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*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 44 countries.*

The main roles of EAEA are:

- Policy advocacy for lifelong learning at a European level;
- Provision of information and services for its members;
- Developing practice through projects, publications and training;
- International cooperation with other stakeholders in the field.

## POLICY NEWS

### EAEA: Validation of non-formal learning should be free

At the beginning of September the European Commission launched a recommendation to boost the recognition of skills and competences gained outside school or university. In its [response](#), EAEA is concerned on the financing system of validation.

EAEA especially welcomes the obligation to member states to implement national validation systems until 2015. The association is happy that the Commission wants to ensure the inclusion of stakeholders, among them civil society and education and training providers, in the development and implementation of these national systems.

EAEA would like to draw the attention to two important points: the association sees validation of non- and informal learning as a necessary and important step in a person's lifelong learning career. One key intent of validation should be the encouragement to take up further learning in order to take steps forward. We therefore believe that any national system for validation should include and ensure adequate learning opportunities for people to continue, i.e. adequate adult and continuing education offers.

EAEA is concerned about a statement in point 3: 'Access to validation is affordable for citizens who wish to undertake a validation procedure.' This seems to imply that people will have to pay for the validation procedure in any case. We strongly recommend that the financing of the validation system be carefully considered and to be available for free, at the minimum for those with low qualifications and for the unemployed.

The Commission's proposal will be discussed by the Council and is due to be adopted by education and youth ministers on 23-24 November 2012.

**More information:**

[Commission's website for validation of non-formal and informal learning](#)



*Sue Waddington, Heinz K. Becker, Tapio Säävälä and Katarína Nevedalová acknowledge the benefits of learning at an older age.*

## EAEA's recommendations on active ageing well-received

Participation in adult learning declines with age. EAEA's [recommendations](#) and [policy paper](#) advise adult education providers, governments, EU, companies and social partners to take action.

EAEA President **Sue Waddington** introduced the Associations Recommendations and Policy Paper on Active Ageing through Adult Learning in the European Parliament on 27 September. EAEA and Austrian MEP **Heinz K. Becker** (EPP) organised a Policy Debate in the framework of European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations.

In addition to MEP Becker, the debaters included Slovakian MEP **Katarína Nevedalová** (S&D) and Head of the Adult Education Unit **Tapio Säävälä** from the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture. **Jane Watts** from the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), **Georg Müllner** (E.N.T.E.R - Network) and **Davide di Pietro** (Lunaria) represented the civil society among the debaters.

### Ageing population has potential

In the coming decades the number of over 60-year-olds will increase from 5 percent to 12 percent of the population.

- This has serious implications to Europe and EU's member states, stated Tapio Säävälä from the Commission.

This being said, Säävälä underlined that an ageing population is not only a threat: it has great possibilities for the society as a whole.

- One of the key questions is how to keep up the skills in a Europe where people live and work longer, he said.

### EAEA tackles the issue

The value of lifelong learning for older people has been identified in research and international policy frameworks. In its Recommendations and Policy Paper EAEA identifies several key areas that must be addressed in order to create an efficient adult education service for older people.

The recommendations include securing access to high quality learning for older persons by clear information on learning of older persons. Also the digital gap should be bridged by targeting elders within ICT strategies and policies.

Several speakers and participants welcomed EAEA's recommendations and policy paper.

- We support EAEA's policy paper and recommendations, MEP Becker said.

NIACE's own research bears EAEA's recommendations completely:

- We will distribute these documents in the national level in the United Kingdom, announced Jane Watts from NIACE.

### Raising awareness to the top of the agenda

MEP Becker found awareness raising on the benefits of learning later in life one of the top priorities.

- Awareness raising is number one and needs nothing but doing. Benefits of learning, including the intergenerational aspect and health aspect have to be promoted. If we put effort to awareness raising on benefits of learning later in life, we will soon meet other aspects as well, Becker said.

Awareness should be raised among the political decision makers as well.

- We try to support adult education and learning in older age to our best knowledge. However, we need the civil society actors to tell us what to do, explained MEP Katarína Neveďalová, the Shadow Rapporteur of the Erasmus for all.

