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Policies for REgional COoperation in the field of Lifelong Learning

Building a broad strategy for the next European planning period

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Presentation

As the Committee of the Regions maintains: any important strategic community reform must be accompanied by a territorial plan of action, it must be founded on multilevel governance, i.e. on coordinated action of the Union, of the Member States and of the regional and local entities founded on partnership and aimed at defining and implementing EU policies.

This is why Earlall and the Member Governments are committed to drawing up this Policy Paper, the purpose of which is to identify the contribution that the Regions can make in implementing European strategy in the field of lifelong learning within the framework of European cooperation in the education and training sector in the 2020 perspective.

The conclusions of the Lisbon Strategy evaluation documents published by the Commission on 2nd February 2010 also aim at this. The Commission also recognises that the Lisbon Strategy did not have the necessary tools for dealing with some of the causes of the crisis. Thus, between commitments and concrete actions there is an implementation gap and it points out how the involvement of regional, local and social partners was less significant than what was due; even though in the sectors concerned by the Lisbon Strategy the regional and local actors often had important political competences and considerable resources.

The response of 120 regional governments to the consultation on Europe 2020 gave precise indications about some of the decisions to be taken on the matter: it deals with "reinforcing the role of regional and local authorities in the strategy, in order to guarantee a full and equal partnership among the various government levels, i.e. "multilevel governance".

In the lifelong learning field, many regional and local authorities demand important competences since they are the institutional subjects that can make a significant contribution to creating in loco reforms. The same can be said for educational and innovation policies, infrastructures, the job market, social inclusion, the environment, high quality public services and ICT policy.

An analysis of the regional policies described in the first part of this document shows how the regional governments have an essential role regarding:

- Qualifying the offer of competences
- Reform and qualification of training systems
- Preparation of such duties through governance that implies the commitment of all public and private actors.

In order to strengthen the role of the regional governments, Earlall laid out a plan of action aimed at strengthening interregional cooperation opportunities:

- To reinforce dialogue with European institutions about lifelong learning;
- To operate on priorities such as:
 - a. Creating European instruments that encourage mobility between Regions for purposes of study and work;
 - b. Increasing the quality of our education and training systems;
 - c. Taking as a common priority the reduction of the number of people with low skill levels: 77 million is an unsustainable quantity;
 - d. Encouraging the development of businesses;
 - e. Opening forms of mutual learning by implementing regional strategies of lifelong learning.

These are the ideas that inspire the actions that Earlall will initiate over the next two years thanks to the direct commitment of the member regional governments.

Gianfranco Simoncini - President of Earlall

European cohesion regarding the 2020 targets is dependant on the policies adopted at the regional level and the nature of common goals.

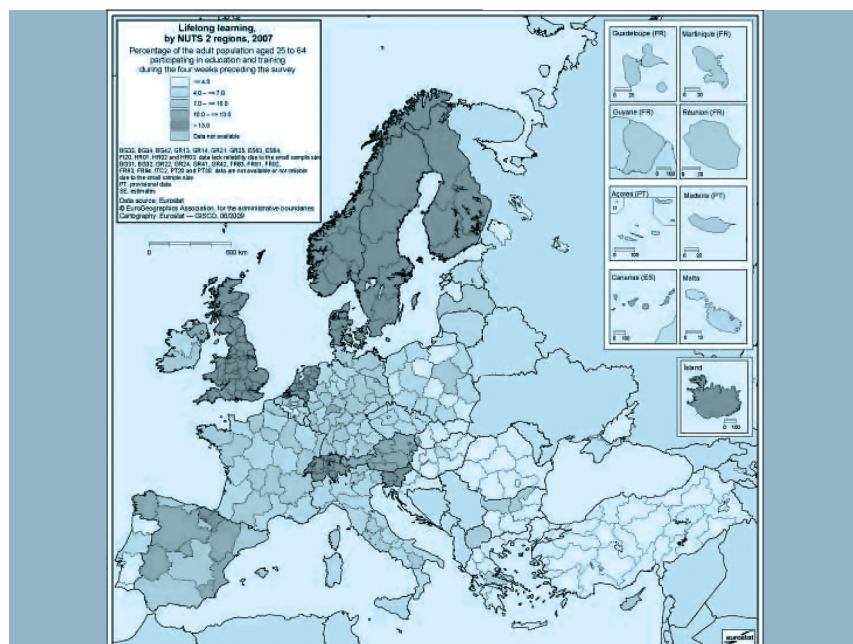
1

1. Implementing lifelong learning strategies remains a challenge for all Member States and European Regions.

The differences between Member States in reaching European benchmarks are even more pronounced if we consider progress at the regional level.

The data shows how regional diversities coexist within Member States, characterised by opposing trends which make differences even greater.

Even more problematic is the difficulty of comparing regional results in different countries.



Tab. 1 – Lifelong learning Benchmark: Major distances among Regions (Nuts) per Countries.

Countries	Region with higher performance		Region with lower performance	
AT	Wien	15,1	Burgenland	10,8
BE	Région de Bruxelles-Capitale / Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest	10,4	Hainaut	3,7
BG	Yugozapaden	2,7	Yuzhen tsentralen	0,7
CH	Zürich	29,6	Ticino	24,2
CY	Kypros / Kibris	8,4	-----	---
CZ	Praha	9,7	Moravskoslezsko	4,3
DE	Berlin	10,7	Chemnitz	5,7
DK	Hovedstaden	33,2	Nordjylland	26,4
EE	Eesti	7	-----	---
ES	Comunidad Foral de Navarra	13,3	Cantabria	7,6
FI	Etelä-Suomi	24,9	Åland	20
FR	Bretagne	9,2	Poitou-Charentes	5,9
GR	Attiki and Kentriki Makedonia	2,7	Peloponnisos	1
HR	Sjeverozapadna Hrvatska	3	Jadranska Hrvatska	1,8
HU	Közép-Magyarország	5,4	Nyugat-Dunántúl	2,5
IE	Southern and Eastern	8,1	Border, Midland and Western	6,2
IS	Island	27	-----	---
IT	Provincia Autonoma Trento	9,6	Sicilia	4,9
LT	Lietuva	5,3	-----	---
LU	Luxembourg (Grand-Duché)	7	-----	---
LV	Latvija	7,1	-----	---
MT	Malta	6	-----	---
NL	Groningen	18,7	Zeeland	14,6
NO	Oslo og Akershus	21,2	Hedmark og Oppland	15,2
PL	Mazowieckie	8,3	Łódzkie	3,5
PT	Centro	5,6	Alentejo	3,5
RO	București – Ilfov	1,7	Sud-Est/Sud – Muntenia/Sud-Vest Oltenia	1,1
SE	Småland med öarna	34	Sydsverige	29,8
SL	Zahodna Slovenija	16,2	Vzhodna Slovenija	13,3
SK	Bratislavský kraj	12,7	Východné Slovensko	1,8
TR	Antalya	2,6	Manisa	0,7
UK	Inner London	26,2	Northern Ireland	10,4

Source: Eurostat Regional Yearbook (2009), Statistical annexes.

