



# Lifelong Learning

Report on Policy Recommendations  
based on Experiences from Małopolska,  
Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Emilia-Romagna,  
Istanbul, Wales



This Policy Recommendations Report is produced in the frame of the **COMORELP Project**. The project involves 7 partners from 6 countries (Poland, Belgium, France, Italy, the UK and Türkiye). The project aims at extending collaboration framework among key actors coming from different European regions, to develop a transnational interregional Policy Lab (the COMORELP Policy Lab Platform) between educational and training organisations and networks to assist and encourage the transnational exchange of know-how in the design development and evaluation of Lifelong learning initiatives/approaches integrated with Lifelong Guidance.

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# About this Report

This Policy Recommendations Report exploits the lessons learnt throughout the COMORELP project, both in terms of lifelong learning policies shortcomings and improvement opportunities, and in terms of measures suggested to base future regional lifelong learning policies on better access to evidence and participatory monitoring of results.

The Recommendations are the result of interaction within the regional Policy Labs that took place in 5 European regions: **Małopolska (Poland), Emilia-Romagna (Italy), Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (France), Wales (UK) and Istanbul (Türkiye)**, in the first project phase, and of the EU policy labs events that took place later and that aimed to connect regional stakeholders at EU level. Some partners also conducted expert interviews and desk research. The EU policy labs took place during LLLP's [Lifelong Learning week 2022](#) and online in March 2023.

The scope of the Report is Europe as the COMORELP project involved two non-EU regions (Wales and Istanbul), however, when referring to EU policies, the geographical focus is naturally on the 27 EU countries. EU regional programmes do not always involve non-EU regions.

The aims and target groups of the Policy recommendations are:

- Recommendations for EU institutions, stakeholders and regional authorities on how to improve inter-regional cooperation in lifelong learning using Benchmarking for comparison, and intra-regional cooperation with education and training stakeholders.
- Recommendations for regional policymakers and stakeholders on how to better design, implement and evaluate lifelong learning policies, fostering evidence-based approaches.

Both sets of recommendations aim to boost the “collaborative approach” in lifelong learning policies and policymaking by involving different kinds of stakeholders (learners, educators, civil society organisations).

# Background: EU Regional Policies in Lifelong Learning

## The legitimate role of regions in European lifelong learning policies

### Regions have political and administrative competences in national lifelong learning policies

Completing the European Education Area requires a stronger regional focus ([Committee of the regions](#)). It is rather uncommon in EU publications and policies to consider the regional level when considering Member States' policies in lifelong learning. In 2021, a study was published on "The Role of Local and Regional Authorities in Achieving a European Education Area by 2025"<sup>1</sup>. The Study, commissioned by the European Committee of the Regions, is one of the rare publications showing different data on lifelong learning issues based on the regional territories. However, it did not address disparities in regional political competences in education but is more of an inventory of good practices from the regional level. [It meant to highlight the role of Local and Regional Authorities \(LRAs\) in the accomplishment of the European Education Area by 2023](#) through the provision of background information and evidence on:

- The territorial breakdown of the achievements of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) on which the EEA 2025 is rooted;
- The territorial state of play of the targets set in the Communication on achieving the EEA by 2025;
- And the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on ET and the ability of local and regional education systems to cope with it.

This limited focus paid at EU level on regional lifelong learning policies occurs despite the reality that in many Member States, regions have a lot of power and competences in the field of lifelong learning. In many European countries, regions have competences in labour market policies, social inclusion, Vocational and Educational Training (VET), validation of

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<sup>1</sup> See maps pages 7, 8, 9 and 10 in Cavallini, Simona & Soldi, Rossella & Bisogni, Fabio. (2021). The Role of Local and Regional Authorities in Achieving a European Education Area by 2025. 10.2863/763468.

competences etc. This was recalled by a Resolution from the Committee of the Regions in the context of the European Year of Skills (EYS) 2023<sup>2</sup>: 12. Recalls that in accordance to the principle of subsidiarity and from a multilevel governance perspective, in most Member States, local and regional authorities have key responsibilities for education and training policies, and they play a strategic role in the fields of employment policies. Stresses therefore that cities and regions represent the level of governance where operational links between education and training institutions and the labour market are the strongest and therefore, **should be financed, implemented and followed up**.

