



earlall

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL & LOCAL
AUTHORITIES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

Work Plan 2021

Approved by

the Board and the General Assembly

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Editor-in-chief: Noelia Cantero
Drafting, proofreading and layout: Luis Miranda
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Introduction

Always looking out for the best interest of its Member Regions and aligned with the European Union priorities, EARLALL's Work Plan for 2021 gathers the network's activities and strategic actions for the upcoming year under six key areas:

- 🚩 **Lifelong greening:** developing soft and hard green skills.
- 🚩 **Lifewide digitalisation:** underpinning regional growth
- 🚩 **Creativity, resilience & entrepreneurship:** catalysing inclusion and youth empowerment
- 🚩 **Vocational excellence & RIS3:** consolidating regional skills ecosystems
- 🚩 **Multilevel governance for the future of Europe:** strengthening and empowering regions
- 🚩 **EARLALL 20th anniversary:** a strong, well-positioned network in the EU arena

A new decade comes with the need for new perspectives and ideas that help us shape a strong and cohesive future of Europe, with regions and municipalities having a prominent role in it. Rethinking of concepts that have been already out for some time, such as mobility, excellence and reskilling, is called for by the circumstances of social distancing and digital innovation opportunities. Furthermore, skills for jobs are becoming skills for life, with a blurring limit between them, and a focus on life competences, including creativity, entrepreneurship and resilience, will be essential to let European citizens thrive.

The COVID-19 outbreak in 2020 marked a turning point and recovery and resilience became extremely important words. The European Commission's instruments to help Member States recover from the crisis caused by it, including Next Generation EU, will provide with funds to reshape education and social policies. The management of these funds will remain at Member State level, and EARLALL Member Regions will be encouraged to engage with their national contact points and advocate for an efficient use of the funds to provide lifelong learning opportunities to those most hurt by the crisis, since implementation will still rely to a large extent on regional and local authorities.

However, we must not forget the challenges and opportunities that were already there in *precorona* times. In this sense, the importance of cooperation at all levels of governance is an axiom that needs to be reminded of. The greening of our way of life and work is a key priority that has scaled up in the European agenda in the last years, also as a solution to the 2020 crisis, and only with a common approach towards lifelong greening will we be able to overcome the environmental challenge. Education and training will have an essential role in shaping a shift towards environmental sustainability, not only in Europe but worldwide. Likewise, international, intraregional and intraregional migration still need education and training policies that help overcome the challenges that might arise.

Last but not least, 2021 will mark 20 years since the foundation of EARLALL. The network has proven its strength and ever growing relevance at European level, engaging regions and local authorities in European lifelong learning policies and providing a space of trust and exchange among active regions in the field. Indeed, the year ahead will bring on new challenges in Europe but also opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate that regions and local authorities have proven their essential role as pillars of an interconnected, multilevel, lifelong learning continent.





Thematic areas

Lifelong greening: developing soft and hard green skills

Continuing with the efforts to promote a green mindset by means of education and training systems, EARLALL will delve deeper into the concepts of *green culture* and *green skills*. The commitment of the European Commission in making the [European Green Deal](#) a cornerstone of COVID-19 recovery and achieving a climate-neutral EU by 2050 needs of the support of all levels of governance, as well as civil society and citizens. In this context, EARLALL aims at improving the life quality of citizens by the actions of regional and local authorities in the fields of education and training, supporting the development of a green competences framework that considers both hard (skills for the green economy¹) and soft (green culture²) skills. These initiatives shall be connected also to the accomplishment of the [2030 Agenda](#) of the United Nations and the Sustainable Development Goals, promoting an inclusive a sustainable regional and local development.

The Greencomp joint initiative by the European Forum for Vocational Education & Training (EfVET), the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) and EARLALL will mainstream our activities towards the promotion of green skills in their dual dimension: hard skills for green jobs and the economy and soft skills for a green mindset and culture. This initiative, born in the context of a workshop organised by EfVET and EARLALL at the European Parliament during the Lifelong Learning Week in 2019, will be further developed, attracting more stakeholders and promoting the development of EU education and training policies that are aligned with the EU Green Deal and UN 2030 agendas.

