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### OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
No. prev. doc.:	13616/21
Subject:	Council Resolution on a new European agenda for adult learning 2021-2030

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Delegations will find in the annex the Council Resolution on a new European agenda for adult learning 2021-2030, as approved by the Council (Education, Youth, Culture and Sport) at its meeting on 29-30 November 2021.

**Council Resolution on a new European agenda for adult learning 2021-2030****THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,****WHEREAS:**

It is crucial to address the future positively by working on the basis of adult learning needs and having in place formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities capable of providing all the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to create an inclusive, sustainable, socially just and more resilient Europe. As we navigate ever more complex and frequent transitions (particularly the digital and green transitions), and address current and future challenges (such as climate change, demography, technology, health, etc.), adult learning, as an important part of lifelong learning, can contribute to making economies and societies stronger and more resilient. It is also important to provide the necessary conditions for people to be agents of change through the choices they make.

**RECALLING THAT**

1. At the 2017 Gothenburg Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth, the EU leaders jointly proclaimed the European Pillar of Social Rights, establishing the right to quality and inclusive education and training and lifelong learning for all as its first principle, and, as its fourth principle, the right to receive support for job search, training and re-qualification, as well as the right to transfer social protection and training entitlements during professional transitions,

2. The **European Council** conclusions of 14 December 2017<sup>1</sup> singled out education as key to building inclusive and cohesive societies and to sustaining European competitiveness; education and training were thus put at the heart of the European political agenda for the first time,
3. In the EU Strategic Agenda 2019-2024 EU leaders agreed to step up investments in people's skills and education,
4. The EU leaders met at the Porto Social Summit on 7 May 2021 to deepen the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights by putting education and skills at the centre of political action,
5. In the June 2021 **European Council** conclusions EU leaders welcomed the EU headline targets on jobs, skills and poverty reduction set out in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, in line with the Porto Declaration, including the EU-level target of at least 60 % of adults participating in learning every year by 2030,
6. The relevant background documents, as set out in Annex III to this Resolution, should be taken into account.

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<sup>1</sup> **EUCO 19/1/17 REV 1.**

## AND TAKING NOTE OF

7. The renewed European agenda for adult learning (EAAL), which was adopted by the Council of the European Union in 2011 in order to continue, complement and consolidate work in the field of adult learning under the four strategic objectives identified by the Council in the ‘ET2020’ strategic framework,
8. The Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults (2016), which underlines the specific needs of adults, particularly among low-qualified, unemployed and vulnerable groups, who require additional attention and support to improve their basic skills and enable progress,
9. The Report ‘Achievements under the Renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning’ (2019), which takes stock of achievements in the period 2011-2018. It also identifies emerging topics and priorities that could be taken into account in the post-2020 period, including continued work on governance, supply and take-up, flexibility and access as well as quality assurance,
10. The European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (2020) proposes, among others, Action 8 ‘Skills for Life’, which envisages work by the Commission and Member States on new priorities for the European Agenda for Adult Learning with the aim towards building comprehensive, quality and inclusive adult learning systems,

11. The Council Recommendation on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (2020) and the Osnabrück Declaration on vocational education and training (2020) call for the further development of VET as an attractive and high-quality pathway for jobs and life, and raise and foster awareness among adults that learning is a lifelong endeavour,
12. The Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond envisages European cooperation in education and training for the period up to 2030 (2021–2030), to be conducted in an inclusive, holistic and lifelong learning perspective, and further states that lifelong learning includes all forms and levels of education and training from early childhood education and care to adult learning, including vocational education and training (VET) and higher education.

### **CONSIDERS THAT**

13. Member States of the European Union have diverse models of adult learning, depending on their national, regional and local needs, circumstances, policies, strategies and traditions. Reports show that due to the COVID-19 pandemic adjustments of adult learning and learning environments have further diversified adult learning practices throughout Europe<sup>2</sup>,

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<sup>2</sup> See for example the following publications: Adult Learning and COVID-19: challenges and opportunities (ET2020 Working Group on Adult Learning, 2020), Adult learning and education and COVID-19 (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2020) and Adult Learning and COVID-19: How much informal and non-formal learning are workers missing? (OECD, 2021).

