



27 May 2020

Dear EARLALL Members,

I hope this message finds you and your loved ones well.

The devastating consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic has undoubtedly put a lot of pressure on our regional education and training systems. Education institutions in over 180 countries around the world have closed, impacting almost 90% of the world's student population. Never before have we witnessed educational disruption on such a large scale. Our regions are supporting their education and training centres during this time of crisis to ensure that learning does not stop. It is only appropriate therefore to send our warmest gratitude to the staff of all our regional administrations - to our teachers, trainers, professors, educators, youth workers, etc for their flexibility, devotion and hard work. I would also like to extend my thanks to our learners, apprentices and their families for their commitment to learning despite the difficulties, for their continued efforts and for making us feel proud of what we do.

European cooperation in education and training is now more necessary than ever before. With the sudden closure of schools, universities, adult education institutions and community learning centres, a surge in online and distance learning, and now the partial reopening of education institutions in some contexts, cities and traditional learning providers have forged new partnerships with other stakeholders, including online learning providers and other businesses and organizations with digital resources at their disposal. The governance of education is drastically changing in European regions and cities. Exchanging our experiences, sharing our concerns to try to find the most appropriate responses to the demands of our territories has been found to be crucial. As Commissioner Schmit remarked on 5 May to the EU Social Affairs and Employment Council, *'We can only overcome this crisis by working together.'* And he insisted that *'The post coronavirus recovery will need to put people front and centre.'*

It is with those important messages in mind that I believe that, more than ever, EARLALL can provide our regions with the right platform to 'work together' to face our new post crisis scenarios where the digital transition is accelerated (at work and in education and training), where globalisation might have a different meaning, where we need a different approach to collective or public goods and services (green measures, social economy, etc), while safeguarding the well-being of our citizens. The new European Commission's priorities for the next five years, introduced by President Ursula von der Leyen in July 2019, include points that are aligned with EARLALL priorities: a 'Green Deal' to tackle climate change, a reinforced 'European Social Pillar' to support international and internal migration trends, ageing population, and labour market shortages and a 'Europe fit for the Digital age' to promote digitalization and the future of work. In this context, education will have an essential role in successfully embracing these challenges to foster regional development and guarantee the well-being of every single citizen.

As you have all read from EARLALL's newsletter, the Secretariat in Brussels has been actively following up developments and providing timely information on the EU decisions dealing with education and training through a dedicated webpage; four project proposals have been submitted (on building inclusive societies, on building regional capacity in the adult education sector, on skills and labour market alignment and on youth entrepreneurship in rural areas); constant dialogue with the European Commission and other institutions has continued and so



has implementation of the EU funded projects involving the association. Lastly, a position paper on Green Skills has been written jointly with the VET providers' network EfVET and it is being disseminated to strategic stakeholders and economic operators.

This year's EARLALL General Assembly takes place on 5 and 6 November and will be hosted by Brittany region. It will be dedicated to 'Building Resilient Skills Ecosystems'. We hope that this will be an occasion where we will be able to meet and share our regional strategies regarding skills provision post Covid-19. In the run-up to November, the Secretariat will organise a series of activities that will match our most urgent education and training priorities. I'm then pleased to announce that in June EARLALL will hold a workshop for its member regions on 'Rethinking VET and adult education systems for long term resilience.' We would like to invite you all to join in a dialogue with representatives from the European Commission and other institutions on how they see the upcoming academic year 20-21 (including mobility actions), what are the headlines of the skills agenda to be published in July, what are the synergies on EU funding programmes that can support the development, acquisition and upskilling of skills and competences, etc. Details will be provided in the near future.

We look forward to seeing you in the upcoming meetings either online and in person at the GA in Rennes later this year.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

EARLALL Presidency