



EAEA response to the  
**Consultation: "Towards a new European Neighbourhood Policy"**

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**The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) is the voice of non-formal adult education in Europe. EAEA is a European NGO with 123 member organisations in 42 countries and represents more than 60 million learners Europe-wide.**

The EAEA welcomes the renewal of the European Neighbourhood Policy. EAEA believes that strong relations with the ENP countries are beneficial for both the concerned countries and the EU. Many of our members are located in the ENP countries and have appreciated the opportunity to work more closely with the EWU and its member states. The work of the European Training Foundation, for example, is highly appreciated. Our members do think that the cooperation, especially in the area of adult education and lifelong learning, should be improved and deepened.

The EAEA's main points are:

1. Extending the ENP makes sense

EAEA supports the idea to extend the ENP to the neighbours of the neighbours. Closer cooperation with the Mediterranean countries but also Russia and the Central Asian countries can contribute to better strategies in dealing with the key challenges.

2. Strengthen adult education and lifelong learning, incl. the participation in EU programmes

Adult education not only helps develop skills and competences but also fosters dialogue, active citizenship and a sense of political efficacy. EAEA members appreciate the developments that the EU countries are making in this area and are keen to join as well as share their own achievements. The participation in programmes such as Erasmus+ and Europe for Citizens (with additional funds) can foster increased cooperation, innovation and exchanges.

We also propose an increased cooperation between DG Enlargement, DG EAC and DG Employment in order to extend the cooperation in the area of education and training. The European Agenda for adult



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learning, for example, could easily be extended to ENP countries (with additional funds for the new countries).

### 3. Strengthen outreach to larger groups of the population

We believe that more strategies are necessary to reach out to groups that have so far been not taken into consideration and/or are hard-to-reach. We propose to support groups such as people living in rural areas, the low-skilled and socially disadvantaged through wide-reaching adult learning initiatives that tackle life and basic skills but also active citizenship.

### 4. Strengthen civil society and their umbrella organisations

EAEA strongly believes that civil society organisations contribute enormously to the democracy and grassroots activism everywhere. We therefore encourage the European Commission to support structures and projects that aim at activating citizens, build their capacity in advocacy and support grassroots structures. Our experience, based on our membership, is also that umbrella organisations in the different sectors (even if they are small) are hugely important in order to provide advocacy for their topics, support their grassroots members but also to cooperate with other stakeholders. A low-threshold programme based on lump sum payments that supports civil society in the ENP would be very welcome indeed.

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