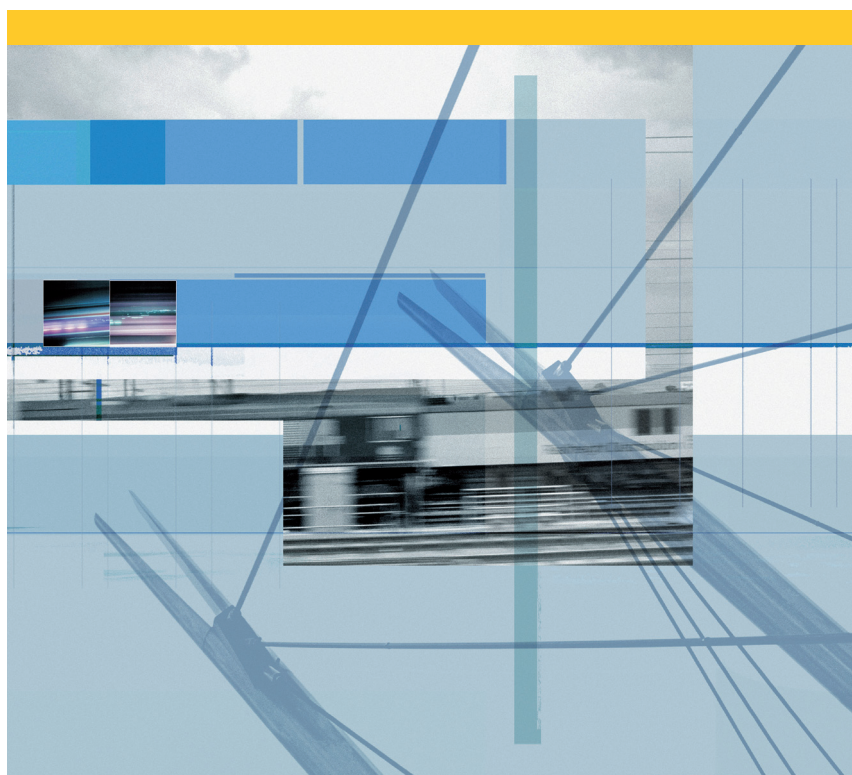
This shows that creating a European and state strategic framework must be followed by the inception, programming and implementation of policies at regional level.

Lack of progress at the regional level undermines European cohesion. Only an advance on a broad front towards the European objectives will avoid the risk of European objectives being achieved by increasing the imbalance between Regions.

The regional and local level is the one most suited to understanding the results of ongoing efforts and for building adequate solutions.

This is because, aside from institutional differences, regional governments often have legal powers and control programme delivery.

In addition, and along with provincial and municipal authorities, regional governments make available and manage considerable elements of the financial and material resources necessary for effective lifelong learning provision.



The form of the State is divided in three types:

1. Federal states

"In practice it is not easy to distinguish the competences"

2. Regionalized states

"Some Regions have legislative power some others are limited to administration".

Spain: *The actual organisation of the Spanish political model provides the seventeen autonomous Regions in Spain with independent competences in the education field.*

Educational responsibilities have been transferred and developed by the 17 regional governments (Autonomous Communities). The management of financial and human resources of all levels of public education except for University is the responsibility of the Regional Education Authority.

3. Unitary states

"In unitary states there exists only administrative self-government at provincial and local levels of government". In Southern Europe local governments were subject to close control by the central government. In Northern Europe there was a stronger tradition of local autonomy or self-government.

Sweden's 290 municipalities are run according to national legislative and regulatory frameworks. Municipal responsibility for schools is based on the Swedish commitment to self-government and democracy. Among their duties, municipalities:

- Provide preschool activities and education for their residents.
- Set goals and make decisions about preschools and other education.
- Set priorities and allocate resources.
- Fund independent schools for students registered in the municipality.
- Act as the employer for teachers and other school staff.

Source: Quotations from European University Institute, Study on the Division of powers between the European Union, the Member States and Regional and Local Authorities, 2008.

2

2. Regions are already engaged in developing **comprehensive and coherent strategies**.

Their close proximity to the challenges of economic and social growth and its main actors, encourages strategies that increase the correspondence of education and training policies with respect to the demand for training throughout life.

The experience of regional governments shows how this has already produced trends useful for building a concrete strategy.

That is why the Committee of the Regions urges the EU for **multilevel governance**, as “coordinated action by the European Union, the Member States and local and regional authorities, based on partnership and aimed at drawing up and implementing EU policies”.



Generalitat de Catalunya

In 2009 the Catalan Parliament approved the *Education Law of Catalonia* that includes the following among its main objectives:

- The quality of education, which enables the achievement of basic skills and achieving excellence, in a context of equity.
- Promoting entrepreneurship.
- The fostering of education beyond school.
- Lifelong learning.

Regione Toscana

Details about integrated planning in the sector of education, instruction, guidance, vocational training and work are provided by the political organisation of the Tuscan Regional Government, which, in this case, provides for one decision-making body at Ministry level, representing the uniformity of policies and controls their application in terms of territorial *governance*. The instruments that come together to form the decision-making processes are represented by the bodies provided for by Law 32/2002 and the consultation promoted by the local bodies and with representative organisations in the territory, such as cultural associations and organisations, the third sector (Regional Law 41/2005), sports clubs and training agencies.

The 2006-2010 Integrated General Guidance Plan (IGI) of the Tuscany Regional Government concerning education, instruction, guidance, vocational training and work is the instrument provided for by the Regional Law no. 32 of 26 July 2002 with the subject "*Consolidation Act of the legislation of the Tuscany Regional Government concerning education, instruction, guidance, vocational training and work.*" By means of this law, the regional government pursues the Lisbon Strategy to create an innovative, competitive and socially cohesive society, based on knowledge, the development of human capital and the creation of stable and skilled work. The Guidance Plan incorporates the strategy of lifelong learning and is structured by integrated specific objectives that identify operating purposes to be achieved through structured measures in relation to the range of ages of the Tuscan people.

