



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

European Parliament report on Erasmus+

EAEA response

April 2019

[The European Association for the Education of Adults \(EAEA\)](#) very much welcomes the adoption of [CULT Committee report](#) on Erasmus+ 2021-2027 by the European Parliament in March 2019. Erasmus+ is an outstanding and crucial programme for adult learners, as it has supported adult education organisations from all over Europe in their efforts for more innovation and cooperation in the sector.

Adult education is tackling many of Europe's most pressing challenges, such as growing inequalities, xenophobia and anti-European tendencies, demographic change, inclusion of migrants and refugees, climate change and digitalization, among many others. Additionally, one in five adults in the EU has low literacy and numeracy skills (OECD 2013) and many more cannot use digital tools confidently in everyday life. Without these skills, individuals are at greater risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. Good adult education strategies contribute to the competitiveness of the European market, social cohesion and inclusion as well as active citizenship and democracy, in addition to many other benefits such as health, well-being and personal development.

The CULT Committee report has recognized the importance of adult education in the Erasmus+ Programme through supporting a holistic lifelong learning approach, in particular by underlining the value of non-formal and informal education activities and the links between them. EAEA welcomes the increase of the funding allocated to adult education to at least 6% and the tripling of the overall budget for the future Erasmus programme. Nevertheless, the budget share for adult education still needs to be significantly higher in order for adult education to be able to make an impact. The (potential) target group of adult education is significantly larger than in any other educational field: 55% of the total population in the European Union is between the age of 25 and 65, i.e. the age group that is considered in the labour force survey, and almost 85% of the population is between 15 and 65 years and older.

EAEA very much appreciates that the report offers mobility opportunities for adult education learners and staff. Through this initiative, wider groups of people and more learners will have the opportunity to contribute to an open and inclusive European society through intercultural exchange.

The main objectives of adult education are the transfer of knowledge, competences and skills and the promotion of social inclusion, active citizenship, personal development and well-being, which are therefore encouraged by the programme.

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The European Association for the Education of Adults highly endorses the introduction of small-scale projects in the new programme. They will increase the accessibility to the programme for smaller organisations with limited financial and human resources. This will have profound effects on the quality of adult education, the transfer of innovation and the creation of a common European area of adult education. Additionally EAEA is also grateful to see that new programme does foresee adult education alliances, which will bring together practitioners and researchers to tackle key European challenges such as democracy or digitalisation and ensure an impact in the area of adult education and at policy level.

EAEA also sees it of outmost importance that Jean Monnet actions are open to all fields of education and training; not only higher education. This is because in particular adult education institutions vastly contribute to the knowledge about the European Union and to teaching and researching in the field of European Union studies, in dialogue with the academic world and policy-makers.

Cooperation in adult education, especially at the grassroots level, can strengthen democracy and intercultural dialogue between citizens, organisations and countries. We therefore very much welcome the proposed European inclusion framework and national inclusion strategies, adapting to the needs of disadvantaged groups with measures towards outreach, support and training offers. We believe that this can foster the participation of small and local organisations, in particular newcomers and community-based grassroots organisations that work directly with disadvantaged learners. The proposal also underlines that the additional costs of measures to facilitate inclusion should not constitute grounds for rejection of an application.

In line with the suggested framework of inclusion measures, EAEA is happy to see the simplification of application procedures, with the aim to make the programme more user-friendly and inclusive, accessible and fair for all groups. For smaller adult education institutions, the administrative procedure was too complicated and resource-intensive, highly bureaucratic and time-consuming.

We believe that it is crucial that associations from Europe that are neither members nor candidates can fully participate in the programme from the very start and are therefore pleased that the report reinforces the international dimension aimed at supporting the Union's external action and development objectives through cooperation between the EU and third countries. This will support skills development, exchange and the transfer of knowledge and should in particular strengthen capacity-building of education systems in developing countries.

In this regard, the report remains vague to what extent it aims to actively contribute to the [sustainable development agenda](#) (SDGs, Agenda 2030). Thus adult education contributes to the achievement of all SDGs by building the foundations of change in social, political, economic, ecological and cultural spheres. It develops necessary skills for sustainable development as well as informs about sustainability.



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Finally EAEA wishes to underline the significance of the proposed “*effective cooperation between all relevant stakeholders at all levels of the Programme’s implementation*” and looks forward to this good cooperation. Because we believe that Erasmus+ is one of the key programmes of the European Union that has the potential to bring citizens in Europe together and closer to the aims of the EU.

More information

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The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) is the voice of non-formal adult education in Europe. EAEA is a European NGO with 141 member organisations in 45 countries and represents more than 60 million learners Europe-wide.