14. The Education and Training Monitor 2020<sup>3</sup> reports that participation in adult learning is low, with an EU average of only 10.8 % of adults (women: 11.9 %, men: 9.8 %) aged 25-64 participating in adult learning in the last four weeks preceding the 2019 survey. Furthermore, Eurostat 2020 data show that participation in adult learning is lower than before the COVID-19 pandemic, with an EU average of only 9.2 % of adults (women: 10.0 %, men: 8.3 %) aged 25-64 participating in adult learning in the last four weeks preceding the survey,
15. The Eurydice report ‘Adult education and training in Europe: Building inclusive pathways to skills and qualifications’ (2021) shows that around one in five adults in the EU have not completed upper secondary education and that a substantial proportion of adults in Europe is affected by low levels of literacy, numeracy and/or digital skills. Countries also vary in terms of adult participation in education and training; however, a common feature is that most learning activities in which adults take part have a non-formal character.

## **RECOGNISES THAT**

16. A new learning culture should emphasise the relevance of basic skills for all and of continuously acquiring relevant knowledge, skills and competences, at all levels within formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts, throughout one’s life. Individuals with a developed lifelong learning mindset are better equipped to adapt to new circumstances and to develop skills they need for jobs as well as for full participation in society and personal development,

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<sup>3</sup> Education and Training Monitor 2020. Teaching and learning in a digital age, SWD (2020) 234 final. Data source: Eurostat, EU Labour Force Survey (a change of methodology is foreseen in 2022).

17. Adult learning has a special place within the strategic priority of the Strategic framework for European cooperation towards the European Education Area – ‘Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality for all’, which is now more urgently needed than ever, due to the challenges of recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and the need for resilience, changing labour market needs, skills mismatch, the green and digital transitions and the persistently large proportion of adults in Europe with low basic knowledge, skills and competences,
18. The fragmentation of adult learning between sectors, policy areas and legal frameworks needs to be addressed. There is a need for dialogue between all parties to ensure that there is a shared vision for strengthened adult learning provision, where the social dimension of adult learning, as well as employability, are considered. Since individuals, employers and the state benefit from adult learning, the responsibility and contribution of each party should be recognised,
19. It is of the utmost importance to foster greater awareness among employers that adult learning contributes to the quality of work processes and outcomes, as well as to the quality of workers’ engagement with their work. Adult learning can contribute to productivity, competitiveness, social inclusion, gender equality, creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. It is an important factor in incentivising employers to take a more active role in supporting upskilling and reskilling and in enhancing the employability and labour market transitions of their employees on an ongoing basis. It is therefore important that a learning culture is created in all workplaces, that learning opportunities are planned and organised in the workplace, and should be promoted and supported by all stakeholders,
20. However, adult learning needs to go beyond the development of work-related skills. It is also important to foster greater awareness among the general population about the importance and benefits of participation in lifelong learning. Adult learning should be interlinked with all types and levels of education and training, including higher education, through flexible formal, non-formal and informal pathways,

21. Adult learning has the power to enhance life and work opportunities for adults, regardless of their socio-demographic and personal circumstances. Individual responsibility for career development should be considered as part of professional lifelong guidance and support. In addition, adult learning can contribute to active citizenship and community learning. It also supports personal, social and professional development and fulfilment, health and wellbeing, in accordance with the individual's current and future needs, talents and aspirations. Adult learning plays a crucial part in responding to current and future challenges and opportunities in life and at work, leading to sustainable communities,
22. The impacts of the demographic change, as well as the green and digital transitions, require new approaches to facilitate the participation of adults, including those not inclined to attend learning activities and the 65+ age group, in adult learning in order to support their full integration and participation in society.

#### **UNDERLINES THAT**

23. Adult learning needs a holistic approach including inter-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration, and effective coordination at European, national, regional and local levels, respecting the diverse models of adult learning in the European Union and fully respecting the specific competences of the different policy levels.

#### **ACCORDINGLY, AGREES THAT**

24. In the period up to and including 2030, the overall objective of the new European agenda for adult learning 2021-2030 (NEAAL 2030) will be to increase and improve the provision, promotion and take-up of formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities for all,



25. The NEAAL 2030's main priority areas ensure continuity of the work and further development of adult learning, as outlined below and detailed in Annex I hereto:

- governance,
- supply and take-up of lifelong learning opportunities,
- accessibility and flexibility,
- quality, equity, inclusion and success in adult learning,
- the green and digital transitions.