Welsh Assembly Government (WAG)

Strategic level planning is undertaken by the WAG in conjunction with operational planning by 22 Welsh Local Education Authorities (LEAs) – part of the local authority network – for schools. Planning relates to demographics, and also includes careers advice and guidance from primary school play based activities.

Strategic level planning is also undertaken by the WAG for tertiary, vocational training (institutional and work-based), adult continuing education, higher education (universities), and all-age careers advice and guidance. Planning relates to assessed needs of employers, local areas and individuals.

Jämtland County Council

To reach the objectives set out in ET 2020, an operative programme for lifelong learning in the Region will be produced during 2010. This programme will take various variables into account, such as the situation on the labour market, the distribution of age groups, and the scarcely populated areas of the Region.

3

3. Simple everyday or emergency management is not enough to guarantee that policies produce the necessary innovation.

The basic problem is choosing **strategic goals that are suitable and important**, not just for the training system, but that can also construct a quality lifelong learning environment open to everyone.

Welsh Assembly Government

Skills For A Prosperous Wales. Lead the contribution that the post-16 education and training system makes towards the achievement of a highly-educated, highly-skilled, high-employment Wales by identifying and prioritising the knowledge and skills needs of employers, learners, communities and WAG; and by driving education and training institutions to be flexible, of high quality, and responsive to national and local needs.

Comprehensive regional strategies

4

4. The crucial task for regional strategies is to align the skills and competences of the working population with the economic and social growth ambitions of the Region and its various territories.

It is a strategic goal requiring, first of all, **increased training demand** and the direct commitment of all the Region's citizens.

Three regional policies appear particularly effective in increasing training demand. These are policies aimed to:

4.1

4.1. Encourage all citizens to take **one step ahead** in their training, regardless of their level. Such action can help spread acquisition of basic competences, reduce the numbers of low-skilled people in the Region, and help to raise the level of all types of competences: mathematics, science, technology. The aim of this policy is to provide each citizen with a goal for their personal growth and encourage them to achieve it.

Generalitat de Catalunya

To align the skills and competences of the working population with the economic and social growth ambitions of Catalonia, the Government is applying the "2nd General Plan for Vocational Education and Training in Catalonia". The period of application of this plan is 4 years, from 2007 to 2010. The plan draws the guidelines allowing the accomplishment of this plan into an integrated, coherent system, linked to the needs of labour market, and to improve the quality of its offer.

The plan contains:

3 priority lines:

- Adaptation and innovation of the VET mechanisms and resources to the new requirements of the Catalan economy.
- Consolidation of the integrated system of qualifications and vocational training.
- Promotion of the acknowledgement and the social value of Vocational Training.

10 objectives:

- To increase training and qualification levels of the working population.
- To promote the adaptation and innovation of the educational offer.
- To promote “transnationality” within the European Qualification Framework and to promote the learning mobility for VET students.
- To encourage entrepreneurship .
- Development and application of measures to integrate the training and qualification system.
- To encourage social acknowledgement of Vocational Training.
- To develop the tools, information criteria and guidance that allow general access to system users.
- To improve tools in training quality.
- To improve the continuous training of teachers.
- To promote the social value and qualification of vocational training in the enterprise context.

38 key actions:

Every objective has several key actions that impact more directly in its execution. The list of these key actions has not been included as it is extensive.

10 indicators:

These indicators serve to evaluate the management of every objective. Several of these indicators are managed with reference to European indicators.

Annually the plan is evaluated by external consultants to monitor its evolution. Finally, at the end of its execution, the plan will be further evaluated by external consultants.

Jämtland County Council

In Jämtland there is a type of adult school (18+) called *Folk high schools*, which focus on people without qualifications from upper secondary school. Combined with studying other subjects, they can obtain qualifications that enable them to go on to higher education. The *Folk high schools* do not have a centrally established standard curriculum. Each school makes its own decisions regarding teaching plans, and they often offer a wide range of courses, from bible studies to mountaineering. The overall objective of the *Folk high schools* is to educate people in human rights and democracy, to give people a second chance through lifelong learning, work for cultural diversity and culture, sustainable development, and global equality. Another objective is to provide access to education for the disabled and the socially deprived.

4.2. Develop policies close to the citizens’ **life cycle**, accompanying them with training in the various transitions during their lifetime, at each phase of their lives, providing them the right, opportunity or duty to take advantage of appropriate opportunities. This is done by offering learning opportunities whose content and methods are specifically designed to respond to different individuals, phases and conditions. This policy guarantees continuity to the individual training demand and leads to adjusting the supply to the various professional and personal needs at different times in the citizens’ life.

4.2

Junta de Andalucía

- Making education and training accessible to all citizens throughout their lives and promoting basic skills and social inclusion where most needed: in prisons, social inclusion centres for youngsters; to reach social exclusion groups such as immigrants and people subject to addictions, low skilled, etc.
- Promoting access to learning through: the implementation of an efficient strategy of *quality services and resources* (access to the internet, personal computers, didactic resources and tools).
- Flexibility and variety in the offer: by means of the recognition of formal, non-formal and informal learning. Flexible modular pathways. Grants for those needing economical support.
- *Innovation in communication* (use of ICT to spread blended and e-learning, to reach isolated areas or as an alternative for those lacking time to go to adult centres) and *methodology* (learning by doing!). This has been reinforced with a recent policy measure (ICT School 2.0) through which all primary students and teachers in their last two school years and all secondary students and teachers will be provided with laptops, electronic blackboards and quick access to the "Internet" in the classrooms.

On the one hand, to avoid *Early school leavers* the Ministry of Education has implemented the Basic Vocational Qualification Programmes - *programas de cualificación profesional inicial* (P.C.P.I) to allow students with low performance to get a professional qualification of Level I, together with the opportunity to obtain and continue their training in vocational training Level II. Also direct access to lower level Vocational Training for adults with no certification after an upgrading test, has been implemented.

On the other hand, the e-learning programme for adults has been a great success as most adult centres have been equipped with Internet access and didactic resources located in a LSM (Learning System Management Moodle) for over 30,000 face to face course students; around 25,000 e-learning blended students preparing for the secondary and postsecondary education certificate, and around 5,000 e-learning between VET, secondary and postsecondary courses. To do this (to reach everybody everywhere) there has been a great effort to develop adapted material for the new technical tools and virtual classrooms.