*Text and photo: Aura Vuorenrinne*

#### More information:

[EAEA policy page on Active Ageing](#)

## Erasmus for All update: EAEA feels that budget for adult education should be increased

The Draft Report from the rapporteur Doris Pack concerning EU's new programme for education, training, youth and sport was discussed in the European Parliament's Culture and Education Committee in 19 September 2012. EAEA has published [a statement](#) regarding the Draft Report and proposed amendments in order to further improve the programme.

The Draft Report suggests renaming the programme. EAEA appreciates this, as well as the fact that Grundtvig, as well as the other sub-programmes, will continue within the new structure of the programme.

EAEA welcomes that the mobility of adult learners will be continued through the learning partnerships, which have been very successful and popular in the current programme. We propose that the other two mobility schemes for adult learners, i.e. workshops and senior volunteering, will also be continued.

### Adequate funding should be secured

EAEA believes that the budget increase for adult learning to 6 % is already a big improvement. Grundtvig is a programme that is the target of many groups and sectors within lifelong learning due to its non-formal nature. It is, for example, being used for young adults' non-formal training, parents' education as well as non-formal teachers' training. Adequate funding is therefore crucial. In order to secure this funding, EAEA proposes to match at least the percentage for Youth, i.e. 8.3 %.

EAEA understands that the training for unemployed people remains the main task of national unemployment services and the European Social Fund, but believes that the transfer of innovation in this field should remain an important issue for the Lifelong Learning Programme.

### More recognition to civil society organisations

EAEA is still sceptical about the 'sustainable systemic impact' that the programme is aiming for. Focusing too much on the systemic level can have an adverse effect and impede a broader participation. Indeed, smaller projects may not have a systemic impact but they do have greater qualitative individual, organisational and societal impacts, especially projects aimed at social inclusion and active citizenship. Civil society organisations should be recognised as agents of social change and innovation and their projects should not be hindered because their impact is not directly measurable.

EAEA regrets that operational grants are restricted to the Youth sector. The argument that for the continuity of the youth sector, it is crucial to ensure that youth NGOs receive also in future operating grants for their work in the field is just as true for the lifelong learning sector. Currently, operating grants for European associations are administered under Jean Monnet, key activity 3. EAEA would also like to see a stronger involvement of civil society in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme as well as the European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS LLL) directly mentioned as a reference civil society partner in the framework of a regular dialogue in education and training.

#### More information:

[EAEA's policy page on Erasmus for All](#)

# Tracing the benefits of lifelong learning

The BeLL project is a comparative European research on the “Wider Benefits of Lifelong Learning”. It is funded by the European Commission as a part of the EU funding line “Studies and Comparative Research (KA 1)” and to date it is the first project to collect comparative quantitative and qualitative data on measurable benefits of adult non-vocational learning within Europe.

The project aims at examining the complex relationship between participation in educational activities and the concrete benefits this brings for the well-being of the participants and the societies they live in. Another purpose of the project is to validate the construct of ‘benefits’ within European comparative research.

In order to adequately represent the variety in European adult education landscape a survey was created following the methodology of existing studies in the field (i.e. Manninen, 2010 and Feinstein et al., 2008 ) and is currently being distributed in 10 countries. This will allow to collect and analyse data from 10 000 participants. Afterwards, qualitative data will add value to the above-mentioned quantitative investigation.

The research will primarily focus on social benefits of learning (i.e. better social cohesion, efficient networks, improved public health and a increased civic involvement) and individual benefits of learning (i.e. improved self-confidence and greater self-awareness) rather than economic or vocational benefits.

The eagerly expected results may help to comprehensively provide knowledge in an area that has received little attention in adult education research so far. Furthermore, the empirical data will provide guidance for policymakers, increas-

ing the visibility of adult education in political discourse and encouraging investment in a frequently marginalized form of education.

Indeed, as the benefits of lifelong learning will become more evident and the understanding of participants will be much stronger, the BeLL-research is contributing to develop better policies, to increase the quality of adult learning and to create delivery systems more attuned to the needs of learners. This will lead to a key contribution to the implementation of the European Commission’s Action Plan on Adult Learning.

Moreover, learning more about benefits from participants themselves will open new arguments and new marketing strategies for attracting potential new learners. The project is therefore closely related to the EU Lisbon strategy with its emphasis on improving participation rates. Furthermore, it is in line with the Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning (2011/C 372/01). In particular, when this latter invites member states to improve their knowledge base on adult learning and monitoring the adult learning sector by:

- stepping up efforts to collect sufficient baseline data on (...) wider benefits of learning for adults and society, and extending the data coverage to the age-range beyond 64 in keeping with the prolongation of working life;
- intensifying research and in-depth analysis of issues relating to adult learning, extending the range of research to include new fields and encouraging more inter-disciplinary and prospective analysis;
- strengthening the monitoring and impact assessment of the development and performance of the adult-learning sector at European, national, regional and local level, making better use of existing instruments where possible.