The EU has three Federal States where, as defined by law and their constitutions, regions have a lot of power and competence: Germany, Austria and Belgium. In those countries, regional authorities can have more competences on lifelong learning than the national level (e.g. Belgium). There are other Member States in which the model is close to federal states where some regions have more autonomy and competence. That is the case in Italy and Spain.

But even in centralised or unitary States, regions can have decentralised powers and competences in lifelong learning policy areas, for instance in France, Italy, Poland, etc. That being said, regions are not always a relevant area for policies (often when the country and/or the population is small), in some countries (e.g., Lithuania), the regional level is not very relevant.

Furthermore, regions have their own internal disparities, and challenges, and this reality calls for policies tailored to their needs<sup>3</sup>. The Committee of the Regions stressed this aspect in its Resolution on the EYS2023: 15. Notes that the skilling and re-skilling uptake across the Union varies widely, leading to skills gaps and skills mismatches across European regions. In this regard, asks the European Commission to further involve local and regional authorities and all relevant actors, as a "one size fits all" approach is not effective.

With all that mentioned points, and considering the many differences and challenges, between the different regions, it would make sense for regions to be involved in EU lifelong learning policies and that EU policies pay more attention to their regional specificities. For instance, the European Commission's European Year of Skills initiative would benefit greatly from getting regions on board: 16. Stresses the need for a permanent dialogue between European, national, regional and local partners in order to identify specific local and regional needs on skills. Reiterates its demand for a more territorial focus when monitoring and assessing the progress of the implementation of the EYS.

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<sup>2</sup> Committee of the regions, Resolution on the European Year of Skills, RESOL-VII/026, 152<sup>nd</sup> plenary session, 30 November-1 December 2022, RESOLUTION on the European year of skills 2023.

<sup>3</sup> See for instance, 2023/2044(INI), 29.6.2023, DRAFT REPORT, on harnessing talent in Europe's regions, (2023/2044(INI)), Committee on Regional Development, Rapporteur: Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro.

For the reasons cited above, in addition to Member States cooperation in lifelong learning, it would make sense to have inter-regional cooperation in lifelong learning and that EU regions be recognised as key stakeholders in EU policies.

## Regional focus in EU policies

Feedback from local and regional authorities is crucial for better EU laws ([CoR Website](#)). With the subsidiarity principle, it is important to recall that the EU does not have *per se*, competence in education and training policies, however a lot of cooperation between Member States takes place using [the Open Method of Coordination](#). Complemented by EU's financial resources (funding), the EU shows important soft law power to influence national and subnational policies and encourage cooperation between Member States and relevant subnational entities.

Local and regional authorities implement 70% of EU laws ([Committee of the regions website](#)). **Dedicated EU policies for regions is not new.** First, there is a European Commission Directorate General dedicated to regions: DG Regio. There is a consultative institution involving regional and local authorities in EU policies: the Committee of the Regions (CoR). The CoR, along with the European Social and Economic Committee are systematically consulted on the proposals of the European Commission. Within the CoR, SEDEC is the Commission that deals with employment, social policies, education, training (including lifelong learning), sports and culture.

CoR also set up a [Network of Regional Hubs](#) (RegHub) with 46 contact points across the EU as a sub-group of the European Commission's Fit for Future (F4F) Platform. The aim of the network is to monitor the implementation of EU policies on the ground and make sure that the voices of hundreds of regional and local stakeholders are taken into account when these policies are evaluated at European level. The network thus adds the local and regional perspective to EU policy making and enlarges its evidence base.

An example of a recent EU policy that is focused on regions and addresses (although to a limited extent) the issue of education in the **European Commission Communication on Harnessing talent in Europe's regions** (launched in January 2023). This has been the outcome of consultations in 2022 to discuss ways to mitigate brain drain in Europe, especially in the context of areas suffering from population decline. The Communication looks at citizens from the perspective of talent development, while the reference to learning and to making certain regions of Europe more attractive is reduced largely to the labour market opportunities and labour market participation. Though a crucial aspect, regions can become more attractive also by providing learners the access to a learning community that promotes lifelong learning and allows for a holistic development.



