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THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

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1 Highlights

Kick-off of the EAEA-led project **Partner-UP**

Focus group on the regional capacity for adult education by **Regale project**

Publication of EAEA's **policy paper on European paid training leave**

Advocacy Academy in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

EAEA General Assembly, Grundtvig Award, and Annual Conference in Zagreb, Croatia

Making Skills Count conference of the European Commission

January

February

Study visit by **the Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation** at EAEA

Launch of **the EAEA Grundtvig Award call**

March

Start of **the Horizon Europe project LEVERS**

The final event of **the Bildung project**

BILDUNG

Citizens' Panel of the European Commission

April

May

Start of **the European Year of Skills**

EUROPEAN YEAR OF SKILLS

Joint **European Year of Skills event** with the Lifelong Learning Platform and ETF

Meeting of the Interest Group for **Lifelong Learning on the Green Transition**

June

EAEA joins European Alliance for a **Just Transition**

EAEA participated in **an Erasmus+ stakeholder consultation** organised by MEP Milan Zver

CONFINTEA VII European regional follow-up event

European Education Area Stakeholder Conference

Kick-off of the EAEA-co-led project **JUST4ALL**

ICAE World Assembly in Bali

Lifelong Learning Week 2023

Meeting of the Interest Group for **Lifelong Learning on the European Education Area**

July | August | September | October | November | December

Launch of the EAEA **podcast Beyond Learning**

Skills Skills Skills event of the European Parliament, Cedefop and Eurofound

EPALE Community Conference 2023

Coordination meeting of the Interest Group for Lifelong Learning with the Lifelong Learning Platform and the chairs MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen and MEP Dace Melbarde

EAEA's 70th-anniversary policy party in Brussels

Publication of **EAEA Country Reports** 2023 with learner stories

Publication of **EAEA's background paper on Adult Learning and Green Transition**

2

MAKING AN IMPACT ACROSS EUROPE

2 Making an impact across Europe

EAEA's year 2023 at a glance

1
new EAEA learning platform:
learning.eaea.org

27
countries covered in the EAEA Country Reports 2023

4
conferences organised and co-organised by EAEA

500+
participants in EAEA's events, training courses, and study visits

7
podcast episodes of the new EAEA podcast Beyond Learning

42
European countries engaged in EAEA's activities

The Green Transition at the centre

Throughout the year, EAEA focused on adult learning and green transition, exploring both policy and practice.

The EAEA Annual Conference on Adult Learning and the Green Transition took place in Zagreb, Croatia on 7 June, and was hosted by Adult Education Institution Dante. The conference focused on two strands - Learning in communities and Strategies for a just green transition - and included a keynote speech from Arjen Wals, Professor of Transformative Learning for Socio-Ecological Sustainability at Wageningen University in the Netherlands, UNESCO Chair for Sustainable Development.

EAEA also encouraged an exchange of best practices by inviting ALE organisations to apply for the EAEA Grundtvig Award. From advancing sustainable agriculture in Armenia, to learning the "forgotten" circular skills across Europe, the winning initiatives displayed the transformative impact of adult learning on lives and communities.

To look at the grassroots perspective in adult learning and the green transition, in 2023 EAEA launched a podcast Beyond Learning, which explores stories of learning, and stories of change. EAEA met with learners and educators to discuss the role of museums in learning about sustainable development, bottom-up community building, co-creation of green public spaces, and more.

Concluding EAEA's thematic work on adult learning and green transition in 2023, the new background paper brings forward the perspectives of adult learners, educators, and community organisers in Europe. It is based on the conversations from the EAEA podcast Beyond Learning, and on the results of the EAEA Annual Conference on Adult Learning and Green Transition. The paper explores learners' motivation to engage in green transition and the values that they see at its core. It closes with a set of recommendations.

> “I think, maybe even without knowing, a lot of people are looking for meaning in life. They’re trying to make sense of what’s happening. It’s about connecting the past, present and future, but it’s also reconnecting science and culture. To make sense of the local historical identity and this whole process of globalisation. What is my position in this and how does it affect me and what can I do? Stimulating awareness and especially agency. I think this is key.

- Maarten Okkersen, Museon Omnversum, EAEA podcast Beyond Learning, Episode 3: Making Meaning

RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW ALE CAN FOSTER GREEN TRANSITION

- **Strategies for ALE and the green transition take a long time to build.** They need to include the communities, the providers, the learners, the educators, trade unions, and decision makers at different levels to have robust foundations.
- **Organisations that aim to address green transition need to accept that they will need to constantly re-imagine themselves.** A forward-looking perspective should include an analysis of not only the broader policy agendas, but also the local context in which their learners are living in.
- **Learning needs to be strongly connected with the reality and lived experience of the learner and their immediate community, and foster a sense of belonging.** When possible, adult learning providers should reach out to the communities that are not included in learning to make sure that their voices are heard.
- **Adult learning providers and educators should address and encourage sustainability in all its dimensions.** It is a spectrum that is not just reduced to environmental sustainability, but also social sustainability, and the importance of keeping meaningful relationships.
- **Practise what you preach.** A whole institution approach to sustainability should be encouraged when possible.

Increasing EAEA's impact and visibility

2023 was a very strong year for EAEA: as a unique association at the European level giving a voice to non-formal adult learning and education, EAEA was a prime partner for events and consultations around the European Year of Skills. EAEA actively worked with a wide range of partners and stakeholders at the European, international, and national levels to build bridges across countries and sectors, bringing practice together with policy and research. Among other things, EAEA organised a launch event for the European Year together with the European Training Foundation and the Lifelong Learning Platform, which also brought the skills agendas of non-EU Eastern European countries into focus. Our work on the European Year gave us strong visibility and we are proud that non-formal ALE was recognised in the European Year thanks to our intensive awareness-raising work.

European Year of Skills conference.

To strengthen EAEA's work on skills for life, EAEA expanded cooperation with many partners: EAEA joined the European Alliance for a Just Transition, concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with the European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training (EVBB) as well as the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA), and also worked with the Bruegel Think Tank on a campaign on Skills.

