



EARLALL POSITION ON THE COMMISSION COMMUNICATION MAKING A EUROPEAN AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING A REALITY

The European Association of Regions and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning (EARLALL)¹ welcomes the Commission Communication *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality* as a step forward following the consultation process launched by the Commission Memorandum on Lifelong Learning of November 2000.

EARLALL particularly supports the comprehensive vision of building a European Area of Lifelong Learning bringing together several distinct but complementary processes, strategies and plans (concrete future objectives of education and training systems, European employment strategy, European social agenda, skills and mobility action plan, elearning initiative and white paper on youth). Nevertheless, the European Association of Regions and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning EARLALL detects an **insufficient recognition** in the Communication of the key role played by regions and local authorities in the **design and implementation** of lifelong learning strategies and local partnerships.

Even though the Communication does call for internal **consultation networks** at regional and local level to support implementation, EARLALL still regrets that the Communication has not envisaged regions and local authorities in seeking to maintain at all levels the momentum created since the Memorandum, especially as regards **policy coordination processes**. It is the regions and local authorities after all who hold many of the competences needed to elaborate and implement comprehensive lifelong learning policies.

This disregard of the role of regions can also be detected as regards the partnership working across the learning spectrum and the call for the development of local level partnerships. EARLALL sincerely believes that for the construction of a successful and truly European Area of Lifelong Learning the proper role of regions and local authorities should be duly taken into account in future works.

¹ EARLALL was set up in October 2001 with the aim of developing real and innovative forms of transnational cooperation in the field of lifelong learning among European regional and local authorities in order better to face challenges of the knowledge based society. The member of EARLALL are: Regione Toscana (IT), País Vasco – Euskadi (ES), Västra Götalandsregionen (SE), Vejle Amt (DK), the National Assembly for Wales (UK), Rheinland Pfalz (DE), Govern de les Illes Balears (ES), County of Sogn Og Fjordane (NO), Council of Madona Regiona (LV).