Learning Agenda activities?

Answered: 80 Skipped: 3



### Q11 Have you been involved in the Adult Learning Agenda activities?

Answered: 43 Skipped: 0



<sup>20</sup> Council Resolution 2011/C 372/01: Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning. Official Journal of the European Union C372 of 20.12.2011.

## v. Civil society cooperation within each country and within the region

Another aim of the RENEWAL project is to foster the cooperation between the stakeholders within the two regions. Three questions were dedicated to this objective, and broader investigation has been conducted through the interviews. Respondents from whatever background are generally very interested in cooperating with civil society. Some minor scepticism about such cooperation from the Central-Eastern Europe region is perceptible from Graph 14.

Concerning existing networks and cooperation, it is clear from the survey that people from the Southern region are a little more involved in comparison to those in the Central-Eastern region (65% against 55%). In general, however, respondents admit that these forms of collaboration are established not within the country or the region but with other European stakeholders (either European civil society or partners in projects).

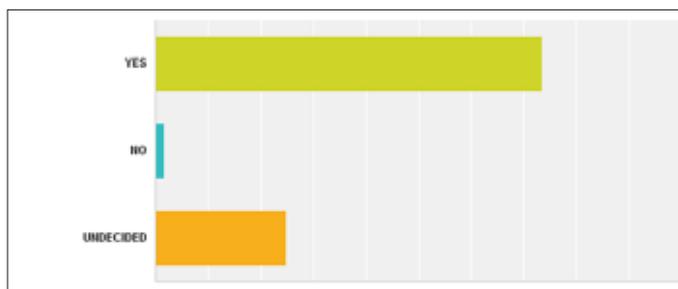
Graph 13: All respondents

Graph 14: Central-Eastern Europe region

Graph 15: Southern Europe region

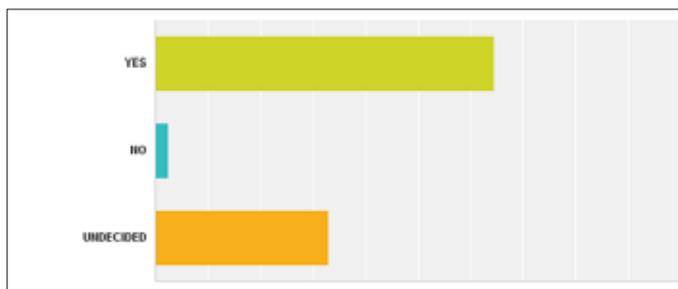
### Q17 Would you be interested in boosting the civil society cooperation within your country/region?

Answered: 121 Skipped: 8



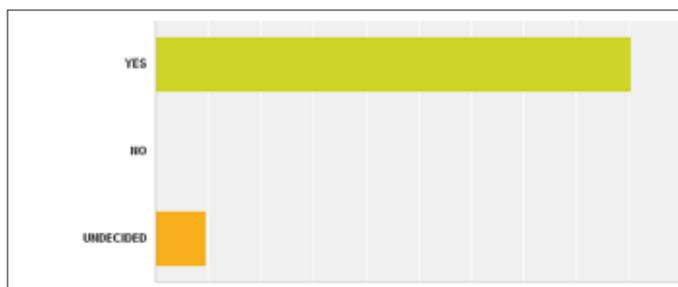
### Q17 Would you be interested in boosting the civil society cooperation within your country/region?

Answered: 79 Skipped: 4



### Q17 Would you be interested in boosting the civil society cooperation within your country/region?

Answered: 42 Skipped: 1



As far as the topics for such cooperation are concerned, the list below indicates preferences per region and per country.

#### CENTRAL-EASTERN REGION

- Awareness raising campaigns, LLL week, participation (HU, SI, RO, PL, BG)
- Weakness of civil society, lack of support, creation of a genuine dialogue with policy-makers, partnership, cooperation between sectors (HU, RO, Six2, PL, BG, HR, SK)
- Opportunities for seniors (HU, SI, CZ, PL, BG)
- Basic skills (HUx2, RO, SI, CZ)
- Quality (HU, RO, CZ, HR)
- Professionalization and train the trainers (RO, SI, PL, SK)
- Civic education (HU, RO, SI)
- Differences between industrial and rural areas (HUx2, RO)
- Funding and sustainability (HU, CZ, RO)

#### SOUTHERN REGION

- Professionalization and train the trainers (CY, TK, IT, ESx2, PTx2, FR)
- Cooperation, exchange of methodologies and strategic planning (CY, TK, ES, IT, PTx4, FR)
- Funding, sustainability and structure for CS (FR, Hex2, IT, ES, PTx2)
- Citizenship education (FR, Hex2, ESx2)
- Participation and awareness raising (MT, TK, HE, PT)
- Recognition and validation of competences (CY, HE, IT, PT)
- Migration and intercultural learning (ES)
- Language for cooperation and mobility of learners (FR)



## II. NEXT STEPS

The next outcomes of the RENEWAL project are two regional meetings<sup>21</sup>, which aim to encourage exchanges and debates on the European Agenda and its implementation in the regions and promote the cooperation between governmental and civil society actors.

Meetings, which are organised by the two RENEWAL partners, are targeted at adult education providers, representatives from civil society and from the European Commission as well as national coordinators.

At these meetings, this report will be presented and form the basis of a national and international exchange and reflection. Feedback and recommendations are then gathered in two regional reports summarising the main outputs and suggestions from the meetings and concentrating on the messages and recommendations to the European Commission and the national coordinators.



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<sup>21</sup> Central-Eastern Europe: Bratislava, 15-16 October 2014  
Southern Europe: Lisbon, 23-24 October 2014  
<http://www.eaea.org/en/projects/eaec-coordinated-projects/renewal/regional-meetings.html>