**FURTHER AGREES, HAVING REGARD TO THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY AND THE NATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE MEMBER STATES, ON THE FOLLOWING IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUMENTS:**

26. *Open method of coordination (OMC)*: In the period up to 2030, the Member States and the Commission will work closely together to take stock of the work done at technical level, evaluating the process and its outcomes by means of OMC and by taking ownership of the process within their respective area of competence, at national, regional or European level. This should be done in consultation with the Working Group on Adult Learning set up as part of the Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030) and the adult learning national coordinators' network.
27. *Mutual learning*: Mutual learning is a key element of the NEAAL 2030 as it provides the opportunity to identify and learn from good practices in different Member States. Mutual learning, with the involvement of relevant stakeholders, will be carried out by such means as peer learning activities, peer counselling and exchanges of best policies and practices, conferences, seminars, high-level forums and expert groups, as well as through studies and analysis, networks (including web-based) and other forms of dissemination and through clear visibility of the outcomes.

28. *Effective governance*: The NEAAL 2030 is an integral part of the Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030).
29. *Monitoring of the process*: The periodic monitoring of progress towards the EU-level targets<sup>4</sup> through EU-level indicators (detailed in Annex II hereto) applied in the systematic collection and analysis of internationally comparable data provides an essential contribution to evidence-based policy-making without creating any additional burdens for Member States. Annual monitoring will take place through the Education and Training Monitor and the European Semester process (through the revised Social Scoreboard), tracking progress towards achieving all agreed EU-level targets in the field of adult learning. Monitoring and evaluation of EU-level targets and indicators should be done in cooperation with the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks (SGIB) and reviewed in 2023.
30. *Knowledge building and evidence-based adult learning policy*: It is necessary to further develop in-depth data analysis and research, where possible, at international, European and national level through a range of tools, and taking advantage of the work of Eurostat, Eurydice, CEDEFOP, the European Training Foundation - ETF, Eurofound, OECD and other organisations. The analysis should also include monitoring of vulnerable groups of adults and data on investment in education and training, if possible also at the level of employers and local communities, among others. The transformation of jobs and the enormous up- and re-skilling efforts require reliable and targeted skills intelligence to map future labour market skills needs. This will support adults in their lifelong career development and facilitate both labour-market and societal transitions.

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<sup>4</sup> The objectives are defined as EU average values to be achieved collectively by Member States. When reporting on progress towards achieving these objectives, including where relevant in the context of the European Semester, the Commission should take into account specificities of different national systems and circumstances. Member States should make full use of Union funding opportunities in line with their national circumstances, priorities and challenges. The objectives do not pre-empt decisions on how Union funding instruments under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 and the NextGenerationEU are implemented.

31. *Cooperation with international organisations:* It is important to enhance the cooperation with organisations such as the OECD (in particular by making use of the results of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competences (PIAAC)), the UN (in particular UNESCO and ILO) and the Council of Europe, and also within relevant regional or worldwide initiatives.
32. *Funding:* Adult learning is funded through a range of different instruments fed by a variety of sources. Adult learning should, preferably and where appropriate, and in line with the principle of subsidiarity, rely on continuous and regular funding rather than on subsidies related to projects or programmes. Financing approaches based on shared responsibility of public and private stakeholders can help increase and intensify resources.

**INVITES THE MEMBER STATES, HAVING REGARD TO THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH NATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, TO**

33. Focus their efforts over the period 2021–2030 on the priority areas described in Annex I, thereby also contributing to the implementation of the Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030), where relevant, and in accordance with their national, regional and local contexts, circumstances and legislation,
34. Enhance effective liaison between the relevant ministries as well as with stakeholders, such as social partners, businesses, non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations with a view to improving coherence between policies on adult learning and broader socio-economic policies. This whole-of-government and multi-stakeholder approach can be further strengthened by effective national, regional and local coordination that would link policy and practice,

35. Support adult learning with lifelong guidance and career development by building partnerships at all levels. In line with quality assurance principles, this guidance should be linked to outreach activities, validation and awareness raising, thus contributing to the implementation of the Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways. This will ensure that all adults have the opportunity to develop their basic skills and key competences based on their needs and attain the skill level necessary in today's society and labour market,
36. In implementing the Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, make progress in ensuring that validation opportunities are available to all adults, thus also ensuring second-chance opportunities, and possibly leading to full or partial qualifications,
37. Support expanding adult learning at the secondary and tertiary levels, both general and vocational through flexible learning pathways, for example evening classes, part-time education, distance and blended learning, and allow adult learners (a) to gain qualifications at EQF level 4 and above; and (b) to complete short courses allowing the updating, broadening and deepening of competences,
38. Raise the occupational status of and support the professionalisation of adult educators and trainers<sup>5</sup> and improve their initial and continuous education and training and professional development, including by supporting the use of innovative approaches (such as blended, online, distance, hybrid, etc.) and resources (ICT infrastructure and equipment),