Jämtland County Council

In order to provide training, education and careers guidance to adult learners in the Region, a network called *LärCentrum* has been formed. The aim is to make learning accessible and to provide a large number of educational opportunities. LärCentrum provides an opportunity for adults (18+) to study in a friendly and quiet environment. The centres, which are located in each of the eight municipalities of the Region, offer a wide range of courses, delivered through traditional teaching methods as well as blended learning or distance courses in order to suit the individual student's needs. LärCentrum also helps to evaluate students' competence and working experience through a governmental validation programme. LärCentrum has a large network within education and the business world and can guide students or students' employers to the right education to develop their professional skills.

Livorno Province

With respect to the increase of training demand, an important tool for the Province of Livorno to prompt all citizens to take one step ahead in their training, regardless of their level, has been the setting up of five Trio (Technology, Innovation, Orientation/Guidance) centres in the Province. From the 1st January 2009, in fact, the management of the TRIO network – the web distance learning system of the Tuscany Region that provides products and training services completely free, accessible and open to everyone - was transferred from the Region to the Provinces. Provincia di Livorno Sviluppo Srl manages the five

centres on behalf of the Province of Livorno (www.plis.it). In the Province of Livorno two of the five Trio centres have been constituted within the Provincial Administration offices. This new structure allows, for its proximity to Livorno Job Centre, a “just in time” service for its users. In particular, in this moment of “crisis” in the labour market the Trio network has become an important tool for people who benefit from “redundancy payments”, in order to reinforce their competences and to orientate them towards other sectors. The tutor helps users to choose the more suitable course for them and then they can have access to that on line course via a username and a password. Ad hoc programmes focused, above all, on information technology and Italian language will be provided.

4.3. Increasing the propensity for training through obligations or financial and material incentives, and by providing information and guidance services. This policy will increase the trend to invest in training, create synergy between public and private investment and make people and companies take responsibility for training.

4.3

Regione Toscana

The individual voucher is a tool aimed at implementing lifelong learning policies and reducing differences in terms of opportunities and growth in the labour market. It is a general tool applicable to all age groups. Its ability to increase the flexibility and open up access conditions to the different training opportunities supports the individualisation processes of the courses. The tool is split into different methods that include *Individual Learning Accounts (prepaid cards)*, which, on the one hand, enable the reduction of differences in terms of training opportunities and, on the other hand, the promotion of the creation of a training demand policy capable of stimulating individuals, especially the lesser motivated. Another method that includes the use of vouchers is provided by *training vouchers* promoting training courses for the employed from the point of view of continuous training. Another important method is represented by *mediation vouchers*. These vouchers were established as a measure aimed at supporting the involvement and constancy of women in the working world through tools capable of providing support to mediation between family and professional life. Other similar methodologies apply to postgraduate training and measures in the area of technological innovation.

Vidin Regional Government

Voucher system of training - From November, 2009 the Employment Agency has accepted applications from training institutions which want to run courses for professional qualifications and/or key competences, financed with vouchers under the “Human Resources Development” Operational programme. This is a voucher mechanism for payment of services connected with acquiring professional qualifications and key competences. It can be used either by unemployed or employed people. The distribution of the vouchers has already begun, with the greatest demand being for vouchers in languages and computer literacy.

Welsh Assembly Government

Promotional learning campaigns, such as Adult Learners’ Week, are used to increase the propensity for training and education. Such campaigns involve local delivery of ‘taster sessions’ and other events within the framework of a regional marketing and promotions strategy. The campaigns are primarily targeted as those who have missed out on previous educational opportunities and incorporate a number of themes such as Learning at Work day.

5

5. The strategy directed at increasing the demand for training accompanies the follow-up of policies aimed at adjusting the quality of the supply of **lifelong learning**.

Four regional policies have proved to be particularly effective regarding quality of supply. These policies are aimed at:

5.1. Supporting **system reform** of education, training and universities by focussing on results produced in terms of learning outcomes. This goal, as far as the reform of systems is concerned, can be taken on mainly by the Regions that have regulatory or management powers. In any case, this contributes to policies to encourage **innovation in the training supply**, so that it constantly adjusts to the needs of people who want to learn at all ages for professional and personal reasons. This applies to formal and non formal learning. It involves new actors and supplements the non formal system and encourages new experiments in managing informal processes at work and in school.

5.1

Generalitat de Catalunya

Catalonia has the *Opening Institute of Catalonia* (IOC) that provides education to all people via a network. This tool is very important for people with timetable or distance disadvantages, or other types of needs. At this moment the IOC is completely operative and offers education to 15,420 students:

- VET students: 4,760 students.
- Baccalaureate students: 1,890 students.
- High school graduate for adults: 5,200 students.
- Test for access to high level VET: 3,570 students.

The IOC approach to distance learning is student-focused and uses information and communication technologies to structure the learning experience. The approach is based on: giving individualised attention, creating a shared learning experience, adapting to the subject being taught, relating to the student's environment, providing continuous evaluation and using one-on-one tutoring. In addition, the IOC has 40 support centres throughout Catalonia to assist their students in attendance centres.

Another significant tool is the *Qualifica't* programme developed by the Ministry of Education of the Catalan Government in cooperation with several organisations such as: social partners, local powers, Chambers of Commerce and companies. The aim of the programme is to improve the training of unemployed or risk of unemployment people with more tools to fight the economical crisis and the unemployment. The main novelty is that the unemployed can receive specific training of their jobs, and at the same time can access regulated training. The first phase of *Qualifica't* affects over 6,000 people. The programme has three main rows: training, validation of the training and validation of work experience.

Welsh Assembly Government

The regional government is currently driving a transformation process affecting how education and training providers for young people aged over 11 years old operate and collaborate to improve local effectiveness and efficiency. The transformation agenda is forward looking in recognising demographic changes, and is centred on the goal of improving the quality and range of skills in all local areas, rather than on supporting institutional type.

System reform is being led through the regional government's 'Transformation Agenda'. This seeks to secure the best delivery model to plan provision collectively; to direct more of the funding available to teaching and learning and learner support; to increase the engagement of disadvantaged young people in the learning process; and to transform the learning network to increase learner choice, reduce duplication of provision, and encourage higher quality learning and teaching in all post-16 provision.

5.2. Creating closer relationships between training and work routes, to enable young people and people searching for work to acquire skills more quickly, creating a production culture and the ability to build and develop social networks. This should be done through regional policies that urge companies and society to take direct responsibility for educating young people and the employed for work and social life. This goal reinforces the supply of competences for the labour market - new skills for new jobs - strengthens training systems and reduces exclusion. It can be pursued and realised mainly at local and regional level, even if the margins of action are determined by the choices made for training system reform at a state level, and at a European flexicurity policy level.

