

Dear colleagues,

On behalf of the European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning - EUCIS LLL – I would like to welcome you to this stakeholders' forum.

Let me start by pointing out some of EUCIS LLL's activities when it comes to the future of the LLP. Earlier this year we already consulted our members about the future of the programme, many of whom had consulted their members. This is very important – in order to really know what actors in lifelong learning think, we have to go to the members of our members, as they are the ones working with the programmes.

We put together a number of recommendations, many of which were targeted at the simplification of the programme, and have presented it to the EC.

EUCIS LLL also has some key messages, and some of them are:

- EUCIS LLL promotes the concept of lifelong learning, which covers people's education and training from cradle to grave and in all areas of life, be it formal, non-formal or informal.
- EUCIS LLL promotes governance structures in lifelong learning that include civil society. Regular civil dialogue is necessary to ensure good policy-making and implementation.
- EUCIS LLL promotes access to quality lifelong learning for all. Particular attention needs to be paid to groups that are hard to engage.
- EUCIS LLL promotes lifelong learning for employability, active citizenship, social cohesion and personal development.
- EUCIS LLL promotes flexible learning paths for everyone so that they can move between sectors, between courses and institutions. Prior learning needs to be recognized and validated so that everyone can make the most of his or her skills and competences.

In order to achieve these and other points, we suggest the following activities, tools and instruments:

- Cooperation between the different sectors in education and training is necessary to improve quality, access, policies and their implementation.
- The exchange of experiences and good practices between sectors in education and training are necessary for innovation and new practices in lifelong learning.

- We need European tools in order to implement a European lifelong learning region. The development of these (current and future) tools needs to happen with the strong involvement of civil society in LLL in order to make the useful and sustainable.

We do think that the LLP programme should help promote these points.

Let me now introduce you to the programme of this stakeholder forum:

This is now the third forum that we co-organise with the European Commission, and we might already call it a tradition. Nevertheless, there are a few things that are new and different this year. This year, in order to prepare the forum, we also worked with the European Youth Forum, as they are the main stakeholders for the Youth in Action programme. We are also going to talk about three different programmes: the Lifelong Learning Programme, Youth in Action and the International Cooperation in Higher Education aka ERASMUS MUNDUS. The context for this is something that EUCIS LLL has always promoted: synergies. Synergies between sectors and programmes so that we can inspire each other, so that we can come up with more and better ideas and innovation.

This first day today is therefore dedicated to the exchange across the programmes and sectors. We will use the world café method in order to make the most of the synergies. At the end of the discussion, Peter Hogdson will summarise the most important points that have come up.

Tomorrow we will then concentrate on the different programmes in different workshops. Two of the programmes, Youth in Action and International cooperation in Higher Education will have a workshop of their own. The discussions of the Lifelong Learning Programme will continue the cross-sectoral approach. We will have workshops that take up the three main themes of the programme – mobility / cooperation and partnerships / policy support – rather than the sectors such as Leonardo, Comenius etc. Hopefully, this will also contribute to a lively exchange. One workshop is dedicated to management simplification and concerns all the programmes.

After the workshops, we will present the results to the relevant directors of the 3 programmes and hear what they have to say to them.

Something else is different this year: in the past, we have always reacted to concrete proposals and texts by the EC. This time, we only have a proposal for a structure. This might make the discussions a bit more difficult on the one hand, as it is not a direct feedback that we are producing. On the other hand, it gives us more opportunities to come up with different ideas and innovative suggestions that will hopefully improve the future programmes.

One final point, although I know that this is not the forum that can make the decision (and it's not even the EC that makes the decision): we will need more money for the programmes.

In order to make progress for a true European lifelong learning area, we need strong, innovative programmes with sufficient funds.

Let's take the opportunity of this forum to go in this direction.

Thank you for your attention.