EAEA also led several policy developments: EAEA's annual conference on Adult Learning and the Green Transition was an official partner of the EU Green Week, contributing to the themes and objectives of Erasmus+. Through our annual theme, we were also involved in European Parliament reports on Green Transition and Just Transition, which emphasised ALE, life skills, and transversal skills thanks to our input. EAEA's participation in the Citizens Panels of the European Commission was also a great success. Through written feedback, but also our participation in the panels themselves as external experts, we were able to participate in the idea harvesting process. The Commission's Proposal for a Council Recommendation 'Europe on the Move' attests to our impact, as well as to the great interest of Europe's adult citizens in participating in learning mobility.

EAEA not only responded to new policy processes but was also an agenda-setter: we introduced an initiative on Paid Transnational Education Leave, which was first discussed as a petition by the European Parliament and later also in other EU institutions. In recent EU documents, we see a development in this direction and are convinced that the adoption of a recommendation or similar will have a very positive impact on the participation in ALE of all adult citizens.

EAEA created a task force, composed of EAEA members, Board members, and secretariat, for the 2024 European elections, which prepared the work on a new EAEA Manifesto for Adult Learning (to be published in 2024) and discussed strategies for successful campaigns to raise awareness for ALE in meetings of a new election advocacy lab. This activity will continue in 2024 until the elections.

Thanks to the engagement of EAEA's members, EAEA was also able to have an impact at the national and regional levels: EAEA's membership of

the EC working groups on ALE and Equality and Values helped us contribute actively to national processes in the areas of Individual Learning Accounts and citizenship education. Furthermore, EAEA was invited by national ministries to provide informal and sometimes formal input to national implementation processes of European initiatives, such as Upskilling Pathways. We provided our members with templates for statements on ALE funding, especially Erasmus+ and ESF+, and were able to support them in drawing attention to their concerns at the national and regional levels. More impact of EAEA's work at the national and regional levels are collected in the EAEA country reports 2023.

EAEA's policy work was particularly taken up by members in Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, and Belgium, where there have been important political changes with a potential negative impact on participation in ALE. Our work empowered them to speak to their national and regional policymakers and raise awareness of the importance of the sector. Our collaboration with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning around the follow-up and monitoring of the Marrakech Framework for Action in Europe also allowed us to reach out to ministries and strengthen cooperation at this level.

Brussels-based events with a focus on policy and strategy, such as the roundtable on green transition, the EAEA 70th anniversary reception and the joint event on Civil Society for Lifelong Skills Development of EAEA, ETF and LLLP, brought together on average 30 participants. Several webinars for members were organised throughout 2023, ranging from topics such as the European Year of Skills, the EU elections, to the Erasmus+ learner mobility, which brought together on average 15 participants.

According to EAEA's member survey conducted in 2024, the members consider EAEA's advocacy and policy work very impactful. When evaluating EAEA's impact on different policy levels, 100% of respondents say the impact on the European level is "strong" or "very strong". This is followed by the impact on the organisation's level (78% "strong or "very strong"), which has been increasing over the past few years.

Strengthening networks through capacity-building

EAEA worked intensively on new strategies for capacity-building and stakeholder engagement, to work more closely with our members and their members at the grassroots level and to reach out to citizens.

EAEA developed a new format for the EAEA Younger Staff Training, a popular learning opportunity for young ALE professionals, to reach more participants. Instead of a multi-day face-to-face training course in Brussels, EAEA launched an online training course with 4 course modules that encourage interactivity and collaboration with other participants. The course, based on Moodle, is available on EAEA's website https://learning.eaea.org and can be started at any time, i.e. even beyond 2023. The course modules include the topics of why ALE is needed, which ALE practices there are in Europe, learning methods and approaches, and policy and advocacy.

In 2023, EAEA also introduced a completely new format, a podcast entitled "Beyond Learning", which can be accessed via Apple Podcast, Spotify, and other streaming services. The podcast, which explores the

Beyond Learning podcast banner illustrated by Clémence Garnier.

many sides of non-formal ALE, is hugely popular with adult educators and adult learners who can relate to the stories and interviews from their personal experience. It also serves to raise awareness among policymakers of the realities and the diversity of ALE in Europe. In 2023, the podcast's theme was the green transition, and a total of 7 episodes introduced listeners to the worlds of upcycling, creating, sustainable lifestyles, and other topics. Additionally, an online training course on https://learning.eaea.org accompanied the episodes of the podcast. In Hungary, EAEA's podcast is currently in the top 40 of educational podcasts, and it is also climbing the ranking in other countries.

EAEA also hosted several training activities and study visits for its members from Finland, Norway, Ireland, and Switzerland, as well as EAEA research partner ESREA, with tailor-made programmes. To improve co-operation with the academic level, EAEA also welcomed ESREA's coordinator Marcella Milana for a few weeks in Brussels and introduced her to EU policy work in the field of ALE. EAEA's many years of experience have shown that these study visits are particularly effective in terms of the sustainability of EAEA's activities.

Engaging stakeholders for cross-sectoral cooperation

EAEA fosters collaboration and knowledge exchange among adult learning and education (ALE) stakeholders throughout Europe. Through EU-funded projects, EAEA has facilitated regional cooperation and established national and regional umbrella organisations in areas where they were lacking. This has notably enhanced cooperation among Central European countries and bolstered associations in the Baltic States.

EAEA's Advocacy Academy is now expanding cooperation in the Balkans and Eastern Europe, using peer learning methods to advance joint learning processes and ALE strategies. Moreover, EAEA's partnerships with RREUSE and the European Alliance for a Just Transition, launched in 2023, establish new networks vital for transformative ALE. These collaborations inform EAEA's policy efforts, including sustainability papers, and reciprocally benefit from EAEA's insights on ALE's role in the green transition.

Furthermore, EAEA's Memorandum of Understanding with EVBB strengthens cooperation between non-formal ALE and vocational education and training (VET) at the European level. Finally, EAEA's involvement with the Belgian Bruegel Think Tank expands its stakeholder network, connecting with academia and other key think tanks.