5.2

Generalitat de Catalunya

The Government of Catalonia, in collaboration with *Cambres de Comerç* (Chambers of Commerce) categorise companies after reviewing their work routes in relation to the training of students. The programme is called FCT, which means work-based training. There is participation between social partners and local powers through consultative and participatory meetings of the Catalan VET Council.

Junta de Andalucía

To cover the needs of a skilled workforce in Andalusia to face the challenge of a changing economic situation since 1990 the L.O.G.S.E. (General Law that Regulates the Spanish Educational System) establishes compulsory in-company training as a requirement in the Initial, Middle and Higher Vocational system to adjust the European models. From 2000, and in an attempt to open Spanish population to a borderless EU, the Regional Ministry of Education has taken an active role to promote Mobility actions through the LLP (Comenius, Grundtvig) and those related to VET (Leonardo da Vinci and Erasmus). Also the Junta de Andalucía invests in funding its own measures to cover the dramatically increasing growth of applicants to spend their internships in companies abroad. The figures have increased to 3,000 students who have contributed to create a more coherent Europe by doing work placements in European companies so far.

Regione Toscana

The Regional Multiyear Adult Education Plan, which operates in the non formal sector and identified introductory training courses to the culture of work and social inclusion as an objective, identified innovative measures that add to the tools that have already been trialled, such as study circles. These are mainly aimed at problems associated with safety in the workplace in the current plan. The innovative tool that was introduced and called *embedded learning* is based on the premise that the more the teaching is in context to the

workplace, the greater the individual's motivation to learn. This type of tool replaces the paradigm whereby first we learn, and then we do, with the paradigm whereby we learn by doing.

Vidin Regional Government

The National Programme *"From Social Assistance towards Providing of Employment"* continues to be the largest programme in the country, despite its limited scope during recent years. It implements one of the main objectives of the national social policy – providing employment and achieving social integration of unemployed people, subject to monthly social assistance, for which this is the only opportunity to work and earn income. The employed people under this programme undertake community activities with a more permanent impact: renovation and repair of playgrounds; through cleaning of channels in settlements; repair of pavements; construction work on public buildings; construction of road surfaces in un-developed neighbourhoods and villages; abolition of unregulated landfills; thorough cleaning of river beds etc.

Jämtland County Council

In the County Council of Jämtland's strategic plan for 2009-2011, two of the main objectives are to stimulate entrepreneurship in rural areas by providing resources for education and to emphasize vocational training. ALMI Företagspartner can support you to set up a new business. ALMI Företagspartner is owned by the government together with the County Council. Entrepreneurs can get support in creating a business plan, they provide smaller loans, information and help with market research. They cooperate with for example LärCentrum to provide entrepreneurs who need some sort of education with access to that.

5.3

5.3. Supporting the **professional growth of workers**, their mobility and career development in the workplace and on the labour market. Regional policies urge companies-above all small and medium-sized enterprises – to improve work quality and to compete on an international level; and for each to provide the right environment for all workers to grow professionally. Companies and workers' representatives are given incentives to apply criteria and standards to make the quality of human resource management of each company transparent. Regional policies aim to integrate young workers into information networks and job demand/supply crossroads to help mobility and outplacement at a local, national and international level.

Vidin Regional Government

The *Tenth National Employment Action Plan* is the main instrument in 2010 for softening and reducing the impact of the economic crisis in the employment field, labour market and more investment in human resources. The plan was developed on the basis of the approved Framework by the National Council for Promotion of Employment with key priorities and areas of operation in 2010. To preserve and promote employment, experts participated in the development of a number of national institutions and representative organisations of employers and employees. The objectives and actions of the National Employment Action Plan for 2010 focus on overcoming the main problems in the labour market in Bulgaria, caused by the crisis. Furthermore, the plan is based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs Strategy of EU. The vision of the National Employment Action Plan for 2010 is *"Increasing the quality of the workforce to maintain employment, reduce unemployment and stabilize the labour market"*.

Welsh Assembly Government

The Skills that Work for Wales strategy, which closely aligns with New Skills for New Jobs, is a good example of regional action that delivers a series of measures (often in collaboration with state agencies and EU funding programmes) to support business skills development at the local level. The Basic Skills Employer Pledge creates incentives for businesses to address basic skills, by linking support to other regional government workforce development programmes. Careers Ladders Wales is an integrated single package of information, advice and support that will help unemployed and economically inactive people back into work, and continue to support them as they consolidate their position and progress in their jobs. The aim is to ensure that those who re-enter the workforce have the skills and motivation to make a positive contribution to their employers, and the opportunity to progress beyond simply securing a job.

Jämtland County Council

The National Agency for Higher Vocational Education was established to develop and oversee a new form of publicly funded further vocational education. Higher Vocational Education Courses, HVECs, cover a wide range of vocational areas, but they have one goal in common, namely the provision of advanced vocational education, tailored to the needs of the labour market, which means that they can also be designed to meet regional needs. In HVECs a modern approach is taken where theoretical learning is integrated and blended with vocational practice at the workplace. In Jämtland the HVECs are mainly focusing on tourism and technicians for wind Power Plants, which are important regional industries.

Coherent regional strategies

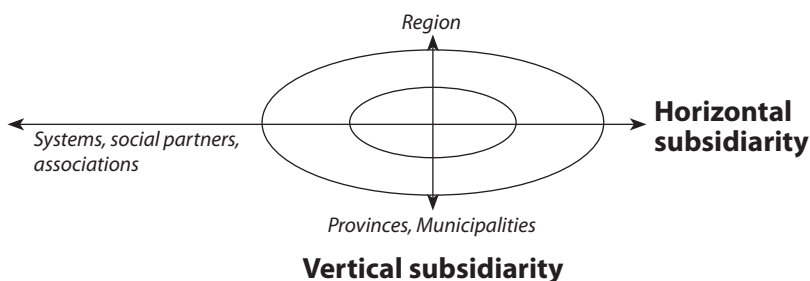
6. The effectiveness in implementing this strategy is contingent on making the various public and private policies coherent and so increasing their impact. Such a policy, for regional governments, involves two specific duties:

6.1. **Governance**, meaning the creation of partnership and cooperation between public and private operations, with special reference to investment by companies in initial and continuing training and, from a societal perspective, the role of NGOs. Alongside this, regional government operates within a second guiding tension of vertical subsidiarity, in between reconciling and complementing central actions and working with provincial and municipal levels of government.