In addition, due to the wide disparities between regions in terms of economic opportunities, the European Commission has launched the [Talent Booster initiative](#). This initiative aims to support regions in training, retaining, and attracting people with the necessary skills and competences to mitigate the impact of demographic transition. The Talent Booster Mechanism is part of the broader efforts of the European Year of Skills and emphasises tailor-made solutions for various regions, utilising existing EU funds and initiatives. The initiative also foresees a Community of Practice called **The Harnessing Talent Platform (HTP)**. **HTP** is a newly formed knowledge-building and experience-exchange platform, which seeks to support regions in addressing the consequences of the demographic change and in mitigating the challenges associated with the decline of tertiary educated populations across the EU. It ensures that impacted regions receive the guidance, information and knowledge they need to elaborate, consolidate, develop and implement tailored and comprehensive strategies to train, attract and retain talents.

The three main funding instruments for regions are under **EU cohesion policy**: the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and its European Territorial Cooperation strand (Interreg).

**What is new, however, is the more specific recognition of the role and involvement of regions in education and lifelong learning policies, especially the ones supported by the EU.**

In EU cohesion policy, overall, EUR 33.6 billion of EU planned allocations have been directed to measures directly targeting education, training and skills development. The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), which is the main EU instrument for investing in people, stands out as the largest contributor with close to three quarters of the total amount. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), as well as its European Territorial Cooperation strand (Interreg funds), also contribute. As EU cohesion policy operates under shared management (i.e. under the responsibility of both the Commission and Member States), ESF+, ERDF and Interreg also facilitate further public investments in education, training and skills development. With the additional Member State contributions to the budget of EU cohesion policy programmes through co-financing, the total planned direct support for education and training increases to EUR 48.2 billion.

Before 2021, education, training and lifelong learning could have been funded by the EU cohesion policy, in particular thanks to the European Social Funds, but cooperation among regions on lifelong learning only became a new priority (i.e. new objective) of Interreg in the 2021-2027 period. Therefore, until recently, very few Interreg projects were addressing education or lifelong learning. Those that were addressing it were related to topics such as employment, SME training, and skills ecosystems. Starting from 2021, Interreg's support for education, training, and lifelong learning is mainly programmed under Policy Objective 4 "A



more social and inclusive Europe." However, investments in the field may also occur under other policy objectives, particularly under Policy Objective 1 "A more competitive and smarter Europe" and Policy Objective 5 "A Europe closer to citizens". Relevant support is also envisaged under the Interreg-specific Objective "Better Cooperation Governance", supporting institutional capacity building for public authorities, local stakeholders, civil society and universities.

Interreg is also funding a platform fostering networking and peer learning between local and regional authorities: the Interreg Policy learning platform. The platform organises peer learning activities, webinars and peer reviews among policy-makers from LRAs. It supports project matching for Interreg applications. Until now, it had not organised any activities on education and lifelong learning considering it is a new area and objective.

Despite these examples, results from the 2021 Regional and Local Barometer indicate that **88% of LRAs representatives consider that they should have a bigger say in EU policies**. 90% of respondents think it is "very" or "fairly important" for LRAs to increase their influence on national policy-making. If we take the drafting of National Recovery and Resilience Plans as an example, this is very apparent. Only 1% of the Barometer respondents indicated they were 'fully involved' in the drafting, and only 9% were 'partially involved'<sup>4</sup>: **that leaves out around 90% of local and regional authorities who were not involved at all!**

Despite their interest, regions' involvement in EU policies is limited and not systematic. The CoR's contribution is only consultative, and the institution has limited resources to engage in EU policies.

## Towards more evidence-based policies

### Evidence-based lifelong learning policies

Inspired by the quadruple helix approach which describes the interactions among university, industry, government, public and environment within a knowledge economy, there is a trend towards more evidence-based policies<sup>5</sup> at the EU level. It starts with collecting more data,

<sup>4</sup> Regional and Local Barometer and EU Annual Report on the State of Regions and Cities 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Evidence-informed policymaking refers to an approach to policymaking that aims at informing policy deliberations and decisions with the best available evidence. Evidence in general refers to "data, information, and knowledge from multiple sources, including quantitative data such as statistics and measurements, qualitative data such as opinions, stakeholder input, conclusions of evaluations, as well as scientific and expert advice". European Commission, Better Regulation Toolbox, November 2021.

connecting with scientific research, and using the findings of the research to design policies<sup>6</sup>. For instance, a Commission staff working document (2022) on “Supporting and connecting policymaking in the Member States with scientific research” called: [to make connections and reinforce trust between scientists, policymakers, stakeholders, and the general public](#).