Statements and opinions

TO INFLUENCE POLICY PROCESSES AND COMMUNICATE THE RESULTS OF EAEA'S WORK, EAEA PUBLISHED A NUMBER OF STATEMENTS, INFO NOTES AND BACKGROUND REPORTS IN 2023:

- A greener future: voices of learners and educators in green transition. **Background paper** on adult learning and green transition. - December 2023
- ESF+: Make it more inclusive and accessible, and put the learners at the centre! – **EAEA's feedback** to the ESF+ consultations (French version is available) - December 2023
- Erasmus+: What's in it for adult learning and education? – **EAEA's feedback** to the open public consultation of the European Commission - December 2023
- Decreasing funding levels – and yet expecting miracles? – **EAEA's statement** on funding pressures on non-formal adult learning and education - November 2023
- We need skills for the labour market – and beyond! – **EAEA's own initiative** midterm review of the European Year of Skills - November 2023

- European Education Area: How more recognition and structural funding for ALE can make it a success – **EAEA's feedback** to the Commission's call for evidence - September 2023
- EAEA feedback to the Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027 - July 2023
- EU Country Reports and Country-Specific Recommendations 2023 – **EAEA's info note** - June 2023
- European Education Area (EEA) – Mid-term review 2023-2024 – **EAEA's info note** - May 2023
- Learning Mobility for Adults: Put quality of learning mobility at the centre – EAEA's statement - May 2023
- Widening Access to Adult Learning through Transnational Paid Education Leave Schemes for All Workers – **EAEA's position paper** - April 2023
- The EESC's recommendations for a solid reform of the European Semester: The missing voice of adult learning and education organisations – **EAEA's response** - January 2023

Cooperating across sectors and areas of work

EAEA's various European civil society partners provided a multiplier effect within their networks. These include the Lifelong Learning Platform, Social Platform, SOLIDAR, EUCEN, ESREA, ESBN and CONCORD. EAEA's Head of Policy Raffaela Kihrer was elected General Secretary of the LLLP in September 2023. A multiplier effect at the global level was ensured through ongoing collaboration with EAEA's global body ICAE, EAEA's sister organisations AAACE (Northern America) and ASPBAE (Asian Pacific Area), and a partnership with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.

International cooperation

At the international level, EAEA engaged and achieved impact in several important processes:

- **European follow-up of UNESCO's CONFINTEA VII:** EAEA organised a European follow-up conference to CONFINTEA VII on 9 October 2023 together with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and the Lifelong Learning Platform (LLLP); see more information in the dedicated section on events.

- **World Assembly of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE):** EAEA participated in the World Assembly of ICAE in November 2023, sharing the European experience with ALE policy development and implementation and connecting to ALE organisations and professionals from around the globe. The new network has already had its first fruits: EAEA was invited to present the European implementation process of the MFA and its connection to the European Education Area at an online conference of the North-American organisation COLLO in 2024.

- **UNESCO CCNGO:** EAEA, represented by Christoph Jost from DVV International, was newly elected to the board of the UNESCO Collective Coordination Group ED 2030 (CCNGO) in 2023. EAEA is thus the

official representative of civil society in the field of education and lifelong learning for Europe and in this role works closely with representatives from other regions of the world. The Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education For All (CCNGO/EFA) is UNESCO's main mechanism for dialogue, reflection and partnerships with NGOs within the EFA movement. It is included in UNESCO's regular programme.

- **DEAR multistakeholder group of DG INTPA, European Commission:** EAEA's Deputy Secretary General Raffaela Kihrer represents European civil society in lifelong learning on behalf of the Lifelong Learning Platform in the DEAR (development education and awareness raising) multistakeholder group of DG INTPA of the European Commission. The Multistakeholder Group dealt with the European Year of Skills 2023 and the prioritisation of the future DEAR programme. EAEA brought the lifelong learning dimension of DEAR to the foreground and encouraged closer cooperation with other DGs of the European Commission.

EAEA networks
umbrella organisations
LIFELONG LEARNING PLATFORM
EUROPEAN CIVIL SOCIETY FOR EDUCATION
ICAE
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ADULT EDUCATION
socialplatform
CONCORD
European NGO confederation for relief and development
EAEA members
other key partners
LIFELONG LEARNING INTEREST GROUP
European Society for Research on the Education of Adults
ESREA
EfVET
European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training
SDG WATCH EUROPE
CEDEFOP
eucen
European Basic Skills Network
EPALE
UNESCO
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UIL
UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
ASPBAE
Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education
ETF
Working together Learning for life
AAACE
European Commission
ELM
European Lifelong Learning Magazine
OECD
solidar

3

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

3 Conferences and events

EAEA events at a glance

7
study visits and training courses

3
online discussions for members

4
conferences

+500
participants at trainings, conferences and events

General Assembly 2023

The General Assembly of EAEA members, the main decision-making body of EAEA, met on 6 June in Zagreb to discuss and approve the EAEA financial and activity reports for 2022 and the plans for the upcoming year. A new Executive Board was elected, as listed elsewhere in this report. The meeting was attended by 100 participants.

Participants discussing at the General Assembly.

Grundtvig Award 2023

The EAEA Grundtvig Award 2023 centred on Adult Learning and the Green Transition, recognising the vital role of adult learning and education in addressing the challenges posed by climate change and environmental degradation. The winners were selected in two categories: national initiatives and transnational initiatives. EAEA awarded the two organisations on 6 June 2023 in Zagreb, Croatia.

WINNER IN THE NATIONAL CATEGORY

Women's economic empowerment in Shirak and Gegharkunik Marzes

The winning project is run by Green Lane Agricultural Assistance NGO in Armenia. The NGO has supported farmers in the transition to sustainable agriculture since 2004. The women participating in the project come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and the project has allowed them to gain knowledge and experience in sustainable agriculture and improve their economic situation, as well as serve as an example to the residents in their communities.

Ester Hakobyan received the award on behalf of Nune Sarukhanyan, President of the Green Lane.

> **Receiving this honour will increase our role and reputation in our country. As a result, more women will be involved in our projects.**
>
> – Nune Sarukhanyan, Green Lane NGO

WINNER IN THE TRANSNATIONAL CATEGORY

Building green skills for circular economy

Run by Fenan Consulting, the Netherlands, the project Building green skills for circular economy involves people from disadvantaged social groups, such as migrants, refugees, and senior citizens, to share their circular skills and sustainable lifestyles with adult learners. The Erasmus+ funded project has increased social recognition by bringing in marginalised groups as educators and inspirational examples in the online course. Non-formal learning club "WE" from Lithuania is a partner in the project.

