



**LIFELONG
LEARNING**
INTEREST GROUP

25 September 2019

Report

SKILLS FOR LIFE,
SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

SKILLS FOR LIFE, SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?	3
FOREWORD.....	4
VIEWS FROM THE INSTITUTIONS	4
THE STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVE	6
CONCLUDING REMARKS	7



Initiated by EAEA and Lifelong Learning Platform together with a number of MEPs, the European Parliament's Interest Group on Lifelong Learning brings together civil society representatives and MEPs to discuss key issues connected to lifelong learning with strong emphasis on adult education.

An important reason to form the Interest Group on Lifelong Learning was the new Juncker's European Commission and its priorities. We stand for a comprehensive and trans-sectorial lifelong learning approach, and want to stress that education is not only about employment, but is linked to personal development, social inclusion, active citizenship, and much more.

The interest group works as a "watchdog" to what the European Union is doing on lifelong learning.

FOREWORD

This second meeting of the Lifelong Learning Interest Group in 2019 was opened by MEP Julie Ward, host, who expressed her passion for promoting lifelong learning and skills for life. So many people, including herself, were failed by the traditional education system so without networks dedicated to lifelong there would be many more failed people. Promoting skills for life also means seeing the importance of breaking down barriers and trying to have a broader perspective on what lifelong learning actually is about.

VIEWS FROM THE INSTITUTIONS

Johanna Koponen, representative of the Finnish Presidency, stressed that learning should take place continuously and that it will be a priority for the Presidency, which will adopt Council Conclusions on the topic. It is the individual's responsibility to take part in learning. We also need to make sure the competences developed through learning are visible. We need both resources and people to make lifelong learning happen. Ms Koponen concluded by expressing the Presidency's aim to take synergies between sectors further, which is why there will be a joint debate of EYCS (education) and ECOFIN (finance) Council in November to discuss the importance of a strong economic base for education and training.

Mónika Képe-Holmberg, DG EAC, commented that the world of work is completely changing, so skill needs are changing. Studies by Cedefop and others show a demand by employers for social skills and ability to adapt to change. It is increasingly important for people to acquire skills to anticipate changes, so there is a shift towards critical thinking and problem solving. All citizens need the competences for a globalized world. This also requires a change in the way that skills are provided, through lifelong and lifewide learning.

MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen stressed the need for Member States to see the value of European cooperation and pooling of resources when it comes to skills and lifelong learning policies.



MS JOHANNA KOPONEN, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FINNISH PRESIDENCY

She added that it is a macroeconomic issue and so mechanisms such as the European Semester have a role to play.

Francesca Caena, Joint Research Centre, presented the work carried out so far on the "LifeComp" framework, a new framework that is being developed for the key competence 'personal, social and learning to learn' competence. An overview of the process of developing the framework and the elements included are available here.

The work started in autumn last year and the final framework will be presented next January. "Lifecomp" has the advantage of straddling education, employment and lifelong learning and one of the main themes is support for implementation in different contexts, including support for trainers and how to implement in curricula.

Roman Horvath, DG GROW, indicated that skills are high on the agenda of the current Commission and expects it will remain the case for the next one. It is about improving the human capital basis. The expertise of DG GROW is skills for specific sectors and industries, for example, the construction sector. He referred to initiatives such as the alliance for Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills and the European Alliance for Apprenticeships. A detailed overview of DG GROW's work in this area is available here. The Commission wants to support the development of good practices and bring them to European level. A balance between developing 'hard' and 'soft' skills is important, the current workforce is lacking the latter and this affects their productivity.

Following the first panel discussion the moderator **Lucie Susova, Lifelong Learning Platform**, expressed the hope that the new Commission will mainstream skills issues holistically instead of having silos between DGs where they find it difficult to cooperate. Panagiotis Chatzimichail, EEE-YFU, questioned the proposed title of the new Commissioner for 'youth and innovation', expressing the view that the EU's policies seem to be more and more about training the future workforce. Ms Koponen said we should look beyond the title per se to see the work the Commission has done to put the citizen at the centre, including the first principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights. Ms Képe-Holmberg highlighted that for DG EAC and in cooperation between Member States it is clear that education is not only about the labour market, given that the ET2020 framework deals with issues such as inclusion, inequalities and innovation in education.



FRANCESCA CAENA, MÓNIKA KÉPE-HOLMBERG, MEP JULIE WARD AND LUCIE SUSOVA

THE STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVE

Kicking-off the second panel discussion, with a view from stakeholders, **Gina Ebner, EAEA**, expressed concern about the estimated 70 million people in Europe who lack basic skills. The picture is more complicated than that, however, when we consider the fact that some well-educated people still lack digital skills. She referred to EAEA's "Life Skills for Europe" project which looks at the broader capacities people might need for daily life, such as managing personal finances, parenting or health literacy, and developing a framework for that which also includes a progressive dimension. The



framework is designed for adult education organisations to use and adapt to their needs. It is important to start with the learner's needs and build everything else around them.