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<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of this Resolution, a teacher is a person who is acknowledged as having the status of a teacher (or equivalent) according to national legislation and practice, while a trainer is anyone who fulfils one or more activities linked to the (theoretical or practical) training function, either in an institution for education or training or at the workplace. They encompass teachers in general education and higher education, teachers and trainers in initial and continuing VET, as well as early childhood education and care professionals and adult educators, in line with the Council conclusions on European teachers and trainers for the future, OJ C 193, 9.6.2020, p. 11.

39. Support, where appropriate, high-quality and inclusion-driven digitalisation of the education, training and learning processes at an organisational and individual level. In addition, assist, educate and train adult learners to use digital tools more widely and effectively while taking into account the digital divide and the digital gender gap,
40. Strive to develop simple, flexible and broad mechanisms for companies and individuals to raise awareness and foster a change in mindset among individuals and society, based on the lifelong learning concept that emphasises the need to acquire knowledge, skills and competences on an ongoing basis,
41. Facilitate lifelong learning to promote the participation of adults in learning through a variety of different instruments such as EPALE - the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (e.g. supporting adult learning professionals, including adult educators and trainers, guidance and support staff, researchers and academics, and policymakers),
42. Promote the learning mobility of adult learners and adult learning staff as well as cooperation across borders, including through the Erasmus+ programme, EU cohesion policy funds and other instruments, where appropriate,
43. Make further efforts to remove existing obstacles and barriers to all types of learning, including issues related to mobility, accessibility, gender inequalities, guidance, outreach, student services and recognition of prior learning as part of learning outcomes,
44. Further develop quality assurance mechanisms by e.g. promoting internal and external quality assurance, with regard to programmes, processes, implementing organisations, adult educators and trainers, and counselling activities, and by developing data collection, for example by using information gathered through graduate tracking.

**INVITES THE COMMISSION, IN LINE WITH ITS COMPETENCES AND HAVING REGARD TO THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY, TO**

45. Support the Member States in implementing the NEAAL 2030 and its priority areas as described in Annex I, as well as in their possible development of holistic, whole-of-government national skills strategies,
46. Ensure the complementarity and coherence of EU policy initiatives undertaken in accordance with the NEAAL 2030,
47. Liaise closely with Member States, in order to ensure that a flexible and efficient governance structure is in place as outlined in the Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021–2030), in particular involving the Working Group on Adult Learning, the network of adult learning national coordinators, peer learning activities and other networking activities,
48. Support the adult learning national coordinators by funding their work to facilitate cooperation among Member States and with the Commission in implementing the NEAAL 2030,
49. Strengthen knowledge about adult learning in Europe by conducting studies and research relevant for analysing adult learning issues, including through Eurydice, CEDEFOP, and ETF and in cooperation with other relevant networks and institutions, by making full use of their information and research capacities, without creating additional burdens for Member States. Attention should also be paid to the 65+ age group by developing comparative evidence and data on their participation in adult learning,

50. Pursue and intensify cooperation with relevant international organisations such as the OECD, the UN (in particular UNESCO and ILO) and the Council of Europe, as well as with relevant regional or worldwide initiatives, for example in the Western Balkans, Eastern Partnership, etc.,
51. Ensure the funds available at European level to support the implementation of the NEAAL 2030 through relevant EU programmes, funds and instruments, such as Erasmus+, the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers, the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the Just Transition Fund, InvestEU, the Technical Support Instrument, etc.,
52. Present and regularly update the Council on a systematic overview and roadmap of ongoing and planned policies, cooperation tools, funding instruments, initiatives and targeted calls at Union level, such as Upskilling Pathways, Erasmus+, and the European Semester, which contribute to the achievement of the NEAAL 2030,
53. Report on the implementation of the NEAAL 2030 as part of the Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (2021-2030), drawing on the work of the adult learning national coordinators, the Working Group on Adult Learning, studies and research experts,

54. Enable further development and implementation of the EPALE, which supports and strengthens the adult learning professionals through exchanges amongst colleagues, blog posts, forums, networking and providing high-quality, accurate and relevant information on all aspects of adult learning,
55. Support Member States, including through funding, in their regular involvement in research cycles in order to obtain comparable data on their progress in the field of adult skills (OECD Survey of Adult Skills [PIAAC], Adult Education Survey and Labour Force Survey).