> **Project partners strongly believe that we can solve the problem of global warming by joining forces with all stakeholders. Together, we can save our planet.**
>
> **- Anna Fenko, Fenan Consulting**

Anne Fenko (in the middle) from Fenan Consulting receiving the Grundtvig Award.

Annual Conference on Adult Learning and the Green Transition

EAEA held its annual conference on Adult Learning and Green Transition on 7 June in Zagreb, Croatia. The event was attended by 120 participants from 26 countries. Our keynote speaker Arjen Wals, Professor of Transformative Learning for Socio-Ecological Sustainability and UNESCO Chair Social Learning for Sustainable Development gave a speech titled "A just green transition in times of crisis: how can adult learning help us build a more sustainable world?"

The conference explored two strands. The first strand, "Learning in communities" focused on community dialogue and political engagement through several thematic sessions, which included a learner roundtable, two parallel workshops, and an interactive world cafe. The two workshops focused on Green transition and democratic processes: getting everyone on board and Adult learning as a space for political engagement. In the second strand, "Strategies for a just green transition", participants explored the more policy and strategy-related aspects of adult learning and the green transition during a policy roundtable, two parallel workshops, and a world cafe session. The two workshops looked at Building green partnerships and Developing a green skills strategy. Full results are available on the conference website.

> "If you can encourage creativity in any way, this is always worth it for the people and the environment around them!
>
> - Margaret Browning, learner of the Roscommon Women's Network, speaking at the EAEA Annual Conference

Workshop participants at the Annual Conference

EAEA Annual Conference

26
countries

4
parallel workshops

120
participants

2
2 strands of parallel activities:
- Learning in communities
- Strategies for a just green transition.

The outcomes of the conference were used to develop an EAEA background paper, featuring case studies and recommendations, with a focus on learner voice.

EAEA Younger Staff Training

In 2023, the annual EAEA Younger Staff Training took place online under the title Introduction to Adult Learning in Europe, hosted on EAEA e-learning platform learning.eaea.org. The course includes four modules:

1. What is adult education, and why do we need it?
2. Adult learning practice in Europe: case studies from selected countries
3. Adult learning methods and approaches
4. Adult learning policy and advocacy.

By the end of 2023, around 50 participants had enrolled in the course.

Advocacy Academy in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Advocacy Academy was co-organised by DVV International, the International Council for Adult Education, and EAEA to assist adult learning organisations from six countries in creating their advocacy plans. Following the first session of the training in Turkey in 2022 (jointly led by EAEA and ICAE), EAEA's Raffaela Kihrer and Davide Muraro, together with ICAE's Secretary-General Katarina Popovic, designed and implemented a second workshop in Sarajevo in May/June 2024 for 30 participants from Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, and Ukraine. The country representatives presented their draft advocacy plans and exchanged feedback, suggestions and best practices, benefiting from inputs from both trainers and fellow participants.

Advocacy Adacemy in Sarajevo.

ETF-LLLP-EAEA joint conference “Civil society for lifelong skills development in Europe and partner countries”

The European Training Foundation (ETF), the Lifelong Learning Platform (LLLP), and EAEA) joined forces in promoting policy dialogue and partnerships between governments and civil society organisations that are active in the sector, both in ETF Partner Countries and EU Member States, as a means towards access to good quality lifelong learning for all. The conference, held on 23 May 2023. included a large number of high-level speakers from the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the OECD. 60 participants attended the event.

ETF-LLLP-EAEA joint conference.

> **"Reporting on the progress of implementation of global adult learning policies is possible thanks to the contribution and feedback of civil society**
>
> **- Nicolas Jonas, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, speaking at the EAEA-ETF-LLLP joint conference.**

European follow-up of CONFINTEA VII withUNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and LLLP

Together with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and the Lifelong Learning Platform (LLLP), EAEA organised a European follow-up conference to CONFINTEA VII on 9 October 2023. The online event was attended by a large number of European ministries responsible for ALE, and speakers included representatives from the European Commission, ETF and EESC.

CONFINTEA VII took place in Marrakech, Morocco, in 2022 and EAEA had played a decisive role in the final version of the Marrakech Framework for Action (MFA). EAEA's close collaboration with UIL on the MFA implementation process will, therefore, continue in the coming years, and, as a result of EAEA's engagement in the process, EAEA has also been invited to speak at events organised by North-American and Asian ALE organisations to share the European experience.

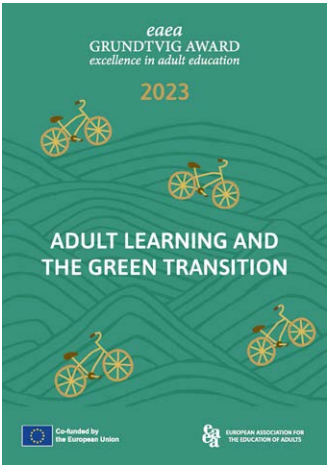
4

PUBLICATIONS

4 Publications

EAEA Grundtvig Award publication

Each year, EAEA awards excellent and innovative projects that follow our annual topic. The 2023 Grundtvig Award publication presents 17 adult learning initiatives that strived to build capacity for greening adult learning and education. The publication, released digitally in November 2023, was widely disseminated to relevant stakeholders and policymakers on European, national and regional levels.



Adult education in European countries from a civil society perspective

The annual EAEA country reports provide civil society insight into adult education developments across Europe. In 2023, a new survey format was launched to further increase the quality and representativeness of the data, resulting in a higher number of countries included. For the first time, the country reports included several learners' stories. EAEA asked its members about, financing, participation of learners, and the involvement of civil society organisations in decision-making processes, awareness, and engagement in international and EU initiatives, among other topics. The reports are published digitally on the country report website.

International Council for Adult Education: 50 years in adult learning and education

In 2023, EAEA's longtime partner the International Council for Adult Education celebrated its 50th anniversary. EAEA supported ICAE by leading the work on a publication that brought together ICAE's main achievements. In addition to coordinating the contributions with the support of the Editorial Board, EAEA produced the layout for the publication and interviewed ICAE members for one of the contributions. The publication was launched at ICAE's World Assembly in Bali, Indonesia in December 2023.