Mirela Mazalu, European University College Association (EucA), explained that soft skills needs and creating personalised learning pathways for students are important. Educators' motivation to engage in the teaching of soft skills is a major factor - what often discourages them is the

fact that it is a time-intensive activity, it requires a lot of time for the necessary teacher-student interaction. It is recommended to provide educators with frameworks, rubrics and training based on a rigorous, scientific approach. For institutions to support the development of these skills it would be helpful to reflect on how to reinvent learning to think in a more multidisciplinary way, taking into account digital technologies and insights from psychology and neuroscience. There are many discoveries still to make.

Margarida Segard, European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training (EVBB), stressed that because society is changing and because of developments such as industry 4.0 and artificial intelligence, we need to put life skills at the centre of all discussions. It is not possible to go further on technical skills without life skills. Without them, you cannot be happy in your work. They are becoming the 'hard' skills. There is already a long list but they should include green skills and sustainability. These must be key competences. She also highlighted the need to better connect the European and national levels in order to truly foster innovation.

Bart Verschueren, EU Sport Link / International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA), emphasised the idea of physical literacy explaining that sports help to include people in society

and promote well-being. There are positive attributes that you can develop through sport and transfer to daily life. It is an essential part of lifelong learning. It could be included in "LifeComp".

Fabrice Gonet, European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL), highlighted that learning mobility is a transformative experience which helps to develop life skills, including multilingual competences. Developing these skills is a lifelong process. For this reason we need to have collaboration between the formal and non-formal education sectors, which can be difficult as formal institutions often struggle to put in place external cooperation.

Concerning reactions from the audience, **Bessie Dendrinis from the European Civil Society Platform for Multilingualism (ECSPM)** emphasised the need to consider plurilingual competences in the debate on life skills. Radu Szekely, Romanian Ministry for Education, commented that perhaps we should focus resources on soft skills and leave the hard skills to the industry. Alexandre Ginoyer, World Committee for Lifelong Learning (WCLLL), asked how it is possible to have cooperation between formal and non-formal learning and to accompany the educators in this process. Gina Ebner, EAEA, replied that the combination of formal and non-formal education can be achieved by mixing methodologies and sectors, for example, using non-formal methods in the formal system. Teachers need to be prepared for that. We need to bring learners into a system which is more adapted to them, including in schools and universities.



CONCLUDING REMARKS

Ms Susova said that the Lifelong Learning Platform is committed to keeping the dialogue between institutions and stakeholders on life skills going, and passed the final word to the host **MEP Julie Ward**. Ms Ward called for caution about the discourse on individuals' responsibility to manage their own learning because some people have no idea where to start. They need to reach a certain stage of confidence before feeling ready to take responsibility for their learning. She underlined that learning can happen in so many different places and for some people this is rarely in the classroom. We have to continue demonstrating and sharing stories about that. Moreover, learning goes beyond borders which is why we should defend the European project and the right to multiple identities. Finally, Ms Ward warned against the marketisation of education, which risks undermining the chances of people developing all the skills they need to be the innovators and problem-solvers of the future.



Initiated by EAEA and Lifelong Learning Platform together with a number of MEPs, the Interest Group on Lifelong Learning brings together civil society representatives and MEPs to discuss key issues connected to lifelong learning with strong emphasis on adult education.

An important reason to form the Interest Group on Lifelong Learning is the European Commission and its priorities. We stand for a comprehensive and trans-sectorial lifelong learning approach, and want to stress that education is not only about employment, but is linked to personal development, social inclusion, active citizenship, and much more. The interest group works as a «watchdog» to what the European Union is doing.

The group aims to fight inequalities and discrimination in education in order to reach the Europe 2020 and Education and Training 2020 headline targets and contribute to the EU growth strategy this way.

Visit our website
<http://www.lll-interestgroup.eu/>

MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT WHO SUPPORT THE INTEREST GROUP

Sirpa Pietikainen, EPP, Finland
Julie Ward, S&D, United-Kingdom
Dace Melbarde, ECR, Latvia
Günther Sidl, S&D, Austria
Brando Benifei, S&D, Italy
István Ujhelyi, S&D, Hungary
Roberta Metsola, EPP, Malta
Milan Zver, EPP, Slovenia
Jill Evans, Greens, United-Kingdom
Konstantinos Arvantis, GUE/NGL, Greece
Claire Fow, Non-attached, UK
Radka Maxová, Renew Europe, Czech Republic

An initiative coordinated by the European Association for Adult Education (EAEA) and the Lifelong Learning Platform (LLLP)



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS



EUROPEAN CIVIL SOCIETY FOR EDUCATION

and the financial support of the European Union



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union