6.1

Figure 1. Diagram for classifying subjects involved in Governance



Generalitat de Catalunya

On February 9th, 1999 the Catalan Council for VET was founded. It is the advisory body of the Catalan Regional Government with regard to Vocational Education and Training. It consists of business organisations, trade unions and public entities.

The functions of Catalan Council for VET are:

- To propose the criteria for the preparation of the General Plan for VET in Catalonia.
- To propose studies in order to detect educational needs or adapt to qualification demands.
- To analyse the modification of professional accreditations, qualifications and certifications, and their respective validation.
- To encourage collaboration of enterprises with regard to in-company training, vocational information and guidance, and monitoring and assessment of the General Plan.
- To suggest measures to promote collaboration of business organisations and trade unions with regard to in-company training.
- To propose criteria for adapting the educational offer of VET to the needs of the labour market.
- To propose criteria for the territorial and sectoral distribution of specific VET in Catalonia.
- To make proposals of educational and “professionalizing” programmes answering to the needs of job placement of students finishing the obligatory education without reaching the objectives of the same.

Regione Toscana

The integrated policies of the Tuscany Regional Government in the sectors of education, instruction, guidance, vocational training and work are implemented through the territorial *governance* system, which is distinguished by significant vertical and horizontal complexity. The role of guidance that the regional government exercises is the result of a *bottom-up* consultation between all the local territorial bodies, which is expressed in policies that require horizontal sharing in order to be implemented with the various institutional levels, between all the members of the regional civil society. The territorial *governance* system was defined by the Regional Law no. 32/2002, the Implementation Regulation of said law, approved with the Decree of the President of the Regional Council no. 47/R/2003 and the Memorandum of Understanding of 17 May 2004 between the regions, provinces, councils and mountain communities. The institutional instruments of territorial *governance* are represented by the *Area Educational Conference*, which has competences in terms of the development of the education and instruction system on a local level and is the minimum institutional territorial body of the governance bottom-up system. In order to guarantee the participation of social parties in determining the integrated policies, Law 32/2002 established the *Regional Three-Party Permanent Commission*. In order to guarantee the efficient coordination of the institutional roles at different levels of the integrated regional system, this law also established the *Institutional Coordination Committee*.

6.2

6.2. The characteristic of lifelong learning policies at a regional level is made up of the tension between, and search for, synchronization; not only with the four components of the standard lifelong learning policies (education, training, labour, security policies), but also other policies (health, justice, domestic, culture). This can also open up a process of developing the **educational quality of other policies** and not only collaboration.

The usual procedure of integrated territorial projects encourages this process by bottom-up logic. In the Regions integrated policies are put side by side, converging on achieving a common goal: immigration, flexicurity, gender equality.

Junta de Andalucía

As a means of integrating stakeholders in the governance system coherently, the Vocational Qualification Agency was created in the year 2003 in order to design, in relation to the Ministry of Labour, Chambers of Commerce and the rest of stakeholders, the VET middle and higher level qualifications. Also this institution is responsible for the recognition of formal and informal competences, qualifications and ECVET certification.

Common goals as regards immigration, flexicurity, gender equality, disabilities, work and life, special needs, etc. are regulated by the LEA Regional Educative Law (17/2007) and implemented by means of special educational programmes such as:

Early morning classroom (Primary); Plurilingualism (Primary, Secondary, Post-Compulsory, Vocational Training); Immigrant Intensive Spanish language support; Co-education. Gender Equality awareness programme; Special needs students programme, among others. There is also a close relationship between the General Directorate of Vocational Education, Training and Lifelong Learning with NGOs through the “entrepreneur” programmes implemented by the Ministry of Education. In cooperation with NGO, Support and Business Development Centres, and Enterprise Associations, support in the setting up, organisation and management of virtual companies also there is a public Contest for Virtual entrepreneurial actions which prize consist in funding to help students to set up their business idea.

Welsh Assembly Government

The *Wales Spatial Plan* is the overarching framework and integration tool for Wales, and provides important underpinning in a whole range of matters, for example:

- economic development and employment goals;
- regeneration programmes in various parts of Wales;
- improving skill levels in the workforce;
- improving strategic planning for transport;
- reducing annual greenhouse gas emissions;
- understanding and meeting affordable housing needs;
- helping to shape regional government capital investment.

The Wales Spatial Plan is based upon local development plans that enable local planning authorities and other organisations to co-ordinate their activities, achieve agreed objectives and manage changes affecting the area.

The *Making the Connections* policy for public service reform in Wales sets out the regional government's vision for a prosperous, sustainable, bilingual, healthier and better-educated Wales. It outlines four main principles:

1. *Citizens at the Centre*: services more responsive to users with people and communities involved in designing the way services are delivered.
2. *Public Engagement*: every person to have the opportunity to contribute and connect with the hardest to reach.
3. *Working together as the Welsh Public Service*: better provider coordination to deliver sustainable, quality and responsive services.
4. *Value for Money*: making the most of resources.

Jämtland County Council

As a cooperation project between Universities and the cultural sector a new programme for pre-school teacher training is being set up in Jämtland. By combining traditional teacher training at University with studies in cultural history at a Museum, the students get a new perspective on their studies and a better understanding of how theory and practice work together.

In Jämtland several different measures are taken to reduce the number of NEETs. One project, Back on Track, is aimed at unemployed young adults in the age of 20-24 without a complete secondary education. The arena for the training is the regional, open air museum, in which a great range of different occupations and skills can be found. The goal is to get 50% of the participants back into some form of education, training or employment. To achieve this there is close cooperation between Jamtli (the regional museum of Jämtland), The regional state archive, The Unemployment agency, Birka folk-high school and the municipality of Östersund with the social welfare office.

Support tools



7. For policy **implementation** and **evaluation**, regional governments use tools to guarantee an adequate quality level.

7.1. First, regional governments adopt the methods and tools of **general and sector plans** to programme action.

The objective of these plans is to reflect European and state priorities, as well as specific territorial ones. The procedure is widespread and the variety of models is vast. Their comparison and perfecting is a basis for interregional cooperation.

7.1

7.2. Second, there is constant reference on all territorial levels to European **benchmarks** and the search for new benchmarks and indicators to evaluate better performance and cooperation with other Regions. This shows the potential and need of each Region and municipality to be able to define its own objectives in relation to each of the benchmarks and be able to take on greater responsibilities and understand how to activate regional and local policies to improve the economic and social wellbeing of these territories.

