

The Lifelong Learning Platform welcomes the European Commission’s vision for a European Education Area laying the foundation for a Social Europe

On 14 November, the European Commission released a new [Communication](#) “Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture” as a contribution to the meeting of EU leaders at the [Gothenburg Social Summit](#) today (17 November). The Lifelong Learning Platform believes that the vision set out by Vice-President Katainen and Commissioner Navracsics for a European Education Area by 2025 would be a **positive step forward for EU-level cooperation in the field of education and training** and would contribute to a **greater social Europe**¹.

The Lifelong Learning Platform welcomes and encourages ambitious commitment to boost EU programmes such as Erasmus+ and reach out to learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. But the role of education institutions themselves, when it comes to inclusion but also supporting innovation, requires further attention. Such a commitment likewise requires willingness for **strong investments** from the Member States. At this very moment, European civil society and major stakeholders in the field of education and training are advocating for a ten-fold increase to the budget for Erasmus+ post-2020²: a first step to ensure a strong, inclusive programme benefitting citizens of all ages and backgrounds and helping Member States learn from each other in **building modern and innovative education systems**³.

The **focus on lifelong learning** and the proposal to increase the EU benchmark for participation in lifelong learning to 25% by 2025 is welcomed. However, the current benchmark of 15% by 2020 is far from a reality - now only 10.8%⁴ - and huge disparities exist between Member States as revealed by the latest [ET2020 Monitor](#). Concrete implementing actions are required, as well as robust investment in lifelong learning systems which **integrate all ages and levels of education**. These systems need to build links between formal, non-formal and informal learning and support **flexible pathways** for all citizens, as the 2002 Council resolution states⁵. That is what lifelong learning is truly about.

Furthermore, the Lifelong Learning Platform underlines that working towards a European Education Area and the ET2020 (and eventually ET2030) targets requires the **close involvement of all relevant**

¹ LLL-P Statement, *The future of Europe is a Learning Europe for all its citizens!*, September 2017 http://lllplatform.eu/lll/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/LLL-Position_Future-of-Europe.pdf

² Learn more about Erasmusx10 [petition](#) and [website](#).

³ LLL-P Statement, *Adapting European education systems to meet society's challenges in an ever changing world*, September 2017 <http://lllplatform.eu/lll/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Statement-schools-and-higher-education-initiatives.pdf>

⁴ Eurostat, Labour force survey, 2016.

⁵ Council Resolution of 27 June 2002 on lifelong learning:
[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32002G0709\(01\)](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32002G0709(01))

stakeholders - learners, parents, educators, civil society organisations and social partners. Their input in the development, implementation and monitoring of Europe's lifelong learning systems is vital for the latter to be credible, innovative and effective⁶.

Finally, **widening socio-economic inequalities** are a huge challenge in education, as the latest results of the ET2020 Monitor stress, and the Lifelong Learning Platform supports the Commission's emphasis on the need to tackle this through education and culture. We therefore urge the Member States to implement the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning, as the new **European Pillar of Social Rights**⁷ sets out as **a right for everyone**.

The Lifelong Learning Platform once again welcomes the proposal for a European Education Area and is ready to support efforts to make it a reality for all learning sectors.

Contact person:

Brikena Xhomaqi, Director of LLL-P

Andrew Todd, Policy and Advocacy Officer at LLL-P

policy@lllplatform.eu

+32 289 32 515

The [Lifelong Learning Platform](#) (LLL-P) is an umbrella organisation that gathers 41 European networks active in the field of education and training, coming from all EU Member States and beyond. Currently these organisations represent more than 50 000 educational institutions covering all sectors of formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Established in 2005, LLL-P promotes a vision of lifelong learning based on equity, social cohesion, active citizenship and personal development. The Platform works as a space for knowledge exchange between its member networks and uses their expertise to discuss and feed in EU policy-making, making sure that European citizens have their voice heard. In that sense LLLP contributes to a better understanding and dialogue between the grassroots level and European institutions.

⁶ LLLP Position Paper, *Reimagining education for the digital age*, September 2017, http://lllplatform.eu/lll/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/DigitalPaper_final-1.pdf

⁷ LLLP Position Paper, *Future of Europe is a Learning Europe* http://lllplatform.eu/lll/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/LLL-Position_Future-of-Europe.pdf