The BeLL project was launched on the 1st November 2011, by a 10 partner consortium which is composed by Universities , private and public research institutes , as well as practice institutions .

The EAEA role in the project is leading the dissemination activities of the project results.

**More information:**

[BeLL website on EAEA.org](http://BeLL.website.on.EAEA.org)



BeLL kick-off meeting in November 2011.

# A new reader on Adult Illiteracy

*“One in five 15-year-olds in Europe, as well as many adults, lack basic reading and writing skills, which makes it harder for them to find a job and puts them at risk of social exclusion. For adults the need for action is just as urgent. Almost 80 million adults in Europe – a third of the workforce – have only low or basic skills, but estimates show that share of jobs requiring high qualifications will increase to 35% by the end of the decade, compared to 29% now. Reading and writing are essential skills, not least as they are the key to further learning.”*  
[Press release European Union, Référence: IP/11/115, Date: 01/02/2011]

## ***The invisible EU crisis: adult illiteracy - a long underestimated problem.***

A reader with facts, information and solutions, includes facts and real life stories, information on the importance of literacy in work life and solutions for combating illiteracy. It is openly available as a [downloadable PDF file](#).

The project Literacy and Vocation identifies literacy needs for workplace purposes and develops concepts and materials for literacy and numeracy education (skills for life) in Europe.

Workplace literacy is the ability to communicate effectively in a workplace using (but not restricted to) written information and other forms of communication. This includes communicating appropriately to fulfil company goals, solve problems, accomplish tasks, and to think creatively and critically on the job. It requires being able to determine what, how, with whom, why, and when to communicate orally or in writing, and how to use language and quantitative information to do this.

The project partnership suggests that workplace oriented literacy programmes are the most effective way to build the literacy skills of people already in employment or in apprenticeship.

To support policy makers, civil servants, teachers, trainers and many more lit.voc develops concepts and materials that focus on how to plan and implement workplace oriented literacy programs. Most of the materials will be published in Bulgarian, Danish, English, German (Austrian and German versions) and Spanish.

Literacy and Vocation is a Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation project.

### **More information:**

[Lit.Voc website](#)

[Lit.Voc website on EAEA.org](#)

## ILLITERACY IN SELECTED COUNTRIES

### **Austria**

UNESCO estimates, that about 300,000 to 600,000 adults in Austria are in need of basic education.

### **Bulgaria**

More than 40 per cent of Bulgarian ninth-graders are functionally illiterate, according to the latest report by the OECD.

### **Denmark**

Every fifth Dane (around 1,5 mio. people) has difficulties reading and almost half of the adult population between the age of 16 and 66 cannot read sufficiently

### **France**

3,100,000 people, some 9% of those aged between 18 and 65 who have attended school in France, are illiterate (IVQ survey, 2004-2005 INSEE ANLCI);

### **Germany**

14% of Germans between the ages of 18 and 64 are affected by “functional illiteracy”. That is 7,5 million people of working age.



This project is funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

# GINCO final conference focused on quality

The third international conference of the [Grundtvig International Network for Course Providers \(GINCO\)](#) project titled "Quality Course Provision for Grundtvig", took place in Hasselt, Belgium in 27-29 September 2012.

The event focused on the quality and variety of the Grundtvig courses. Its purpose was to improve courses in terms of quality and relevance.

The conference gathered together Grundtvig IST course organisers, adult education organizations planning to organise such courses and all stakeholders in the field: Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) National Agencies, adult education policy makers, programme developers, to name a few.

The conference offered the opportunity to endorse policy recommendations that were proposed in order to give weight to the stakeholders' voices in the debate on the Grundtvig In-Service Training (IST) action. It was also a chance to discuss the future of GINCO network, which finishes now to be formally funded, but does not lose its will to represent Grundtvig training providers. GINCO will continue under a title "GINCO Tools and Training", offering Grundtvig courses for Grundtvig course organisers.