**Taking into account the specific circumstances within each Member State, and in accordance with national priorities, Member States are invited, where appropriate with the support of the Commission, to focus on areas outlined below.**

**Priority Area 1 – Governance**

- a) Partnerships between governments, regional and local authorities, education and training providers, companies, social partners, public employment and social services as well as civil society are a necessity and are strongly linked to the shared responsibility borne by all parties involved. This responsibility covers tasks including analysing education and training needs and developing learning opportunities for adults, optimising the involvement of and cooperation between all stakeholders, awareness raising and outreach, and supporting the provision of sufficient guidance and counselling to providers and companies.
- b) Strengthening the overall conditions for cooperation on adult learning needs: strive to develop a comprehensive approach to adult learning which includes all types, forms and levels of adult education and training and other relevant forms of learning opportunities, and clarifies the roles of all sectors involved. It should provide a cross-sectoral oversight, as well as inter-ministerial and cross-sectoral partnerships leading to policy coherence. Such an approach, as part of lifelong learning, could result in adult learning strategies and national skills strategies which are based on research, evidence and data.
- c) Cooperation and partnership of stakeholders at national, regional and local levels should meet the needs of adult learners and employers, including, if possible and according to national circumstances, the effective and efficient funding of adult learning initiatives.

## Priority Area 2 – Supply and take-up of lifelong learning opportunities

- a) It is paramount to raise awareness among adults about the importance of learning as a lifelong endeavour, which should be pursued at regular intervals throughout a person's life.
- b) Adult learning should become more tailor-made. It should be encouraged and supported through effective lifelong guidance systems with outreach activities, as well as through integrated systems for the validation of prior learning.
- c) Existing skills forecasting systems (skills intelligence) should be available to all stakeholders in order to support the lifelong guidance and adult learning planning.
- d) Where appropriate, the integration of financial incentives, tax incentives and other social benefits or compensatory measures at employer level in the implementation of policies on adult learning should result in increased employer commitment to adult learning.
- e) Sustainable public funding should be supplemented by other funding at various levels (European, national, regional, local, employer, individual), for all types, forms and levels of adult learning. The efficient allocation and use of funds are crucial and need to be adjusted to individual learning needs. The monitoring of expenditure plays an important role in this.

### Priority Area 3 – Accessibility and flexibility

- a) Adult learning should be flexible from the perspective of time, place, resources, forms of organisation and implementation, and should include a variety of approaches and measures to increase participation, inclusion and motivation for learning. It should allow enrolment not only in different levels of formal education and training but also in other programmes - including at non-formal level - aimed at reskilling and upskilling, together with a wider paradigm of learning. To fit in with their family, life and work responsibilities, flexibility is key to increasing and retaining adults in learning. Adult learning must provide high-quality programmes, irrespective of whether the financing is private or public.
  
- b) Educational and training programmes provided in the context of adult learning should build on the prior knowledge, skills and competences, experience, preferences and specifics of individual learners, based on their needs, possible self-assessment results, and with particular attention to vulnerable groups. An educational and learning approach that encourages adults to express their affinities, desires and needs is inclusive and motivates adults to educate themselves and to improve, while offering opportunities for personal and career development, community learning, intergenerational learning and other social aspects.

- c) Adult learning should also facilitate the acquisition and reinforcement of knowledge, skills and competences and thereby contribute to ensuring more inclusive societies and guaranteeing equal opportunities according to specific circumstances and socio-economical background, with special attention placed on vulnerable groups.
- d) Consideration should be given to putting in place financial and other support measures, as well as concrete actions to support learners. Examples might include financial incentives, such as loans, grants and tax reliefs.
- e) Exploring the concept and use of micro-credentials can help widen learning opportunities and could strengthen lifelong learning by providing more flexible and modular learning opportunities, and offering more inclusive learning paths.