5

INFORMATION SERVICES

5 Information services

EAEA information services at a glance

Communication channels

EAEA successfully implemented its communications and information strategy in 2023, reaching thousands of stakeholders, educators, and adult learners in Europe and beyond. To ensure a good foundation for EAEA's communications work in the coming years, EAEA updated the new communications strategy for the next 2-year period. EAEA also launched a new Beyond Learning podcast, which was actively promoted through EAEA's channels and reached a good number of listeners.

EAEA worked on the continuous professionalisation of the communications and the involvement of EAEA's members in communication. Among other things, EAEA planned a communication campaign for the upcoming European elections with the members. Communication was reinforced through a new staff member who supports communications and capacity-building.

The EAEA website and social media channels remained the main reference point for information on new adult education policy developments. Number of users on eaea.org website dropped slightly (from 44 000 to 38 000), which is potentially caused by the changes in the analytics tools used. In July 2023 Google enforced change from Google Analytics 3 to GA4, and in November 2023 EAEA replaced Google Analytics with more GDPR-compliant Matomo. EAEA Facebook account continued growing (more than 9000 users by the end of the year), and X/Twitter account (5800 followers) gained a high level of engagement (nearly 5% rate), which means our followers find our content interesting and useful. EAEA's LinkedIn profile attained more than 3100 followers, with a growth of 48 percent. LinkedIn allowed EAEA to reach a professional audience that is otherwise rather difficult for EAEA to reach.

EAEA disseminates information to its members through various channels. EAEA's general newsletter was published 6 times and the member newsletter 10 times in 2023. In addition to the newsletters, the EAEA Secretary General e-mailed the members about important policy developments. For example, in 2023, "News From Brussels" channel was used to report on EAEA's successes with the Commission's proposal on Europe on the Move. EAEA also adopted a more direct approach to specific interest groups through invitations to events, social media outreach, and meetings face-to-face and online.

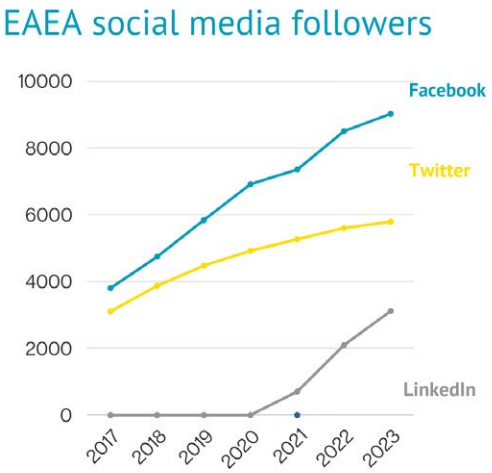
EAEA continued to be an active member of the advisory board of the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE) in 2023. EAEA also remains on the Editorial Board of ELM Magazine. These collaborations have helped EAEA to expand its reach and impact.

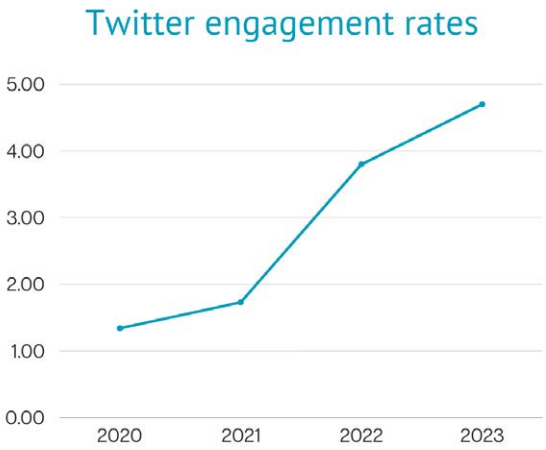
The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture continued to support EAEA's Communication Officer (through the Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation – Kvs) in 2023.

Satisfaction with EAEA's communication work

100 % who replied to EAEA member survey felt either "very satisfied" or "satisfied". Members were particularly appreciative of Policy news, news

about EAEA events, and information about projects. Members' most followed communications channels were EAEA Newsletter, Member Newsletter, emails and the website.





Impact of EAEA communication work

3,4% INCREASE

6% INCREASE

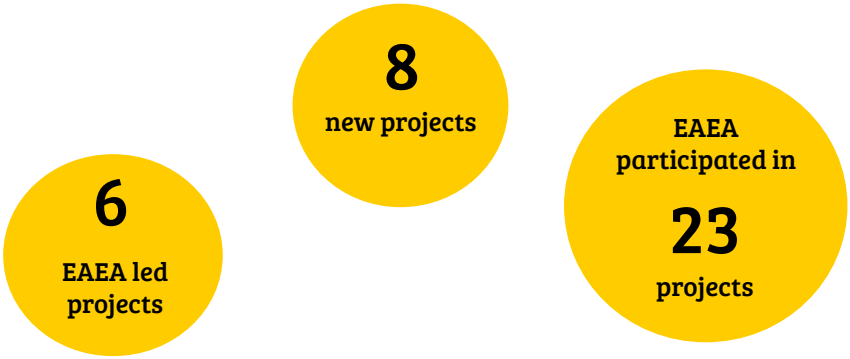
48% INCREASE

6

PROJECTS

6 Projects

EAEA 's project work in 2023 at a glance:



EAEA's projects focus on, on one hand, on advocacy and policy and, on the other hand, on design, implementation and exchange of practices in adult education and lifelong learning. EAEA participates mainly in Erasmus+ projects but also other funding programmes, such as Horizon Europe and CERV. With EAEA steadily broadening its engagement in project work, current projects are not only aiming at a concrete, practical level but also in creating impact on a more systemic and policy support level.

The projects cover a wide range of topics, such as partnerships and cooperation in ALE systems (Partner-Up, RegALE), supporting sustainability and green competences through ALE (SMALEI, TALE, Engage4BIO and LEVERS), improving adult participation in education and social inclusion (ENHANCE, MOVE-UP, JUST4ALL, ALL-IN), emerging technologies application in ALE (e.g., AI4AL) and improving learning spaces (SAFE). In 2023, EAEA was involved in additional projects targeting older learners (e.g., AgeingWell, E-enAGEd , COPE and SAA).

Included target groups are low-skilled adults, older learners, as well as ALE organisations and educators, with some projects aiming also at the systemic and strategic levels involving public authorities.