Key actions

-  Joint conference with EfVET and EAEA at the LLLWeek 2020 (December 2020) [EVENTS](#)
-  Online workshop on 'The role of regions for apprenticeships in the green and digital transitions' (organized by the European Commission, the European Committee of the Regions, EARLALL, and the Basque Country) [EVENTS](#)
-  A breakout session within the conference on 'The role of regions for apprenticeships' (organised by the European Commission, the European Committee of the Regions, EARLALL, and the Basque Country) [EVENTS](#)
-  Greencomp online platform (December 2020) [POLICY](#)

¹ The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) is currently drafting an own-initiative opinion on "Towards an EU strategy for enhancing green skills and competences for all," focusing on the fact that "the shift to a low-carbon economy is more urgent than ever and where new "green" occupations emerge and existing jobs need to be "greened." This opinion is expected to be approved by the plenary session scheduled for 2-3 December 2020. Further details: <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/towards-eu-strategy-enhancing-green-skills-and-competences-all-own-initiative-opinion>.

² A new framework and a recommendation by the European Commission on education for environmental sustainability is also expected to be released in 2021, with consultations starting by the end of 2020.

- Monitoring the development of the Skills for Sustainable Development framework and the prospective Council Recommendation on encouraging cooperation in education for environmental sustainability by the European Commission, as outlined in the [EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030](#), launched by the Commission in May 2020 POLICY
- Continuous dialogue with the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee on the topic of green skills POLICY
- Further discussions and follow-up on greening the Erasmus+ programme POLICY
- Project development with EFVET and EAEA under Horizon 2020 PROJECTS

Working groups involved

- ➔ Mobility
- ➔ Skills & Labour Market
- ➔ Lifelong Guidance & Adult Learning
- ➔ Youth Policies

Lifewide digitalisation: underpinning regional growth

The second leg of Europe's *twin transition* embraces the unlocking of digital technologies to improve the lives of citizens and strengthen European interconnection while respecting the environment. The field of education remains a catalyst for digitalisation to reach all corners of the continent, guaranteeing basic digital skills and the provision of skills for digital jobs. Empowering inclusive digital connections, bridging the digital skills gap and make digital literacy a reality for all (as outlined in the [Digital Education Action Plan](#), published by the European Commission on 30 September 2020) will be an essential strand of EARLALL's work in 2021.

With the goal of empowering regions and facilitating their transition towards a more sustainable and digital growth, EARLALL will seek for new opportunities that can help in achieving these goals. A new programming period will bring new opportunities, such as Digital Europe, helping to improve digital skills and digital teaching and learning. On another hand, it will also bring a renovated Erasmus+ programme, based on a triple pillar for digitalisation, sustainability and inclusion.

Key actions

- Online workshop on 'The role of regions for apprenticeships in the green and digital transitions' (organized by the European Commission, the European Committee of the Regions, EARLALL, and the Basque Country) EVENTS
- Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition – promotion of activities and news among EARLALL members POLICY
- Explore the development of the [European Education Area](#) and the [European Research Area](#), as well as links between them POLICY
- DAMAS project (pending approval) PROJECTS
- Inclusive digitalization processes: exploring Digital Europe PROJECTS

- Identifying opportunities and synergies between new EU programmes post-2020: Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, Digital Europe and Creative Europe ^{PROJECTS}

Working groups involved

- ➔ Mobility
- ➔ Skills & Labour Market
- ➔ Lifelong Guidance & Adult Learning
- ➔ Youth Policies

Creativity, resilience & entrepreneurship: catalysing inclusion & youth empowerment

The turmoil caused by the COVID-19 crisis has brought about new social challenges, mainly in urban areas, with key groups such as young people and third country nationals heavily impacted by its economic side. However, new opportunities for regional development have also risen, caused by an “urban exodus” towards rural areas due to the shift towards teleworking that many companies have embraced and the quest for social distancing when looking for leisure activities. In this context, an entrepreneurial, problem-solving mindset will be essential to tackle challenges but also identify and seize potential opportunities ahead.

With these two sides of the coin in mind, EARLALL’s work in 2021 will focus on the following aspects:

- Tackling inclusion and fighting discrimination ([in line with the “EU Action Plan against racism 2020-2025,” launched in September 2020](#)) through education and employment, and fostering community-based initiatives for integration.
- Fostering youth involvement in rural development and building cohesive local communities through entrepreneurial actions.
- Slowing down brain drain processes and promoting youth employment initiatives, in accordance with the [“Brain Drain in the EU: addressing the challenge at all levels” opinion by the European Committee of the Regions, adopted in February 2020](#), and the [Youth Employment Support package by the European Commission, launched in July 2020](#).