7.2

Welsh Assembly Government

- 1) By 2010, an EU average rate of no more than 10% early school leavers should be achieved. In 2008/09 333 15 year olds left full-time education in Wales without a qualification – or 0.9% of the cohort, and 0.7% points lower than in 2007/08.
- 2) The total number of graduates in mathematics, science and technology in the European Union should increase by at least 15% by 2010 while at the same time the level of gender imbalance should decrease. UK students are less likely to choose scientific and technical subjects than EU average, though the UK has a relatively healthy output of scientific and technical graduates.

- 3) By 2010, at least 85% of 22 year olds in the European Union should have completed upper secondary education. Wales' position estimated in 2007 report at 77% - slightly lower than both the UK as a whole and the EU27 average at that time.
- 4) By 2010, the percentage of low-achieving 15 years old in reading literacy in the European Union should have decreased by at least 20% compared to the year 2000. Wales did not take part in PISA 2000 and 2003, therefore progression on this indicator cannot be reported. However, in the PISA 2006 survey, Wales' position was slightly lower than the OECD average.
- 5) By 2010, the European Union average level of participation in lifelong learning, should be at least 12.5% of the adult working age population (25 to 64 age group). Wales position reported in 2007 at around 19%, far higher than the majority of European counterparts at that time.

7.3. Third, all the Regions, to different extents, are equipped with a system to **evaluate** the results achieved by the policies enacted, sometimes by impact analyses. In some Regions the evaluation covers individual spheres of operation and the group of policies and results produced with respect to European goals.

7.3

Junta de Andalucía

For policy implementation and evaluation, the regional government uses tools to guarantee quality levels. The Ministry of Education has its own *Educational Evaluation Agency* which is an independent institution. In the Ministry of Education structure there is a General Directorate of Educational Evaluation. Each school has a specific evaluation process to report yearly to the Provincial Delegation and results are showed up in the yearly report which a public document.

European cooperation

8. European cooperation between regional governments is an integral part of lifelong learning strategies. It develops at several levels, concerning above all the regional governments that sign specific **bilateral or multilateral cooperation agreements**. Regional governments act according to the increase in cooperation opportunities among the social actors in their Regions. This helps to develop cooperation between companies, training organisations, social partners, students and researchers.



Generalitat de Catalunya

Generalitat de Catalunya has established various bilateral agreements with other regional powers to promote cooperation between VET systems and perform mobility training projects. Concretely, Generalitat de Catalunya has bilateral agreements being sign up with Région Midi-Pyrénées (France), Conseil Régional de Rhône-Alpes (France), Conseil Régional de Languedoc-Roussillon (France), Regione Toscana (Italy), Regione Piemonte (Italy), Welsh Assembly Government (United Kingdom) and Illes Balears (Spain).

Govern de les Illes Balears

The establishment of collaboration agreements provides the possibility of student mobility from the Balearic Islands. With these agreements, it has been possible to carry out the placement practical training for students of higher grade, medium grade students and students of initial vocational training. At the moment there are several agreements that have been signed with other regional governments, i.e. with the Welsh Assembly Government (United Kingdom), the Regione Toscana (Italy), the Regional Government of Wielkopolska (Poland) and the Languedoc-Roussillon (France). The initial vocational training placement has been one of the biggest successes. The motivation that has been shown by pupils has been a good result. Thus, in this way training was addressed to some students who wanted to abandon their studies. They have also been given the tools to enter the labour market with better chances. The Balears Government also maintains a strong relationship with the Chambers of Commerce, Business Associations and Trade Unions. All these associations are aware of the magnitude of the task of encouraging entrepreneurs to develop their own business. Furthermore the Balears Government is involved in European activities aimed at improving document management training practices of the foreign companies. To facilitate the students' linguistic and cultural preparation, the Government offers different alternatives as well as some specific courses coordinated by the Official Language School .

Junta de Andalucía

The European cooperation is set up by means of bilateral agreements between regional government to support Mobility measures which put together the educational system, companies, training organisations, social partners, students researchers to get better work insertion and flexible pathways creating synergies between the European goals and tools. Junta de Andalucía has bilateral agreements signed with Lower Saxony Region in Germany, Tuscany Region and France. In the year 2009, Junta de Andalucía also joined the Barcelona Declaration to guarantee quality. The reliability in host institutions is guaranteed by this Declaration. Moreover Junta de Andalucía is involved in a Leonardo Partnership project ERIE-VET to establish common ways to create mobility actions with more than 12 regional Educational Institutions.

Regione Toscana

Regional cooperation may increase the added value, like safety and quality, of mobility in particular with regard to mutual guarantees that Regions can offer to our citizens. For this reason the Regional Government of Tuscany has already signed bilateral agreements with other regional governments in order to achieve a series of common goals aimed to develop transnational cooperation. Regione Toscana has signed bilateral agreements with Baden Württemberg, Wales, Catalunya, Junta de Andalucía, Brittany, Västra Götaland, Balearic Islands, Pest, Basque Country.

Västra Götalandsregionen

For the year 2010 Region Västra Götaland has been given an assignment from the Swedish government regarding implementation of a *competence platform*. Västra Götaland Region, together with its 49 municipalities, has initiated a plan to implement a competence platform in the Region. The purpose of the platform is to provide regional public authorities and educational planners with relevant statistics and information regarding range of educations/courses provided, and the current needs in the labour market. The platform aims to be a tool in the implementation of a coherent and comprehensive education market, where the supply/demand is in balance and the education demands of the future are met before imbalances occur. A strategic Council will be set up to let Region, labour market and industry meet and discuss what the Region needs in terms of competence and vocational skills now and in the future.

9. The main fields where transregional cooperation work develops are:

9.1. **Improving the European strategic and political picture**, using joint action to create synergy between European goals and tools and the growth potential of Regions.

9.2. Joint promotion of **mobility policies for study and work purposes**. The aim of these policies is mutual support to guarantee the best conditions for quality of study and work experience. They cover a vast range of people: students, apprentices, trainers and teachers, social partners, businessmen, researchers and policy makers. Regions exploit their interface role with the local economies, promoting new forms of sector mobility that involve actors in a specific economic sector and helping them develop relationships with partners in another Region.

9.3. **Policy learning and policy transfer** actions aimed at both “policy ideas” and concrete tools. These actions develop towards the:

- need to improve the quality of formal and continuing education and training systems and their capacity to innovate, including those linked to new technologies;
- conception of policies and measures linked to specific goals such as developing entrepreneurship, adult education and gender policies.

