

European Stakeholders call on the European Institutions to take into account their recommendations in the preparation of the Communication on the future “Education Europe” Programme

28 European education, training and youth organizations formed a coalition to ask for a stronger and more comprehensive education, training and youth programme within the next multiannual financial framework. We welcome the Commission’s proposal to increase the budget of the so-called “Education Europe” programme to 15,2 billion EUR for the period 2014–2020. We feel this proposal matches the high objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy. As the OECD [“Education at a Glance”](#) report shows, *“despite strained public budgets, governments must keep up their investment to maintain quality in education, especially for those at risk”*. We believe that the current programmes – the Lifelong Learning Programme and Youth in Action – have proved their added value and successes. The EU and its Member States can rightly be proud of this and continue in this pathway. We thus **call on the Council and the Parliament to adopt the proposed budget**.

EU programmes give a positive impulse and are complementary to the work that is done at national, regional and local levels in all the sectors – adult education, schools or colleges, non-formal education, vocational education and training and higher education. We would like to remind the importance of having a EU programme that supports this **life-long approach to learning**. In that respect, the denomination “Education Europe” does not seem appropriate as in many countries the word “education” refers to formal education whereas lifelong learning covers formal, non-formal and informal learning taking place across all ages and in all areas of life. In particular, the specific role of non-formal education should be acknowledged and given a proper support in the architecture of the future transversal programme. We thus invite:

1. The Parliament and the Council to keep the name “**Lifelong Learning Programme**” for the future transversal programme which should be complemented by a separate Youth in Action Programme. This decision would be symbolic notably in the framework of the 10th anniversary of the Lifelong Learning Memorandum. Concerning the sub-programmes we observe that the brands “Erasmus” or “Grundtvig” are well known; changing the names again will only create confusion for final beneficiaries.
2. Instead we invite the Commission to propose a **transversal programme that secures that all the sectors are covered** (i.e. minimum % to respect) while at the same time enabling a lifelong learning approach by **suppressing barriers between the sub-programmes** with common rules and flexible options (common application forms with flexible options to adapt to sectoral specific needs for i.e. on mobility duration). It will allow synergies and enhanced efficiency with greater impact and European added value while at the same time keeping what already works. We are willing to give advice to the Commission in finding innovative solutions in order to enable such equilibrium.

The “Lifelong Learning Programme” should aim to promote opportunities for people to acquire **transversal competences** for life that are not just focused on professional or skills’ development but also on personal and societal development as well as to promote their recognition. This is crucial if we want to reach the Europe 2020 objectives. We wish to remind the following commitments:

- ⇒ Member states stressed in the EYC Council conclusions of 6 November 2009 that *“A solid foundation of key competences for both young people and adults, together with comprehensive lifelong learning opportunities – including enhanced possibilities for learning mobility – are crucial to promoting adaptability and innovation.”*
- ⇒ Member States in the Council conclusions of 11 May 2010 *“Endeavour to make active use of each strand of the lifelong learning programme and, where appropriate, of the European Social Fund, of the European Regional Development Fund and of the Progress programme, in order to strengthen social inclusion through education and training, and maintain a strong focus on this dimension in the proposals for the next generation of programmes”*.

In that respect we understand that **measuring impact** has become a high point in the negotiations, in combination with periodical benchmarks. We thus invite:

- ⇒ the European Commission, the Council and the Parliament to consult stakeholders and use recent research to develop indicators¹ that take into account the social, civic and economic impact of the programme (i.e. measuring employability but also participation, citizenship, personal development, social inclusion). Furthermore, reforms in education and training have long-term effects. It is crucial to adopt indicators and impact measurements that are

¹ Commission Staff Working Document “On EU indicators in the field of youth”, 25.03.2011, SEC(2001). Exploratory research has in recent years taken place on indicator development for active citizenship and civic skills by CRELL at the JRC. Other researches exist such as The International Civic and Citizenship Education Study ([ICCS](#)), the IEA Civic Education Study ([CIVED](#)) or ESN [surveys](#).

well adapted to our sectors and take into account qualitative aspects.

- ⇒ the European Commission, the Council and the Parliament to take into consideration the individual, organisational and systemic impact of the programme. Focusing too much on the systemic level can have an adverse effect and impede a broader participation notably of disadvantaged publics. Indeed, if we want to reach out disadvantaged groups we need to support smaller, local organisations alongside bigger projects that can have a broader impact. Smaller organizations and networks, whose qualitative impact is often difficult to measure, can be very effective in achieving capillary results. They also provide a more direct link between Europe and its citizens, thereby bringing about greater social cohesion and understanding of the beneficial impact of the EU Programmes. We thus strongly encourage the Commission to **find a balance between big projects with stronger systemic impact (policy-support action line) and smaller projects** that have greater qualitative individual, organizational and societal impacts, that often are less measurable but very effective.

Last but not least we would like to outline the **specific role of European civil society organisations** that are currently supported by Jean Monnet. They play a crucial role as multipliers in informing and involving education and training actors in EU cooperation and policy making and in disseminating EU cooperation outputs. They ensure that EU challenges but also the results of EU programmes are shared and known.

- ⇒ The current programme only plans a small budget line to support their work. We advocate for a raise in the allocation that is provided to support them as well as for more **sustainable operating grants**.
- ⇒ **Volunteer work** should also be recognised as contributions in projects and its value should be accepted as co-funding possibility as one of the main outcome of the discussions taking place during the EY2011 on volunteering. Civil society organisations largely rely on volunteers' time and engagement to function and ensure a greater socio-economic impact. They very often encounter difficulties in finding alternative sources of funding and the possibility to quantify volunteers' time contribution would help concentrating more on the quality and impact of their projects.

Once again we would like to affirm our will to work with European institutions to come up with actual, 'ready for the future', comprehensive, innovation-friendly and user-friendly programmes for education, training and youth. The members of the coalition are available to work on the programme future guidelines and indicators.

Sincerely yours,



17 October 2011

28 European networks active in the field in education and training support this campaign. Together they represent millions of learners, teachers, educators, youth workers, school heads or human resources professionals as well as thousands of schools, colleges, universities, adult education centers, youth centers and associations across Europe.