EAEA-led projects

PARTNER-UP

- **2023-2024**
- **Aims:** The Partnerships and stakeholder engagement for Upskilling Pathways (Partner UP) intends to improve the implementation of Upskilling Pathways (UP) by identifying and engaging new stakeholders, establishing and improving cooperation mechanisms and implementation plans with them. It intends to have a systemic impact on the implementation of Upskilling Pathways (UP) by developing new cooperation mechanisms.
- **Website:** partnerup-project.eu

AI4AL

- **2022-2024**
- **Aims:** AI4AL aims to facilitate a mindful adoption of AI technologies in the adult learning and education sector, as well as improve assessment and self-assessment procedures for the basic digital skills of adult learners and for the definition of personalised individual training.
- **Website:** www.ai4al.eu

ENHANCE

- **2023-2024**
- **Aims:** The ENHANCE project focuses on bottom-up approaches and learners as agents of change in their communities, through the creation of a comprehensive and interactive matrix of existing initiatives that promote learners' voices, the creation of a roadmap, a set of recommendations and booklets for enhancing learners' voices, as well as the development of a series of podcasts that will be socially activated in the public space.

BILDUNG

- **2020-2023**
- **Aims:** By adopting the holistic concept of 'Bildung' and exploring its political and practical potential for adult learning and education (ALE) systems in Europe, the project contributed to innovation in the sector and promoted social inclusion as well as addressed key challenges for European society.
- **Website:** eaea.org/project/bildung

REGALE

- **2021 – 2024**
- **Aims:** RegALE aims to increase the impact and sustainability of regional/local adult education (AE) organisations by setting up or reinforcing networks among them and with regional/local authorities.
- **Website:** regalenetwork.eu

SMALEI

- **2022-2025**
- **Aims:** The Sustainability Matrix for ALE institutions focuses on improving the sustainability of adult learning and education (ALE) providers and organisations all over Europe and increasing their capacity to contribute to forward-looking (and sustainable) societal development.
- **Website:** smalei.eu

Partner projects

ENGAGE4BIO

- **2022-2025**
- **Aims:** Engage4BIO will strengthen circular, sustainable bio-economy and sustainable regional development through engaging quadruple helix actors - taking into account their diversity of societal, economic and cultural perspectives from five regional bio-based systems (and five associated regions) in processes of design thinking, co-creation, (re)training and skills development.
- **Website:** www.engage4bio.eu

LEVERS

- **2023-2026**
- **Aims:** The LEVERS project is researching ways we can understand the cause of complicated problems in our society, through using systems thinking and critical approaches in education and communities. We are exploring ways we can take collective action when faced with gnarly issues like climate change and social justice.
- **Website:** leversforclimate.eu

ALE4TT

- **2023-2025**
- **Aims:** The ALE4TT project supports ALE organisations in better communicating, advocating and developing strategies to convince third parties such as policymakers why ALE has a crucial role to play in a just transition process. It also supports them in building a wider network with diverse allies from the broader digital and green community.
- **Website:** eaea.org/project/ale4tt

MOVE-UP

- **2023-2024**
- **Aims:** MOVE-UP develops a flexible and quality upskilling pathway for women who are dedicating most of their time and efforts to the role of mother and who are in need to (re)join education activities and the job market.
- **Website:** academyofentrepreneurship.org/move-app

move up
Motherhood is an asset

JUST4ALL

- **2023-2025**
- **Aims:** Just4All is an EU-funded initiative promoting a just transition through inclusive and innovative lifelong learning and adult education. The action's overall objective is to support an inclusive recovery and digital and green transitions in Europe. More specifically, it aims to develop integrated, inclusive, and innovative adult learning and education (ALE) models that promote just transition, with a special focus on migrants, women, and low-skilled adults.
- **Website:** eaea.org/our-work/projects/just4all-adult-education-for-a-just-transition

AGEING WELL

- **2023-2025**
- **Aims:** Through innovative research, training programmes, and policy advocacy, Ageing Well seeks to empower elderly individuals, caregivers, and communities to support healthy ageing and positive mental health outcomes. By fostering cross-disciplinary collaboration and knowledge exchange, we are working towards creating inclusive environments where older adults can thrive.
- **Website:** eaea.org/project/ageing-well

ALL IN

- **2020-2023**
- **Aims:** The All IN project aims to foster inclusive adult education by analysing and transferring the model institutions – in the sense of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The key factor of this successful model is the cooperation between people with disabilities, relevant institutions and networks, and the project partners.
- **Website:** eaea.org/our-work/projects3/all-inclusive-adult-education-and-inclusion-new-cooperative-approaches-all-in

COPE

- **2022-2024**
- **Aims:** The main objective of the COPE project is to show that combining topics of culture and health promotion can create new paths in adult education and reduce loneliness and social exclusion among vulnerable population groups, such as older people living alone or people with mental health challenges.
- **Website:** culture-on-prescription.eu

DESINFOEND

- **2022-2024**
- **Aims:** The main objective of this project is to face this inequality and promote an inclusive society through the media alphabetization of digitally excluded groups.
- **Website:** desinfoend.eu

MOTIV-ACTION

- **2020-2023**
- **Aims:** MOTIV-ACTION will design, develop and test a methodological toolkit that will support the uptake of a digital, open and multichannel approach to career guidance, fostering the creation of a stronger dialogue between unemployed adults and career counsellors/adult educators.
- **Website:** motiv-action.eu

MOTIV-ACTION

E-ENGAGED

- **2023-2025**
- **Aims:** The objective of Project e-EngAGEd (Intergenerational Digital Engagement), funded by the European Commission (Programme CERV), is to improve critical thinking and media literacy by training young volunteers to act as facilitators who can transmit their knowledge to older adults.
- **Website:** engaged.altervista.org

SAA

- **2022-2024**
- **Aims:** The project wants to strengthen the competencies of volunteers and staff of different professions in social and healthcare organisations, older adults themselves, and the broad public in becoming aware of the pervasiveness of ageism in all spheres of society.
- **Website:** saa-game.eu

SAFE

- **2020-2023**
- **Aims:** The SAFE project strived for social inclusion and change by improving and extending the supply of high-quality learning opportunities for adults through the creation of a comprehensive guide for creating and maintaining safe spaces for learning.
- **Website:** www.safespacesale.eu