9.4. Actions aimed at extending the network of relationships between regional governments interested in developing activities with the **Open Method of Coordination**– usually on simplified models – and **benchmarking** activities.

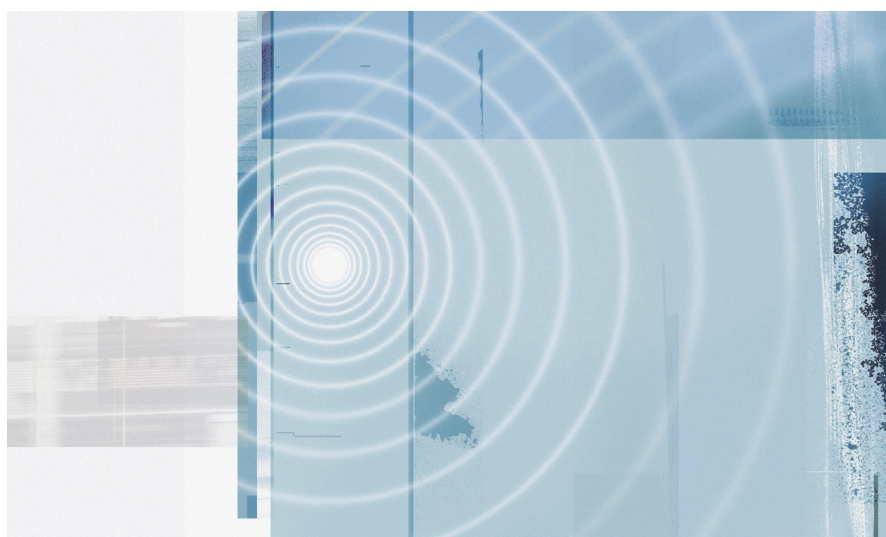


9.1

9.2

9.3

9.4







ACTION PLAN FOR 2010-2011

The EARLALL Action Plan could include the following commitments:

1. Mobility: Creating a new context of European programmes to encourage mobility between Regions

It is necessary to extend the number of regional governments that cooperate on mobility, as hoped for by the Barcelona Declaration.

Presently there is no European policy aimed specifically at stimulating and strengthening the role the Regions can play to encourage citizen mobility for study and professional growth.

To overcome this limitation it is necessary to act at European level on several fronts:

- 1.1. **Mobility programmes within the framework of lifelong learning policies.** Mobility actions in the programmes should earmark an amount to stimulate and support bilateral cooperation between regional governments, developing regional policies on mobility and increasing the quality and effectiveness of the measures adopted at regional level.
- 1.2. **European Social Fund.** The ESF must begin a balance of mobility action aimed at professional growth created with the Regional Operational Programmes (ROPs) and the Transnational Axis. This requires learning lessons from ongoing experience, allocating more resources for this as soon as possible, and preparing guidelines so that the next programmes can extend appropriate actions.
- 1.3. **Interreg.** Its goal is to refine a programme for financing mobility projects between European Regions regardless of the area they belong to.
- 1.4. **Sector mobility.** Within the framework of the programmes of the various European policies (commerce, environment, companies, etc.) specific action should be contemplated to support sector mobility for the professional development of young people and operators.

2. Increasing the quality of education and training systems in the Regions

It is necessary to reinforce the cooperation between Regions to increase the quality of regional systems. This can be obtained by actions to:

- 2.1. Increase the relationship between educational systems and the world of work by benchmarking the measures adopted in various Regions and through internationally important common actions. These could include the study of devices to better understand the demand of new professional profiles emerging in the labour market; particularly those already programmed in the framework for innovation on vocational training and lifelong learning activities, and European strategies for “New Skills for New Jobs”;
- 2.2. Develop cooperation in distance learning training through exchanges or joint production of training modules and the development of common databases;
- 2.3. Support exchanges and joint and coordinated actions to train trainers;
- 2.4. Develop new forms of cooperation in the field of ongoing training;
- 2.5. Improve training quality through its integration and cooperation with cultural infrastructures.

3. Social cohesion and adult education

Regions must contribute to stopping the stagnation in every Member State of the educational conditions of 77 million low-skilled workers. Further, we know from reports by the European Commission that without special intervention by 2020 more than one fifth of the population aged between 25 and 35 will be illiterate. Regions should start forms of mutual learning to understand how to implement a package of urgent transversal measures that act to:

- 3.1. Use training and prevent low educational achievement among young people;
- 3.2. Train young parents with inadequate scholastic backgrounds;
- 3.3. Reinforce and publicise “security” training measures for unemployed people and, in particular, low-skilled people;
- 3.4. Promote basic training in the workplace;
- 3.5. Develop or create local, regional and national systems that involve a wide range of key actors to guarantee service continuity and security.

4. Entrepreneurship

A strategy for entrepreneurship in education is an investment in future innovation and in a more dynamic society, where individuals are capable of identifying opportunities and taking action by transforming ideas into activities in a social, cultural or economic context. It is the responsibility of educational Institutions to implement this strategy. Therefore, Regional and Local Authorities have a crucial role to play.

The Oslo Agenda for Entrepreneurship Education in Europe offers a rich menu of proposals, from which EARLALL should pick the following actions to develop in co-ordination with the member Regions that wish to do so:

- Build a common platform of existing programmes, projects and teaching materials in all Regions, to share and disseminate to support practitioners in improving the supply of entrepreneurship education.
- Develop and share research results to assess the impact of entrepreneurship education on individuals, communities, society and the economy.
- Launch innovative actions to train teachers, provide specific training in entrepreneurship, explaining why entrepreneurship is a key competence for all and how related methods and activities can bring more dynamism and innovation into different courses.
- Encourage the creation of international learning communities with the mission of fostering entrepreneurial mindsets, by building links between education and the business world.

5. Implementing regional strategies for lifelong learning

The common challenge to all regional governments is to bring all the sector operations to a comprehensive and coherent lifelong learning strategy.

There are three transnational and transregional types of actions to be performed in coming months:

- Activate relationships with the European Commission to study the possibility of prearranging a first experimental relationship to study the contribution of Regions to implementing the European strategy for education and training.
- Operate on a European and state level to guarantee, even for the future, the close relationship between the European Social Fund and the regional policies for lifelong learning.

- Raise awareness of the real lifelong dimension in lifelong learning i.e. "from cradle to grave" – and include cultural experiences as important tools for both quality development in education and broad participation in lifelong learning.

Learning

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