## New tools and approaches for Grundtvig trainers

Results and outcomes developed in the three year life span of the network were presented and relevant themes for the Grundtvig stakeholders were explored during the conference. In particular, the current challenges of the field, the future of

professional development for adult education and the scenario forecasted in the new European Education Programme were studied.

A lively discussion was held on the basis of the statistical analysis of the Training Database which was conducted by the GINCO network for the two-year-period from January 2011 to December 2012. This debate led to suggest for the next phase of the programme a number of measures to improve the thematic spread of the course provision and to bring the total offer more in balance with the number of grants issued by the national agencies (e.g. a maximum of two sessions per year per course).

## Quality courses awarded

In the framework of the conference, the first GINCO Awards was organised by the project consortium in cooperation with the national agencies. The competition consisted in awarding Grundtvig courses with a quality label. The awards were assigned in three categories: ICT use, quality care and validation of learning outcomes. More information on the awarded courses can be found on the latest [GINCO newsletter](#).

*Text: Francesca Operti*

*Photo: Michele Paulus*



*The GINCO award aimed at giving the opportunity to highlight the innovative methodology. Eight excellent Grundtvig courses were awarded.*



**24-26 October 2012, Nuremberg, Germany:**

**ENIL CONFERENCE:**

*Intergenerational Learning: Towards Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity*

The second conference of [European Network for Intergenerational Learning \(ENIL\)](#) targets educators, practitioners, policy makers, organisations and individuals across Europe who have an interest or are already active in intergenerational learning. The conference will include key note presentations and a range of thematic workshops, which will explore how policy and practice can support learning, active ageing and intergenerational solidarity. All of the workshops will be simultaneously interpreted so they are available in French, German and English. The conference programme includes also plenty of networking opportunities.

The aim of ENIL is to promote Intergenerational Learning by bringing together and supporting sustainable, effective practice in the field and by facilitating the exchange of ideas and expertise beyond individual projects, and by creating a mechanism for practitioners to influence policy and practice.

Registration and more information at [ENIL website](#).



**15-16 November 2012, Parma, Italy:**

**POLIGLOTTI4.EU CLOSING CONFERENCE:**

*One continent, many tongues: a spotlight on Europe's linguistic wealth*

Bringing together experts and multilingual talents from across Europe, the conference will highlight the outcome of Poliglotti4.eu's project achievement and will also raise the voice of Europeans who live and work in multilingual Europe representing diverse fields such as science, art and culture, education, economics, politics and public spaces. The conference is part of the Parma Theatre Festival.

Poliglotti4.eu is a European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC)-project that was developed by the Civil Society Platform to promote multilingualism in Europe. It is co-funded through the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission.

Registration and more information on [Poliglotti4.eu website](#).

## EAEA NEWS

### EAEA to the Advisory Committee of Civil Society Platform on Multilingualism

The Civil Society Platform on Multilingualism held its latest General Assembly on 29 June 2012 in Brussels with a renewed spirit to continue its efforts to promote multilingualism in Europe. The members dialogued about the future role of the Platform in the new political and economic context, and discussed about new objectives and working methods to achieve its goals.

The Platform aims to raise public awareness of the value of language learning. It seeks to make recommendations on how to achieve the EU's goal of having all Europeans fluent in two foreign languages. The Platform wants to propose measures to ensure all immigrants learn the language of their host country.

As opposed to the first mandate (2009-2011) of the Platform, in the second mandate the European Commission expects the it to have more concrete topics and a bigger impact on stakeholders. The members of the Platform debated these propositions during the meeting.

The Commission agrees on the members' proposal of enlarging the Platform to organizations and individuals previously selected by current members. These Associated Partners are

fulfilling the Commission's criteria which can invigorate the Platform with new input and improve its outcomes. They will be invited to the next thematic plenary meetings.

The members of the Platform additionally agreed to set up an Advisory Committee, which will mainly provide support to the chair. EAEA has been elected as its member.

The meeting was chaired by the President of the Platform Uwe Mohr (Language Department Director, Goethe Institute, Brussels) and Belen Bernaldo de Quiros (Head of the Unit of Multilingualism at the DG Education and Culture of the European Commission). It gathered 23 organisations.

*Text: Francesca Operti*

# A tour through lifelong learning at a European level

A study visit for a group of adult education professionals from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia and Serbia took place in Brussels in the beginning of September. EAEA organised it on behalf of an EAEA member organisation, the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association ([Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V., DVV](#)).