TALE

- **2022-2024**
- **Aims:** In the Tale project, adult education organisations engage with learners, communities, social movements, and grassroots initiatives to provide new insights on transformative learning to further green transition.
- **Website:** kvs.fi/tale

PATH2EU4AE

- **2022-2024**
- **Aims:** The project develops an online tool that provides freely accessible information and helps institutions of adult education to make a good choice in the context of the application for EU funding.
- **Website:** eaea.org/our-work/projects/path2eu4ae

TRANSVAL

- **2021-2023**
- **Aims:** TRANSVAL-EU proposes innovative approaches for the validation of transversal skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL), which will be tested in five pilot countries – Austria, Belgium, Italy, Lithuania and Poland.
- **Website:** www.transvalproject.eu

GREENERAGE

- **2021-2024**
- **Aims:** The GreenerAge promotes environmental literacy for urban citizens 55+ while also aiming at enhancing digital skills and competence development in the target group through the development of a digital gamification platform as a playful literacy tool.
- **Website:** greenerage.eu

7

MEMBERSHIP

7 Membership

EAEA's membership in 2023 at a glance

13
new members

100%
satisfied or very satisfied with EAEA's advocacy work on the European level

100%
satisfied or very satisfied members

120
members
in **43**
countries

In 2023, the EAEA maintained a close partnership with its members. Members were invited to participate in online discussions and contribute to consultations and EAEA working groups. Two working groups focussed on members' contributions: the working group on financing ALE and the working group on quality in ALE. In addition, EAEA continued the activities of the "Europe is more than the EU" working group and brought members together to discuss relevant topics.

Member satisfaction

According to the results of the member survey conducted in 2024, the general satisfaction with EAEA work and services has stayed high, 100% of members who responded to the survey describe themselves as "satisfied" or "very satisfied". The highest satisfaction rates were recorded for advocacy work on the European level for non-formal adult education and lifelong learning, our cooperation with EU institutions and national and international NGOs, and dissemination of ALE project information.

When evaluating EAEA's impact on different policy levels, 100% of respondents say the impact on the European level is "strong" or "very strong" (similar to last year 96%). This is followed by the impact on the organisation's level (78% "strong or "very strong"), which has been increasing over the past few years.

Changes in membership

At the General Assembly in June 2023, as per the usual procedure, the EAEA membership approved the welcoming of several new members into the association and decided on the exclusion of members who had not paid their membership fees in three consecutive years.

The following organizations were approved to become ordinary members of the association:

- Arci Pelago - Arcipelago Association, Italy
- Sisian Adult Education Center Foundation (SAEC), Armenia
- Foundation for Romania's Development, Romania
- Educational and Advisory Center "absm", Kosovo

The following organizations were approved to become associate members of the association:

- Bulgarian Women's Lobby, Bulgaria
- Università delle LiberEtà del FVG - ETS (ULE), Italy
- GO! Learning together, living together, Belgium
- Adult Learning Wales, UK
- Centre for Advancement of Research and Development in Education Technology - CARDET, Cyprus
- Tempus Public Foundation (TPF), Hungary
- Croatian Chamber of Economy (CCE), Croatia
- Mindfluencer, Hungary
- Accademia IRSEI APS, Italy

The following organisations were approved to be excluded from the association:

- Adult Education Society Belgrade, Serbia (ordinary member)
- SWAM, North Macedonia (associate member)
- AEDE France - Association Européenne de l'Education, France (ordinary member)

Three members decided to leave EAEA:

- CEP Alcala de Guadaria, Spain (associate member)
- Adult Education Association of Slovenia, Slovenia (ordinary member)
- DEPARTEMENT CULTUUR, JEUGD EN MEDIA, Belgium (associate member)

Most of the members who were excluded and voluntarily left the EAEA membership underwent significant (negative) structural and financial changes, which reduced the scope of their activities or forced them to close down altogether.

EAEA Executive Board

The Executive Board and its preparatory body, the Bureau - composed of President, Vice-Presidents and Secretary General - are responsible for the overall direction and policy development of the association. The Board works primarily on a policy and strategic level, leaving the running of the association to the Secretary General. Nevertheless, members of the Executive Board regularly advise the secretariat on different matters, from practical to operational to general. The role division is clearly defined in the constitution of the association.

Executive Board meetings in 2023

- 6-7 March 2023: Zurich, Switzerland
- 19 April 2023: virtual
- 5 June 2023: Zagreb, Croatia
- 25-26 September 2023: Florence, Italy
- 14-15 December 2023: Brussels, Belgium

EAEA Executive Board 2023

EAEA PRESIDENT
UWE GARTENSCHLAEGER
GERMANY

EAEA President since 2019, third term
German Adult Education Association (DVV) International

EAEA VICE-PRESIDENT
DEARBHAIL LAWLESS
IRELAND

AONTAS
EAEA board member since 2021, second term

EAEA VICE-PRESIDENT
GEORGE A. KOULAOUZIDES
GREECE

Hellenic Adult Education Association
EAEA Board Member since 2019, third term

OLEG SMIRNOV
UKRAINE

Ukrainian Adult Education Association
EAEA Board Member since 2021, second term

DINA SOEIRO
PORTUGAL

APCEP – Associação Portuguesa para a Cultura e Educação Permanente EAEA Board Member since 2019, third term

ALEX STEVENSON
UK

Learning and Work Institute
EAEA Board Member since 2019, third term

LAURI TUOMI
FINLAND

Finnish Adult Education Association EAEA board member since 2019, third term

JOHN EVERS
AUSTRIA

Verband Österreichischer Volkshochschulen
EAEA Board Member since 2019, first term

BALÁZS NÉMETH
HUNGARY

Hungarian Folk Highschool Society EAEA Board Member since 2021, second term

MARTA JENDEKOVÁ,
SLOVAKIA

Association of Adult Edu cation Institutions in the Slovak Republic (AIVD)
EAEA Board Member since 2023, first term

GUSTAV FRIDOLIN
SWEDEN

Swedish Interest Organisation for Popular Movement Folk High Schools (RIO) EAEA Board Member since 2021, second term