Research conducted by specific countries can be particularly valuable. As an example, we can look at 'The Human Capital Balance Sheet' (BKL), which has been implemented by the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP) and Jagiellonian University in Poland since 2009. This initiative encompasses cross-sectional research, providing general information about the labour market, as well as industry-specific research in three key sectors: finance, IT, and tourism. The purpose of this research is to deepen our understanding of qualifications and professional needs within these industries, especially those for which Sectoral Competence Councils have been established.

On the policy side, strengthening the capacity of public administration for better-informed policymaking is one issue that the Technical Support Instrument (TSI) managed by DG REFORM seeks to address. The instrument, with a budget of EUR 864 million for 2021-2027, provides tailor-made technical expertise to EU Member States to design and implement structural reforms. TSI projects combine a mix of expert-led diagnostic assessments of capacity, with the development of policy recommendations and concrete networking and capacity building measures (mutual learning exercises, staff exchanges, training, pilot schemes). However, while this is being funded by the Cohesion Policy, there is little information on the extent to which it supports regional and local authorities (compared to Member States and national ministries).

In the field of lifelong learning policies, there are also examples of increasing evidence-based approaches. Examples include the integration of more indicators in the EU education and training monitoring e.g. equity indicators. The recent Progress Report on the European Education Area, from 2022, has also put forward the work that the European Commission Working Groups have made on setting up indicators to measure the impact of equity in academic achievement. [Such initiatives serve as an example for how an increase of evidence can open up new policy pathways as quality education is now linked with equity at EU level.](#)

Another example is the launch of a **Learning Lab on Investing in Quality Education and Training** by the European Commission with the Joint Research Centre. This Lab promotes the use of education policy evaluation practices in the EU. It helps improve evidence and identify ways to invest in education policies to ensure that they produce better learning outcomes and equity. The Learning Lab can support policymakers and evaluators with knowledge,

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<sup>6</sup> SWD (2022) 346 - 25/10/2022, Commission staff working document, Supporting and connecting policymaking in the Member States with scientific research.

tools, methods and resources to make their public spending on education and training cost-effective and encourage an evidence-informed approach to policy design and implementation in education. While the Lab claims to be [bringing together the European Commission and the relevant authorities in the interested EU Member States promote evaluation of education policies tailored to specific local, regional and national needs, and encourage their use in policymaking.](#)

To this date, it seems to have mostly involved national policy-makers from Ministries. A similar approach was taken by the [European Commission with the Structured Dialogue](#) on digital education and skills. The initiative, which ran over 2022-2023, foresaw collaboration and exchanges of experiences in policymaking from all EU Member States in order to improve the way digital technologies are integrated in education and training and to improve the digital skills levels of all. Each Member States nominated a National Coordinator, who spearheaded a whole-of-government approach to the engagement of Member States with this process while also setting up national coalitions for digital skills. Though focusing on a niche side of education and training, and limiting this collaboration to Member States, this process also stands testament to efforts at EU level to build the evidence base on policy-making in education and training.

Another challenge is that data is not systematically available at regional level, as shown on [Eurostat datasets](#). Educational attainment, participation in education and training, or early leaving rates are available for the regional level while it appears that data related to skills (language skills, digital skills) or more specific data on the participation in different forms of learning (non-formal or informal) is only available at national level. Having more data available at regional level (collected EU-wide) can support EU regional evidence-based policies (e.g. [Cohesion policy](#)).

Evidence-based policies to be successful must also be a co-creation exercise not only involving stakeholders but also beneficiaries in the policies<sup>7</sup>. Examples of such practices – involving the beneficiaries - are less common.

## Improving monitoring and evaluation at regional level

28. Highlights that education, training and VET should be continuously updated and framed by a future-oriented skills perspective. LRAs can help establish monitoring systems as well as skills anticipation and matching mechanisms at local and regional level. (Committee of the Regions, Resolution on the European Year of Skills, 2022)

<sup>7</sup> Mangiaracina, A., Kefallinou, A., Kyriazopoulou, M. and Watkins, A., 2021. 'Learners' Voices in Inclusive Education Policy Debates' *Education Sciences*, 2021, 11 (10), 599.