#### **Priority Area 4 – Quality, equity, inclusion and success in adult learning**

##### *Professionalisation:*

- a) Professionalisation and capacity-building of adult educators and trainers, including practitioners (e.g. mentors, tutors) and other professionals involved in supporting activities such as guidance, validation, outreach, awareness-raising, leadership and management in adult learning is needed. Defining and validating the key competences of adult learning professionals could be an added value.
- b) Professionalisation in adult learning is essential for the quality of the education and training provided (e.g. in addition to content-related skills, adult learners need to acquire social and digital skills, for which a different/adjusted teaching approach is needed). Adult educators and trainers should be supported in implementing competence-based teaching and learning, including through counsellors and peer learning activities.
- c) A well-developed network and partnership of adult learning providers and other partners offering learning opportunities could ensure that adult learning becomes more accessible, and that money and time are less of a barrier than before.

*Mobility:*

- d) The mobility of adult learners, adult educators and trainers and other stakeholders in adult learning should continue to be expanded as a key element of European cooperation and a tool to enhance quality in adult learning and promote multilingualism in the European Union. Further efforts should be made to remove existing obstacles and barriers to all types of learning and teaching mobility, including issues related to access, guidance, student services and recognition of learning outcomes.
- e) Make use of the Erasmus+ programme, which offers a variety of new possibilities for strengthening mobility within the EU, outside the EU and for strengthening cross-border cooperation, possibly complemented with funding from ESF+ resources.

*Inclusion:*

- f) Adult learning is important for fostering gender equality and solidarity between different age groups and between cultures and people from all backgrounds and for fostering democratic citizenship and EU fundamental values; in this context, vulnerable groups merit special attention.
- g) A balanced allocation of resources for adult learning in education and training is needed. Funding models based on shared responsibilities and a strong public commitment need to be considered, especially with regard to adult target groups which are from a disadvantaged background, have disabilities or are affected by other factors that may cause exclusion.

- h) Incentives should be considered to eliminate the barriers to participation in adult learning of all target groups, such as lack of time for studying, low basic skills, low professional skills, inaccessibility, low levels of motivation and negative attitudes to learning. Cooperation with relevant stakeholders is essential in drawing disengaged adults and specific target groups back to learning.
- i) Intergenerational learning, including the 65+ age group, can be beneficial in promoting wellbeing as well as active, autonomous and healthy ageing.

*Quality Assurance:*

- j) Quality assurance of adult education and training providers and their partners on the systemic level should be further strengthened as appropriate.
- k) Monitoring the results of adult learning provision can increase quality assurance.
- l) Education and training should be more learner-centred and could provide short learning experiences to acquire or update targeted competences.
- m) The continuous development of monitoring, evaluation and quality methods is essential for ensuring that learning outcomes are evaluated and that progress is a prospect.
- n) In order to support the quality of adult learning, national and regional systems or models, including the validation and recognition of prior learning, should aim at developing and providing internal and external quality assurance.

## Priority area 5 – Green and digital transitions

- a) The twin transitions (i.e. digital and green) act as a driver for innovations in learning pathways and new educational and training approaches, including learning environments. These innovations must ensure permeability and flexibility between the various forms and levels of adult learning. The digital and green transitions call for all generations to develop the necessary green and digital skills (increased digital media literacy and environmental awareness) to work and live proactively in a digital environment. Digital (blended, hybrid, etc.) learning also requires the professional development of adult educators and trainers, as well as support for the use of digital tools and the adaptation of learning materials, approaches and resources.
- b) Develop approaches to integrating sustainable development into adult learning, including by addressing environmental attitudes, developing suitable mindsets, raising awareness and considering taking specific steps to develop training. The acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences in adult learning should be an important component of the ecological transformation process. Green skills, i.e. the skills needed in a low-carbon economy and society, will be required throughout society and in the workforce (in all sectors and at all levels) as emerging economic activities create new (or renewed) occupations, and as we strive for a sustainable lifestyle.
- c) Additional support for opening up learning environments will accelerate digital transformation or improve the already existing infrastructure/initiatives, such as by promoting inclusive, digital and sustainable societies and learning workplaces. Such environments should enhance equal access to digital material for adult learners of all ages and should support the safe use of digital technologies. Learning platforms for the public good should be designed in such a way as to offer motivational support, professional mentoring, guidance and counselling to participants.

