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EUCIS-LLL POSITION PAPER ON "AUSTERITY MEASURES, LIFELONG LEARNING AND SOCIAL COHESION"

PREAMBLE

Lifelong learning covers education and training across all ages and in all areas of life, be it formal, non-formal or informal. Its ambition is that individuals become "**lifelong learners**", aware of the knowledge, skills and competencies they acquire and who are able to use them in the different situations they are confronted with.

Lifelong learning contributes to the development of an individual's employability as well as active citizenship, social cohesion and personal development. It represents all the learning processes that enable the emancipation of "**learning citizens**". In this sense, it is seen as having the potential to empower people to exercise their **civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights**. In these times of economic crisis, lifelong learning can be an important tool for empowerment, both at a personal and societal level. It can provide a chance for re-orientation, a new challenge and ultimately social recognition.

In a smart, sustainable and inclusive society, the **right** to education should be extended to **lifelong learning**. The equitable and lifelong access to knowledge is seen as the prerequisite towards learning societies. This means providing everyone with the means to learn in all contexts – be that formal, non-formal or informal – and at all levels: from early childhood education and compulsory schooling through to higher education, vocational education, training and adult learning. It is only by doing so that we can contribute to more **smart, sustainable and inclusive** societies in Europe.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Poor access to lifelong learning limits people's ability to access high-quality jobs and participate fully in society. This is why, following the European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, in view of the ambitious goals set up by the "Europe 2020" Strategy and in the context of the current economic austerity measures, EUCIS-LLL calls on all the relevant institutions and stakeholders to take the following recommendations into consideration:

1/ Ensure access to LLL for ALL by

- ⇒ Offering equal opportunities for accessing formal, non-formal and informal education and training programmes for ALL members of society with particular emphasis on participation fees;
- ⇒ Targeting those that are farther away from learning, for instance promoting innovative learning programmes which incorporate teaching methods suited to the individual learner or groups at risk of social exclusion (e.g. migrants, the elderly, the physically disadvantaged);
- ⇒ Promoting national strategies to enhance learning opportunities for those at a disadvantage in the labour market due to their low or inappropriate qualifications;
- ⇒ Implementing inclusive and comprehensive learning systems to avoid segregation effects and promoting intercultural education as a rich source of learning opportunities in societies that are or are becoming increasingly multicultural.