The main focus of the COMORELP project is on how to improve benchmarking as a collaborative and comparative endeavour between EU regions in the field of lifelong learning. It looks into how to improve monitoring and evaluation at the regional level. Information is quite scarce on this topic, but our desk research led to finding out about similar initiatives in related areas that could inspire further initiatives in the field of lifelong learning.

There is an initiative by the EU to involve regions in the monitoring of the SDGs. the pilot project "[Monitoring the SDGs in the EU regions – Filling the data gaps – REGIONS2030](#)", aims at providing a framework for regions to monitor the SDGs in their territory. The project was initiated by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre, in collaboration with EC's Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy and Eurostat, with the support of the European Parliament and the CoR, proposed by MEP Petros Kokkalis in 2021, and approved by the European Commission in 2022. It is called a "Voluntary Subnational Review" and involved 10 EU regions in a pilot project.

Similar initiatives could take place in the field of lifelong learning policies. For instance, in the context of the European Education Area. Regional stakeholders need to be trained as well on how to better monitor and evaluate their policies.

# Policy Recommendations

## European recommendations

**Share more public information on how lifelong learning is addressed by the Cohesion policy and funds given the programme's extensive budget for education and training:**

1. Define clearer responsibilities and role in DG REGIO for policy-makers' portfolio on innovation, skills, and lifelong learning to better build synergies among those policies (e.g. between the partnerships for regional innovation, skills ecosystems and other DG EMPL and DG EAC policies on lifelong learning issues).
2. Include better guidance on how Member States can involve regional education and training stakeholders in policy-making initiatives under Cohesion Policy.
3. More information and data, research and publications to bring more knowledge and transparency on regional lifelong learning policies and cooperation.

**Increase local and regional authorities' participation in EU lifelong learning policies:**

4. Raise awareness of regional stakeholders on how they can cooperate with regional authorities in Interreg-funded projects.
5. Provide more funding opportunities for regional education and training stakeholders to access funds to collaborate with regional authorities.
6. Give more visibility to the Committee of the Regions and more visibility on its role and contribution in EU policies.
7. Ensure more cooperation of the Committee of the Regions with stakeholders.

**Better involvement of regions in EU skills-related initiatives:**

8. As recommended by the CoR in its Resolution<sup>8</sup>, include this institution as an observer of EYS2023 national coordinators meeting.
9. Ensure and follow-up national coordinators' involvement of regional stakeholders in the EYS2023.

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<sup>8</sup> 20. Welcomes the proposal of setting up meetings of national coordinators to organise the running of the EYS, while ensuring that local and regional authorities have a say in the framing, implementation and assessment of the Year; proposes that the CoR be included, as observer, to the national coordinators' meetings (Committee of the regions, Resolution on the European Year of Skills, 2022).

10. As part of the EU Skills Agenda, follow-up on the flagship Action 3 on the development of National skills strategies using a whole-of-government approach and explore how regions are involved (and could be better involved) in such strategies.
11. Consider broadening the implementation of funding and co-creation tools, such as the Technical Support Instrument and the Learning Lab, to regional authorities as well.
12. A Study on how regions approach skills strategies linking with the work of the OECD on stakeholder's engagement could be an important support to LRAs.

**More EU support for inter-regional cooperation activities:**

13. Encourage the participation of regional stakeholders in the activities organised by the Interreg Policy Learning Platform such as for the peer reviews.
14. Support, by using EU funding, new initiatives such as the organisation inter-regional and regional policy labs on lifelong learning policies (inspired by the JRC approach).
15. Disseminate tools like the ones developed by COMORELP project to improve policy monitoring and evaluation at regional level.
16. Promote specifically regional cooperation in the field of lifelong learning.
17. Improve cooperation between beneficiaries of ESF+, Erasmus+, Interreg to exchange good practices, knowledge, tools and lessons learned from the projects developed.

**More support from the EU for reforms in lifelong learning at regional level to help achieve the 60% EU target in participation of adults in learning (among other targets):**

18. Raise awareness of regional authorities on DG Reform's technical support instrument and support them in accessing and using it.
19. Provide guidance to regional authorities on how to implement EU initiatives or Council Recommendations on education and training topics, namely providing them with evidence on how Individual Learning Accounts, Micro-credentials or Blueprint alliances for sectoral cooperation on skills have been implemented in other regions.