The question remains: how to do it? In a more interconnected, faster-pace changing world facing common challenges as never before, new ways of doing things and innovative solutions are called for. *Resilience* became a key word in 2020, proving to be an indispensable characteristic for regions and local communities to thrive in the 21st century. Adaptation to change, full participation in society and close European and international cooperation can only be achieved by fostering entrepreneurial, creative and critical thinking, as gathers the new [LifeComp framework by the European Commission](#), launched in June 2020.

Key actions

- YESpecialists Erasmus+ KA2 project ^{PROJECTS}
- Erasmus+ proposal for building community networks for the integration of third-country nationals ^{PROJECTS}
- Participation in the European Migration Forum 2021, by the EESC ^{EVENTS}
- Two breakout sessions within the conference on 'The role of regions for apprenticeships' (organised by the European Commission, the European Committee of the Regions, EARLALL and the Basque Country) ^{EVENTS}
- Renewed ESF Transnational Cooperation Platform – promotion of activities and news among EARLALL members ^{POLICY}
- Follow-up of ESF+ and the Youth Guarantee scheme ^{POLICY}
- Follow-up to the Next Generation EU programme, mainly under the upskilling and reskilling strand (no. 7) ^{POLICY}

Working groups involved

- ➔ Youth Policies
- ➔ Integration of Third-country Nationals
- ➔ Lifelong Guidance & Adult Learning

Vocational excellence & RIS3: consolidating regional skills ecosystems

Vocational education and training has consolidated as a key education sector for regions to tackle social and economic challenges. The [European Commission's Council recommendation proposal on vocational education and training \(VET\) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience](#), published in July 2020, acknowledges that "Centres of Vocational Excellence [should] act as catalysts for local business investment, supporting recovery, green and digital transitions, European and regional innovation and smart specialisation strategies, development of vocational education and training at higher qualification levels (EQF levels 5-8) and provide innovative services such as clusters and business incubators for start-ups and technology innovation for SMEs, as well as innovative reskilling solutions for workers at risk of redundancy." The recommendation calls for an active implementation through EU funds and programmes.

Furthermore, a renewed European Alliance for Apprenticeships (July 2020) recognising the prominent role of regional and local authorities and a Pact for Skills (expected in 4Q2020) among relevant stakeholders demonstrate that the momentum for VET cooperation is here and that regional actors must be encouraged to engage in it. Therefore, EARLALL will continue its close cooperation with the European Commission's DG EMPL and Joint Research Centre (JRC) to keep its member regions closely connected to EU policies in the field, and will closely monitor the development of the initiatives announced by the Commission under the umbrella of the [new European Skills Agenda](#) published in July 2020 and the [Osnabrück Declaration](#) by Education Ministers

introduced to Member States by the German Presidency of the Council in September 2020.

Last but not least, upskilling and reskilling have also been set as key priorities for the Next Generation EU programme, aimed at supporting a fast and efficient recovery process from the COVID-19 crisis. EARLALL will also follow its developments and identify useful opportunities within it for its Member Regions, as well as encourage more links and transferability between vocational education & training, adult learning and education, and higher education.

Key actions

- EARLALL project activities in 2020 and follow up: [PROJECTS / EVENTS](#)
 - BRIDGE+ prolonged for 6 months
 - VET's CLIL multiplier event in Brussels (May 2021)
 - EXAM 4.0
 - KEYMOB prolonged for 6 months
 - New project proposals under Skills & Labour Market + Mobility working groups
- Participation at the EU Vocational Skills Week 2021 [EVENTS](#)
- Apprentices Support Services stakeholder group at European Commission's DG EMPL [POLICY](#)
- European Alliance for Apprenticeships – promotion of EAfA and its activities among EARLALL members [POLICY](#)
- Monitoring the new Erasmus+ programme and, more specifically, the Centres of Vocational Excellence strand [POLICY](#)
- Follow-up to EARLALL Member Regions joining the European Pact for Skills, launched by the European Commission at the European Vocational Skills Week in November 2020 [POLICY](#)
- Organisation of 2 workshops and the EAfA conference on 'The role of regions for apprenticeships' (organised by the European Commission, the European Committee of the Regions, EARLALL and the Basque Country) [EVENTS](#)