**EU-LEVEL TARGETS AND INDICATORS - Monitoring the European average performance in adult learning**

As a means of monitoring progress and identifying challenges, as well as contributing to evidence-informed policy making through systematic collection, analysis and research of internationally comparable data, a series of reference levels of European average performance in adult learning ('EU-level targets') and indicators should support the strategic priorities outlined in the NEAAL 2030. They should be based solely on comparable and reliable data and take account of the different situations in individual Member States.

1. **EU-level targets**<sup>6</sup>

**Participation of adults in learning**

At least 47 % of adults aged 25-64 should have participated in learning during the last 12 months, by 2025<sup>7</sup>.

At least 60 % of adults aged 25-64 should have participated in learning during the last 12 months, by 2030.

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<sup>6</sup> The 2025 target was agreed by the Council in its Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030). The 2030 target was welcomed by the EU Heads of State or Government in the Porto Declaration and by the European Council in its conclusions of 24-25 June 2021.

<sup>7</sup> Eurostat, EU Labour Force Survey (LFS), data collection from 2022 onwards. Given that the data source is planned to be changed in 2022 (from the Adult Education Survey to the EU Labour Force Survey), the target is subject to confirmation in 2023 on the basis of experience of the new data source. The Commission, in cooperation with SGIB, will evaluate the impact of these changes by comparing the results of the Adult Education Survey (AES) and the LFS in 2023 and consider possible changes to the LFS methodology, or to the level of the target. On the basis of this evaluation the Council will decide on a possible adaptation of the target level.



## 2. EU-level indicators

- a) Participation of low-qualified adults in learning<sup>8</sup>
  - b) Unemployed adults with a recent learning experience<sup>9</sup>
  - c) Adults with at least basic digital skills<sup>10</sup>
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<sup>8</sup> The definition and sources of the indicator are similar to the indicator on participation of adults in learning. The main difference is the focus on low-qualified adults, i.e. those adults who have achieved at most a lower secondary qualification (or below) as their highest formal educational qualification. Thus, the indicator measures the proportion of low-qualified adults who report having participated in formal or non-formal education and training over a period of 12 months.

<sup>9</sup> The data is available from the EU Labour Force Survey. 'Recent learning experience' refers to participation in formal or non-formal education and training during the last 4 weeks.

<sup>10</sup> The source of the data for this indicator is the EU Community survey on ICT usage in households and by individuals.

The background documents relevant for the NEAAL 2030:

### **European Council**

1. European Council conclusions of 24-25 June 2021 (EUCO 7/21)
2. A New Strategic Agenda 2019-2024 (adopted by the European Council on 20 June 2019)
3. European Council conclusions of 14 December 2017 (EUCO 19/1/17 REV 1)

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4. Council conclusions on equity and inclusion in education and training in order to promote educational success for all, OJ C 221, 10.6.2021, p. 3
5. Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030), OJ C 66, 26.2.2021, p. 1
6. Council Recommendation on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience, OJ C 417, 2.12.2020, p. 1
7. Council Recommendation on A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee and replacing the Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee, OJ C 372, 4.11.2020, p. 1

8. Council conclusions on European teachers and trainers for the future, OJ C 193, 9.6.2020, p. 11
9. Council conclusions on the key role of lifelong learning policies in empowering societies to address the technological and green transition in support of inclusive and sustainable growth, OJ C 389, 18.11.2019, p. 12
10. Council conclusions on the implementation of the Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults, OJ C 189, 5.6.2019, p. 23
11. Resolution of the Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on a framework for European cooperation in the youth field: The European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027, OJ C 456, 18.12.2018, p. 1
12. Council Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning, OJ C 189, 4.6.2018, p. 1
13. Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults, OJ C 484, 24.12.2016, p. 1
14. Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, OJ C 398, 22.12.2012, p. 1
15. Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning, OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, p. 1.

## Declarations

16. The Porto Declaration (8 May 2021)
17. Osnabrück Declaration on vocational education and training as an enabler of recovery and just transitions to digital and green economies (30 November 2020)

## European Commission

18. The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan (COM(2021) 102 final)
  19. Green paper on ageing. Fostering solidarity and responsibility between generations (COM(2021) 50 final)
  20. Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027. Resetting education and training for the digital age (COM(2020) 624 final)
  21. European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (COM(2020) 274 final)
  22. A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 (COM(2020) 152 final)
  23. The European Green Deal (COM(2019) 640 final)
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