The purpose of the visit was to increase the participants' knowledge about the functioning of the EU, to deepen their understanding of European education and training policies and to enable them to share experiences and good practice among each other.

Participants were invited to reflect on the information received and they were guided in networking activities. Through these latter, interesting ideas of cooperation were proposed and some of them will probably lead to a future concrete cooperation. Coffee breaks and joint meals were also used as informal settings to continue discussions and share experiences.

## Erasmus for All: A hot topic

The visit provided the participants with the possibility to discuss trends and developments in the European educational debate with Maïke Koops from the Adult Education Unit of the European Commission, Directorate-General for the Education and Culture. At that meeting, special attention was paid to the Erasmus for All proposal. Participants additionally learned how the European Training Foundation (ETF) supports the Balkans countries.

Erasmus for All was discussed also with the Representations to the EU of Cyprus and Denmark. Loizos Solomou (CY) and Mette Andersen (DK) explained how important the role of the EU Council Presidency is in the European legislative process, listed the current priorities of the Council as regards education and training.

The participants also had the occasion to learn about a variety of European NGOs. The European Civil Society Platform for Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL), Solidar and Concord were presenting their activities.

Moreover, the group met their national representatives and shared with them the civil society's point of view on the lifelong learning policies in their five countries.



*Thanks to the visit of Balkan colleagues, EAEA now understands better the features of adult education in their region.*

## A fruitful visit

When asked about their expectations of a possible cooperation with EAEA, participants underlined how beneficial it would be to receive regular information on adult education policies, to exchange views on key resources about national and European developments of adult education and to share best ideas and practice between the EAEA members. Furthermore they would like to have the opportunity to be involved in European projects and to be supported in achieving the EU standards.

It was also highlighted how the EAEA membership would help the participants in their lobby and advocacy activities at a national level. EAEA membership would contribute to their capacity building and by empower them to improve their daily work.

*Text: Francesca Operti*

*Photo: Nazaret Nazaretyan*

## New faces at EAEA: Ricarda and Aura



### Adult education expert starts as a Policy Officer

Ricarda Motschilnig is an Austrian professional of Adult Education. Her duties at EAEA include monitoring the policy making of European institutions as well as writing papers on a range of topics on adult learning and project coordination.

Ricarda's study background is in Educational Science that she studied in Austria. During her studies, Ricarda also did research in Ireland.

After studies Ricarda had the opportunity to get to know EAEA as a trainee in the Brussels office a couple of years ago.

- After my traineeship at EAEA, I was glad to have the chance to stay for some time longer as Project Assistant. I was mainly working on the [DOLCETA](#) project, she explains.

After a while Ricarda moved to the Netherlands to continue her studies in the field of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the Free University of Amsterdam.

- I also spent some research months in Zambia as well as conducted a study on the wider benefits of adult education, Ricarda tells.

Ricarda then worked with DVV-International in Germany, the European Association for University Lifelong Learning (EUCEN) in Spain and the Carinthian folk high schools in Austria as project coordinator in the field of adult literacy and basic education.

After her interesting experiences in various countries, Ricarda is very happy to return Brussels to work at EAEA main office.



### Diverse professional of communication

Aura Vuorenrinne, the new Information Officer, is a Finn with visual and journalistic experience. Her duties at EAEA include practical communication tasks and long-term strategic development of EAEA's communication.

Aura has a Bachelor Degree in graphic design, gained in her home country Finland. Aura has worked in an advertising agency in Helsinki and seven years in total as a graphic design freelancer. After working a while with design she went back to study.

Alongside her studies of sociology and communication, she was working mainly in the field of communication. Aura worked in the University of Turku with web communication, after which she moved to Denmark for six months in 2009.

- I worked as a Communication Assistant in the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), she explains.

In the beginning of the current year Aura returned Copenhagen to work with Internal Communication at World Health Organization (WHO). In March new duties called in Brussels where she worked in the Legislative Coordination unit of European Parliament's Directorate-General Internal Policies.

- I learned a lot about European decision making, Aura tells.

Aura has now returned Finland, where EAEA's communication office is placed in the Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation (KVS) in Helsinki.

*Text: Ricarda Motschilnig and Aura Vuorenrinne  
Photos: Valentina Chanina and Annu Hattunen*