Working groups involved

- ➔ Mobility
- ➔ Skills & Labour Market
- ➔ Lifelong Guidance & Adult Learning

Multilevel governance for the future of Europe: strengthening and empowering regions










It is within EARLALL's principles and very essential goals to raise the visibility and profile of its Member Regions and strengthen their role at European level discussions on education and training policies, bringing them closer to citizens. In this context, the [Conference on the Future of Europe](#) initiative by the von der Leyen Commission has

been welcomed and its development will be closely monitored. As stated by the Council in its position, the Conference shall reflect also the regional dimension and “with the assistance in particular of the Commission, the CoR and EESC as well as national parliaments should ensure effective involvement of citizens and stakeholders through debates, including at national and regional level, and through multilingual internet/digital platform(s) and citizens' panels in Member States and at European level.” Furthermore, digital advocacy and networking opportunities for EARLALL Member Regions will be further explored as an outcome from the COVID-19 outbreak that has arrived to stay.

In a more policy-level context, continuity will be given the cohesion 2.0 workshop organised in cooperation with the Goethe Institute to inspect the role of education and training in cohesion policies. In addition, new perspectives into the European Semester will be explored, including a higher role for the regional dimension and education and social well-being related indicators.

These goals cannot be achieved without the sufficient capacity at regional and local level to take fully part in EU initiatives and programmes. Therefore, EARLALL will continue its efforts in providing capacity-building opportunities to its Member Regions' officers and representatives, expanding also their networks at local, regional and European level through new associate members and prospective members.

Key actions

-  Stride4stride project PROJECTS
-  RegALE project PROJECTS
-  Continuation of the Resilient Skills Ecosystems initiative POLICY
-  Monitoring the Conference on the Future of Europe POLICY
-  Participation at structured dialogue meetings with EC's DG EMPL POLICY
-  Cooperation with OECD POLICY
-  Online and offline training workshops and project development support under the Resilient Skills Ecosystems initiative, including a workshop on EU Tools in January 2021 EVENTS
-  Follow-up to the Cohesion 2.0 event with Goethe Institut EVENTS
-  2 workshops in the context of the Stride4Stride project EVENTS

Working groups involved

- Mobility
- Skills & Labour Market
- Lifelong Guidance & Adult Learning
- Youth Policies

EARLALL 20th anniversary

Anniversaries always mark a milestone for assessment and reflection on previous achievements and prospective endeavours. EARLALL will be 20 years old since its constitution in 2001, and special activities will be organised to celebrate that the network

has increased its relevance as years have passed thanks to the persons that have been part of it throughout its history.

The regional dimension of education and training policies remains a key issue that is being progressively taken into account by the EU institutions and international organisations, and EARLALL continues to be a node of connection and meeting point, fostering also interregional relations, as well as interaction with non-governmental stakeholders, civil society and the private sector. *Lifelong learning* has consolidated as an essential concept and its progressive mainstreaming in policies and practices across all levels of governments keeps on acknowledging its importance, incentivising also the need of being a *lifelong learner* to fully participate in society and understand the complex world that surrounds us.

Therefore, a special publication will be launched next year, along with a social media campaign that will revisit the highlights and key achievements of the network in the past 20 years. The commemorative activities will culminate in an ad-hoc event during EARLALL Annual Conference 2021.






Key actions

- 🚩 Commemorative event in the context of the Annual Conference 2021 [EVENTS](#)
- 🚩 Commemorative publication [POLICY](#)
- 🚩 Social media campaign revisiting EARLALL history [POLICY](#)

Strategic development & governance




Working groups

EARLALL's Working Group structure will remain as in 2020:

-  Mobility, led by Borås Municipality on behalf of Region Västra Götaland
-  Lifelong guidance & adult learning, led by Baden-Württemberg
-  Youth policies, led by Tuscany Region
-  Integration of third-country nationals, led by Region Västra Götaland
-  Skills & labour market, led by Catalonia

Member regions and associate members

EARLALL's Member Region structure will remain as in the previous year, with 12 Member Regions. The [Associate Member](#) category created with the [new Statutes](#) approved in November 2019 will welcome three new Associate Members (to be approved by the General Assembly of 5 November 2020):

-  [GO! onderwijs van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap](#) (Flanders, Belgium)
-  [Movetia](#) (Switzerland)
-  [Adult Education Borås](#) (Västra Götaland, Sweden)

New Member Regions and Associate Members will be sought after by EARLALL Secretariat and current Member Regions and Associate Members.

