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## EAEA response to the proposal on ‘Erasmus for all’

The European Association for the Education of Adults is an NGO with 127 members in 43 countries, representing non-formal adult education and learning on European level. EAEA and its members represent the whole spectrum of Lifelong Learning and Adult Education activities, including formal, non formal and informal learning, education and skill training.

EAEA welcomes the proposal on ‘Erasmus for all’ and agrees with the identified challenges for Education and Training. We also welcome the fact that the programme will support the participation of partners from non-EU countries.

EAEA would like to underline the low participation of adults in lifelong learning and the low level of skills and qualifications of a large number of adults in Europe. In order to reach the 15% participation rate target for 2020 as well as to support the benchmark for higher education on the one hand and fewer school drop-outs on the other hand, strong adult education systems, providers, methodology, staff and provision across Europe is needed. More specifically, there is the need to increase the participation especially of adults with low qualifications who participate seven times less than higher qualified ones. Additionally, in times of a crisis that is not only financial but also concerns European cohesion and identity, adult education has to be the place for European active citizenship, which a strong adult education programme can further develop and promote.

The only answer to these challenges is to promote adult learning – on the one hand through policy and the New Agenda for Adult Learning but also through the corresponding programme.

EAEA therefore has these main proposals:

- Adult Education and Learning has to remain a sector of its own. It is desirable that there are close links with vocational training, but nevertheless **a distinct stream for non-formal and non-vocational adult education** is necessary in order to tackle the challenges mentioned above.
- While we appreciate the proposed increase in budget, we understand that there is a high possibility that this increase will not be approved by the member states. As a consequence, the current minimum allocation would actually mean a decrease for adult education. We therefore need a minimum allocation that enables progress for adult learning in Europe! The 2% for Adult Education is completely inadequate in view of the demographic ageing of Europe and the need to increase the participation of adults in lifelong learning and therefore **at a very minimum this should be increased to 7% like schools and youth.**
- EAEA believes that **systemic impact** should not be the only impact that should be considered. The Lifelong Learning Programme has had enormous impact on **organizations and individuals**, and this should be recognized in the new programme, too.



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- International cooperation should be possible for adult education, too. The exchange with non-EU countries can enrich the European debate but also reinforce adult education as a tool for democracy and human rights, especially in the European Neighbourhood countries.
  - While we understand the need for efficiency, we would like to call the EC to balance the need for bigger and more efficient projects with the need to be **inclusive**. A lot of work in adult education (and other sectors) is done by small organizations, and they should still have the opportunity to participate in the new European Programme. We especially support the continuation of the **learning partnerships** which have been very successful for adult education. In the implementation of the new programme priority should be given to easy administrative procedures and easy to access implementing agencies on the country-level.
  - EAEA regrets that the **mobility schemes for adult learners** have disappeared from the programme. Both Grundtvig workshops and senior volunteering have opened the opportunity for European participation to many people who would not have had the chance otherwise. Taking into consideration that a lot of money goes to students and even graduates who, in most countries, are already in a privileged situation, we think that some support should go to adult learners, too.
  - Europe is currently facing not only a financial crisis but also a crisis of the European idea and European cohesion. We believe that lifelong learning in general and adult education in particular are one of the best tools to foster the European idea. We therefore propose to add a specific objective (article 5) that adds European citizenship as a key issue.
  - Civil society in lifelong learning plays an important role in connecting European policies to the grassroots level. In order to continue and even strengthen this role, operating grants for European associations are of utmost importance for their sustainability. We therefore strongly insist on a continuation of operating grants (currently Jean Monnet – Key Activity 3).

In the current crisis and the years after, Europe will need highly skilled workers, but also active citizens that support and promote the European idea and European values. We need creative and innovative people who are resilient and can overcome challenges and difficulties. We need people with all the key competences that improve their own but also other people's lives. We need citizens who support democracy, human rights and solidarity and do not seek refuge in hateful, nationalistic thinking. Adult education and learning are indispensable for achieving this.

EAEA will present a detailed proposal for amendments in the next weeks. We hope that you will support our position. For any questions or a meeting, please contact the EAEA Secretary General at [gina.ebner@eaea.org](mailto:gina.ebner@eaea.org) or +32.2.234.37.60.