**More support of the EU to capacity-building opportunities for staff in public administrations on how to manage partnerships, collaborations, etc.:**

20. Regional authorities do not always have sufficient resources for training and continuous professional development.
21. Regions need support and training on how to involve stakeholders in the design, implementation and evaluation of their policies.
22. Provide resources to JRC to also provide training to regional policy-makers on competence framework for policy makers.
23. Provide more visibility to the work which is being done under the [European Community of Practice on Partnership](#) (ECOPP) and incentives for its members to implement its principles.

## Regional recommendations

The following recommendations resulted from the consultation and work with stakeholders in the five European regions in focus in the project: Małopolska (Poland), Emilia-Romagna (Italy), Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (France), Wales (UK) and Istanbul (Türkiye). However, it is important to note that most of those recommendations are also relevant for other regions.

### Małopolska (Poland)

1. It is important to strengthen the integration and more effective coordination of actions for the development of lifelong learning in the region. Creating flexible solutions that allow for the development and coordination of regional lifelong learning policies is essential, overcoming limitations associated with silos and weak collaboration among different elements of the lifelong learning system (public administration and its agencies, educational and training institutions, labour market institutions, NGOs, businesses).
2. It is important to raise awareness and engage regional decision-makers in the development of lifelong learning, highlighting the complexity and significance of these processes for the economic and social development of the region. At the same time, efforts should be directed towards changing the legal framework to enhance their autonomy and decision-making authority in shaping and implementing policies and solutions in the area of human capital development in Małopolska.
3. There is a need to strengthen and promote a holistic approach to education, focused on the integral development of residents of the region at different ages and life situations, while considering all aspects of life – professional, social, and cultural. Formal education should further prepare individuals for lifelong learning, foster learning skills, and enhance motivation. This primarily involves emphasising skill development over knowledge transmission. It is essential to raise awareness among educators, directing their attention to the diversity of learning forms and competencies.
4. Emphasising the role of lifelong learning in economic and social development is crucial, as it fosters awareness and engagement in lifelong learning development among decision-makers, employers, and other stakeholders. Strengthening the collaboration between the education system and the business sector, particularly in the area of vocational education, is also necessary.
5. It is important to disseminate knowledge about available services, counselling, and institutions that provide them, as well as the role of lifelong career counselling in planning and development. This requires, among other things, integrating related services: competency assessment, training, validation, and providing financial and human resources to increase the accessibility of guidance for adults.
6. It is important to conduct evaluation activities to further shape evidence-based policies and solutions. Continuing to work with the tool developed in the COMORELP project and



creating a platform will facilitate both analysing the knowledge gained about regional situations and enabling the exchange of best practices.

7. Effective identification of educationally excluded or at-risk groups (e.g., persons with disabilities, migrants - currently particularly refugees from Ukraine -, caregiving women, children, and youth from families facing various challenges) is essential. It is necessary to develop forms of support for skills development that enable overcoming existing barriers and leveraging one's potential, thereby enhancing the region's growth.
8. It is crucial to remember that the comprehensive nature of lifelong learning policy requires efficient intersectoral and interinstitutional collaboration at every level of its implementation. In practice, this implies the need to strengthen cooperation and enhance its appeal to lifelong learning partners, as well as initiating regional activities within international bodies dedicated to lifelong learning.
9. It is essential to initiate efforts towards developing systemic solutions that ensure the growth of human capital and the alignment of skills, competencies, and qualifications of the region's residents with the evolving needs of the economic and social environment. Simultaneously, conduct an analysis of the possibilities and sources of financing lifelong learning activities that are independent of EU funds, while testing various models in this regard. For instance, this could involve establishing public-private partnerships at the local and regional levels or outsourcing public tasks to non-profit institutions.
10. Regular identification of issues that pose barriers to the implementation of activities related to the competence development of various groups of residents (e.g., different age groups, professional backgrounds, etc.) is essential. This involves introducing proven and effective best practices and legal solutions, such as the "learning by doing" approach, on-the-job learning, or the employment of young individuals.