The Annual Conference 2021 host elections to the Board.

Stakeholder cooperation

EARLALL will continue its relations at EU institutional level with the European Commission (DG EMPL, DG EAC, DG CONNECT, JRC) and with the European Parliament (LLL-IG, MEPs, etc.), as well as with other stakeholders, such as the Lifelong Learning Platform, EfVET, the EAEA, and the Goethe Institut.

Communication & dissemination activities

EARLALL communication and dissemination activities will continue to aim at raising and consolidating the profile of the network in the European lifelong learning arena and promote its Member Regions achievements and best practices, along with cooperation projects.

A digital push will be given to the network's communication strategy, prioritizing digital events and meetings when required by COVID-19 prevention measures and offering

blended opportunities with live events that allow digital interaction and remote participation. Furthermore, all communication actions will be greener, prioritizing ecological promotion materials when needed and promoting a green way of thinking European advocacy in general.

To fulfil these aims, specific objectives will be the following:

Social media targets

- 1,671 followers on Twitter
(1,354 as of 7/10/2020)
- 341 followers on Facebook
(284 as of 7/10/2020)
- 398 followers on LinkedIn
(310 as of 7/10/2020)

Website targets

- Regular posts as up until now
- Reach 3,247 website users
(2,700 as of 7/10/2020)

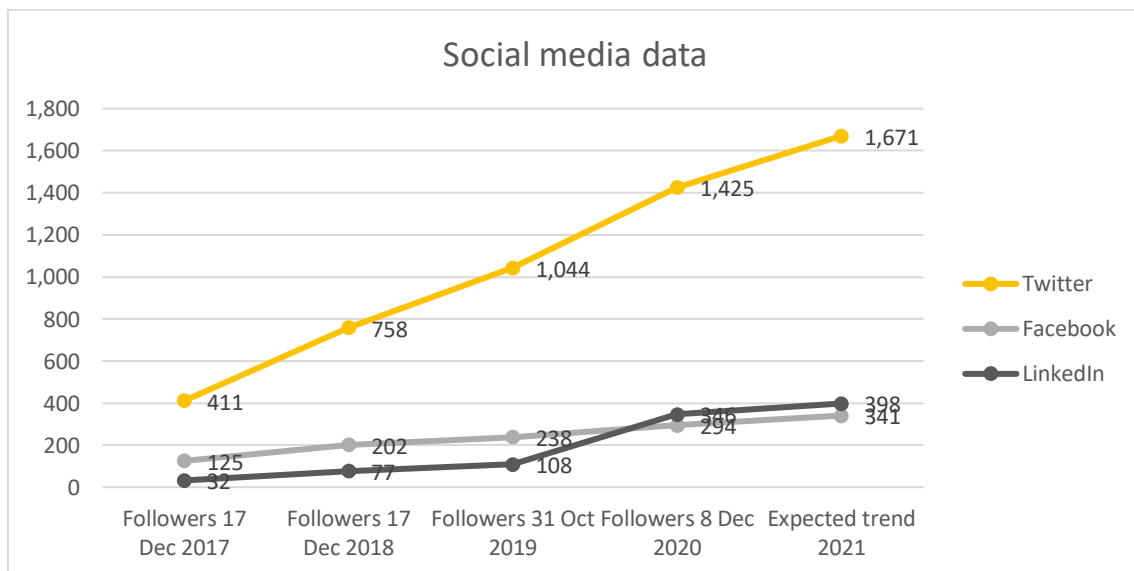
Printed materials

- All printed materials shall be made of recycled paper, produced in a way that respects the environment.

Newsletter targets

- Reach 500 EARLALL Insights Newsletter subscribers
(459 as of 7/10/2020)
- EARLALL Insights, quarterly launched
- EARLALL EU Monitoring, monthly launched

These goals and predictions are based on data from previous years:



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