ANNA SKOCZ
POLAND

NGO Traine's Association/Stowarzyszenie Trenerskie Organizacji Pozarządowych sTOP / EAEA board member since 2023, first term

Finances

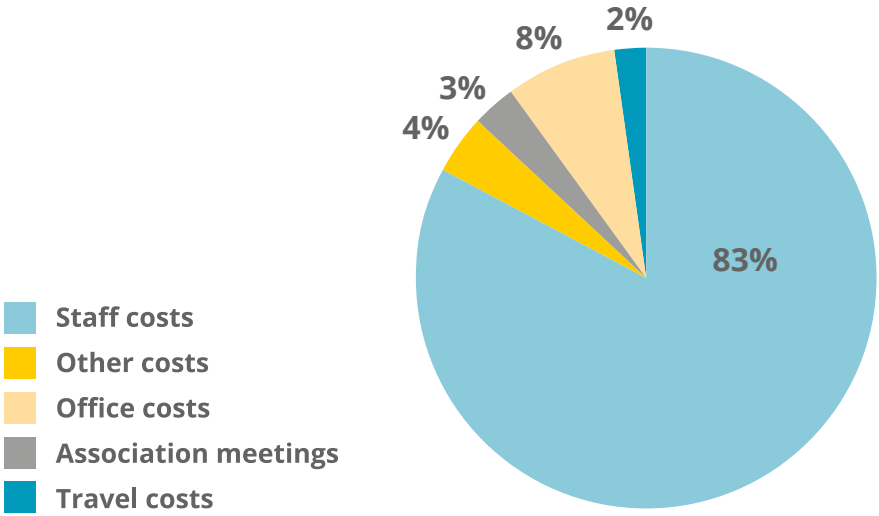
In 2023, EAEA successfully applied for a three-year framework contract with the European Commission's Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), and a one-year operating grant contract. EAEA also renewed its service contract with EPALE for the provision of content and expertise.

In 2023, EAEA won a centrally managed ESF+ project ("EaSI" - Employment and Social Innovation), an Erasmus+ Forward-Looking project on Individual Learning Accounts, as well as an Erasmus+ ENGO (centrally managed Erasmus+ project for European NGOs), and continued to successfully participate in other Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe projects. Project funding remained a key source of funding for EAEA's activities in 2023.

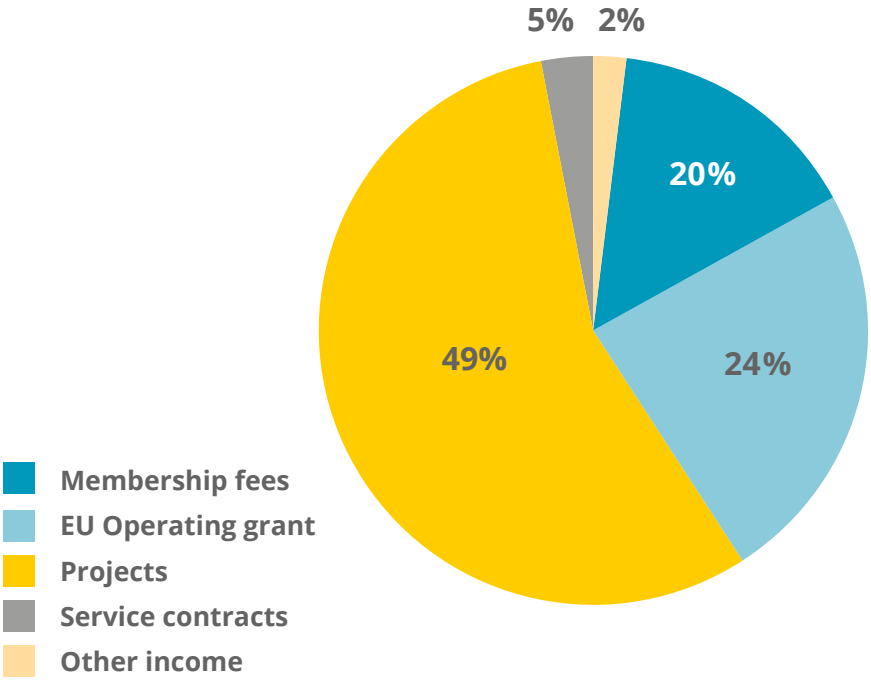
To maintain the independence of EAEA's positions, membership fees continued to play an important role in 2023.

The distribution of expenditure remained similar to previous years. Staff costs remained the largest item, as is usually the case with non-profit organisations in advocacy.

EXPENSES IN 2023



INCOME IN 2023



Staff

- **Regina Ebner,** Secretary General, 80% FTE
- **Raffaela Kihrer,** Deputy Secretary General and Head of Policy
- **Aleksandra Kozyra,** Head of Capacity-Building
- **Christin Cieslak,** Head of Stakeholder Engagement
- **Matthias Jespers,** Operations Coordinator (until 13/02/2023)

- **Tina Mavric,** Policy Coordinator
- **Angeliki Giannakopoulou,** Policy Coordinator (from 06/01/2023)
- **Davide Muraro,** Policy and Projects Coordinator (from 09/01/2023), 80% FTE
- **Viola Pinzi,** Head of Projects (from 23/01/2023)
- **Karen Maniraho,** Administration and Finance Coordinator (from 12/06/2023)
- **Marina Sakač Hadžić,** Communications and Capacity-Building Officer, traineeship from 13/01/2023 to 13/07/2023 and employment contract from 14/07/2023
- **Sari Pohjola,** Communications Officer - this position is financed through the support of the Finnish Ministry for Education and Culture

Matthias Jespers, EAEA Operations Coordinator, left EAEA in February 2023 and his position was filled in June 2023 by Karen Maniraho, who was appointed Administration and Finance Coordinator. The Belgian Maribel Fund supports this full-time position financially.

In addition, EAEA was able to create the position of Communications and Capacity Building Officer thanks to part-time funding from the Belgian Maribel Fund. Marina Sakač Hadžić, who previously held a Belgian entry-level contract (convention d'immersion professionnelle) at EAEA, was recruited for the position. 50 per cent of the full-time position is financed by the Maribel Funds, and 50 per cent from other EAEA funds.

The European Association for the Education of Adults is an international non-profit organisation (A.I.S.B.L.) registered under Belgian law.

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

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