### **Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (France)**

1. Integrate a clearly identified approach to lifelong learning into regional public policies so that lifelong learning is not segmented.
2. Move from a "lifelong training" to a "lifelong learning" approach.
3. Give back to the regional institution a steering role in the coordination of field actors of lifelong learning by giving them a space for expression and exchange and for sharing about challenges and innovation in their daily practice.
4. Ensure a better visibility of the training and learning offer from the user's point of view by offering reliable and up-to-date mapping of all the actors concerned in the territory.
5. Shift from a supply approach (funds) to a beneficiary-centred approach.
6. Encourage and accompany the persons in the use of their individual learning accounts (ILAs).
7. Ensure and monitor the good quality of the training eligible to the use of the ILAs at the local level.

### **Emilia-Romagna (Italy)**

1. Re-launch the integrative concept of lifelong learning, seldom understood, and promote a regional partnership for lifelong learning to face the multiple challenges of transformations (inclusion, digital, green).
2. Establish a permanent coordination mechanism among the different authorities in charge of different levels and kinds of education and training, giving regions a core role between State and local authorities.
3. Involve private sector, civil society and learners representative organisations in the planning, implementation and evaluation of lifelong learning.
4. Set up a regional Policy Lab on lifelong learning, participating in international benchmarking and peer learning initiatives, possibly under CoR or Interreg Europe framework.
5. Encourage and support teachers training and inter-sector mobility of teachers and trainers.
6. Increase efforts to ensure outreach to all sections of the population.
7. Invest in the learners' agency and capacity to structure an integrated learning path through personalised information and guidance services.
8. Provide help to learners in the choice of and access to learning opportunities, including informal learning.

### **Istanbul (Türkiye)**

1. By means of addressing individuals and societies, lifelong learning is directly related to the strategic growth and development of regions and countries. For this reason, when talking about regional lifelong learning policies, it should not be considered separately from strategic and sustainable growth. Increasing participation in lifelong learning through effective policies and effective collaborations will bring beneficial results for both the institutions operating in the region, the general situation of the region and ultimately the country. Below, the recommendations are presented with this perspective.
2. Define the regions both as geographical areas and also in terms of identity, needs, strengths, and areas to improve.
3. Define the actors and leader institutions in the regions and promote cooperation by assigning roles or by giving incentives.
4. Promote top strategic development documents/reports/action plans and apply them to regions by specifying goals for each region (in line with the identity of the region). Also assign roles to actors in the region (private sector, NGOs, universities, governmental bodies, etc.)
5. Improve the tools or strategies for monitoring and evaluation (for monitoring the cooperation between the institutions, monitoring the participation in lifelong learning and to assess the outcomes).
6. Provide announcements, campaigns through audience-appropriate channels to make lifelong learning a culture over time (e.g. social media, posters, SMS, handouts). In order

to ensure the participation of individuals, it is necessary to inform them of opportunities. Individuals should know the institutions in their region and learn to look for opportunities.

7. Review and adapt international good practices.
8. Collect good practices from regions and help them to transfer knowledge.

### **Wales (United Kingdom)**

1. Make lifelong learning policy cross sectorial and multi-disciplinary. Tackle the challenge that lifelong learning is currently fragmented and siloed by making an overall policy that spans across sectors (formal education, work-based learning, informal learning etc).
2. Make the definition of lifelong learning as wide as possible. It has in recent years been expanded from 18+ to 16+. However, it is recognised that a culture of lifelong learning starts earlier and before formal education years.
3. Rebalance policy priorities to focus less on learning for employment to all aspects of learning. Wellbeing, health (social prescribing) and loneliness are all aspects that should be explored further in the field of lifelong learning.
4. Focus lifelong learning policies less on entitlements and accreditation and more on increasing (or tackling the decrease) of uptake of lifelong learning. Regions can add value by focusing on larger campaigns to recruit learners.
5. More focus is needed on international collaboration and learning across regions nationally and internationally.
6. Less focus on current skills shortage in the labour market and more focus on planning for future needs that are not known yet. This requires an agile approach to lifelong learning policy.
7. Placing all lifelong learning under one umbrella, like the new Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) will do, brings big hopes for lifelong learning in Wales. This is an innovative approach that other regions across Europe can learn from.

