



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

LET'S USE THE RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE FUND FOR ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION!

EAEA Statement
September 2020

EAEA welcomes the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), which was presented on 17 September 2020. The RRF will provide a total of €672.5 billion to support investment and reforms, and one of the flagships is Re- and Upskilling. 'This is a great opportunity to strengthen and invest in adult learning and education (ALE) in Europe. EAEA calls on the EU Member States to foresee a budget for ALE in their plans,' says Uwe Gartenschlaeger, President of the EAEA.

The RRF requires EU Member States to draw up plans for their recovery and resilience. These should contain a coherent package of reforms and public investment projects to be implemented by 2026 in order to be eligible within the RRF. National reform programmes should be in line with the country-specific recommendations of the European Semester of recent years, but in particular those of 2019 and 2020.

EAEA emphasises that the 2019 recommendations in particular, in their analysis of the situation in the respective countries and in the specific recommendations, repeatedly point out the need for investment in the field of lifelong learning and adult education in order to reduce so-called "skills shortages" and, for example in the field of basic education and digital education, to help adults to adapt to the needs of the labour market and daily life. Although the 2020 recommendations focus on the challenges posed by COVID-19, they also call for more educational measures, especially in the area of digital skills.

According to the European Commission, "Member States will be encouraged to submit their national reform programmes and their recovery and resilience plans in a single integrated document. This document will provide an overview of the reforms and investments that the Member State will undertake in the coming years, in line with the objectives of the Facility." **This is a unique chance for the EU Member States to strengthen national and regional lifelong learning and adult education systems through coherent strategies and investment.**

In order to ensure that national reform plans will respond to the needs of adult education and learning systems, **EAEA urges the EU Member States to involve civil society in the ALE sector**, especially adult education organisations and providers – many of which got into a precarious situation during COVID-19, to draw up reform plans that will be owned and implemented by all actors. According to the guidance document on the RRF, civil society needs to be given a central role in the design and implementation of the national plans. In particular, Member States have to report on how they have interacted with civil society and other stakeholders in addition to the social partners in the preparation of the plans.

Education, training and learning play a key role in the recovery from the COVID crisis. Basic, digital, transversal and professional skills are necessary for people in Europe, for society and the economy. EAEA especially welcomes that education and learning have, therefore, been included in the RRF as one of the



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flagship actions: “[Flagship] 7. Reskill and upskill – The adaption of education systems to support digital skills and educational and vocational training for all ages.”¹

The other flagships of the Facility highlight digitalisation and the climate transition – both will need to be embedded in the skills and competences of the people in Europe. Non-formal and community learning provide resilience, health and well-being, inclusion and cohesion. **EAEA believes that a successful recovery of Europe is not possible without the promotion of life skills – including digital and sustainability skills – through adult learning and education and therefore calls on Member States to use the available funds accordingly.** We also ask the European Commission to give the countries the relevant advice for their plans and when evaluating the applications.

EAEA calls on the European Commission to

- evaluate national reform plans of EU Member States on the basis of their responding to the country-specific recommendations, especially also concerning the promotion of adult learning and education;
- ensure that key objectives are met during the implementation phase of the programmes;
- ensure that Member States involve civil society in all phases of the programme design and implementation.

EAEA calls on the EU Member States to

- ensure that their national reform plans tackle the issues highlighted in the country-specific recommendations of 2019 and 2020, especially the recommendations concerning the promotion of adult learning and education;
- use this unique opportunity to strengthen national and regional lifelong learning and adult education systems through coherent strategies and investment in the sector;
- involve civil society in decision-making processes on the national reform plans as well as in the implementation phase of the programmes;
- adopt a holistic approach to adult learning, in which formal and non-formal learning have their equal place and where “life skills” - including digital skills and sustainability skills/green skills - are central.

EAEA calls on its members to

- contact their national authorities (ministries or other decision-making bodies) to ensure that they are consulted on the preparation of the national recovery and resilience plans.

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

¹ from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_1659