



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR  
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

## RESPONSE TO THE OPEN CONSULTATION ON THE COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION ON VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING (VNFIL)

To be submitted to [EMPL-E2-UNIT@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EMPL-E2-UNIT@ec.europa.eu) and [carlo.scatoli@ec.europa.eu](mailto:carlo.scatoli@ec.europa.eu)

**November 2019**

The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) sees validation as a key tool in order to promote lifelong learning, to ensure more flexible learning pathways, to encourage learners and build their self-confidence as well as to create a more comprehensive understanding of competences.

EAEA recognizes the importance of the [Council Recommendation](#) in creating a momentum for validation and believes that the Recommendation has contributed in generating national action towards more and better validation opportunities.

Yet, a lot still needs to be done in order to enable individuals to progress in their educational or professional development.

Validation cannot be considered as a good investment for individuals if it's not widely understood and accepted by societies. Therefore, more awareness raising campaigns should be organised at the European and national levels to sensitise both the public opinion and reach out to potential candidates<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, specific policies need to be put in place in order to make sure that validation produces credible and reliable results (for instance making mandatory to eliminate all differences in the certificates obtained, or adopting clear and transparent quality standards<sup>2</sup>).

EAEA and its members are convinced that it's not enough to target disadvantaged groups to make validation accessible and inclusive. More has to be done to make the process more affordable – if not free, less timing consuming and complex for its candidates<sup>3</sup>. Guidance and counselling,

---

<sup>1</sup> During the project RURAL FORCE, information campaigns were organized to raise the awareness of the target group about the validation process and benefits, followed by guidance sessions for the people identified as potential candidates for validation services.

<sup>2</sup> The International Women's Centre Den Helder (IWC) uses legitimated standards and criteria which are nationally legitimate and widely recognized such as tests, presentations, discussions, search for evidence, port-folio writing, assessments and certificates.

<sup>3</sup> The diversity of stakeholders authorised to develop validation and the existence of a large number of centres for validation is a success factor in Portugal. Many WBA candidates find the adaptability of the duration of the validation according to individual needs of candidates useful.



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR  
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

which is key for all candidates, especially those with a disadvantaged background<sup>4</sup>, is still not enough available. Evidence shows that investments in those areas are worthy not only for individuals, but also for the economy and the society as a whole.

EAEA is also thankful to the European Commission for supporting the Member States and stakeholders with working groups, peer learning activities and key resources such as the European Inventory on the validation of non-formal and informal learning and European Guidelines.

However, Member States should be urged more to create less fragmented validation arrangements, both on a policy and practice levels.

Validation policies should be agreed, implemented and monitored by all interested parties, including adult education providers and stakeholders. Indeed, they are often the implementing bodies of the validation systems, sometimes being responsible of the certificate-oriented validation, in other cases of the formative-oriented validation. Furthermore, as the Recommendation rightly states, there is a need to promote coordination on validation arrangements between stakeholders in the education, training, employment and youth sectors, as well as between those in other relevant policy areas<sup>5</sup>. A cross sectorial dialogue between validation stakeholders will increase reliability and trust for the validation results and ultimately lead to an increased participation in validation.

EAEA and its members will continue working with the relevant institutions at the European and national levels to help develop, implement and monitor the national systems.

This statement is backed up by the work carried out by the [AVA project](#) consortium, who published an evidence-based set of recommendations for all the stakeholders involved in validation and an action plan from the point of view of non-formal adult education providers: [the AVA action plan](#).

### More information

**Contact:** Gina Ebner, EAEA Secretary-General, tel: +32 2 893 25 24, [gina.ebner@eaea.org](mailto:gina.ebner@eaea.org)

*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 130 member organisations in 43 countries and represents more than 60 million learners Europe-wide.*

---

<sup>4</sup> The Education and Training Service Center (ETSC) in Iceland coordinates training of validation staff, meetings with project managers, career counsellors and assessors to guarantee the process quality. The ETSC set the validation's methodology but many stakeholders are involved when a new area/curricula/job is opened up for validation.

<sup>5</sup> The IWC has a very broad network of social partners, communities' leaders and educational stakeholders. They contact directly companies and potential employers in order to find job places for the women attending their courses.