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EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL & LOCAL
AUTHORITIES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING



Empowering European Regions: EARLALL's contribution to the European Year of Skills

May 2024

Introduction

This report lays out the activities and initiatives that EARLALL participated in or launched during, and in preparation for, the European Year of Skills. The activities had the goal of bringing visibility, debate and discussion around the topics of (up)skilling, reskilling, skills matching and relevance. Overall, EARLALL participated in 12 in-person events organised by the European Commission or other relevant EU Institutions, organised 11 webinars as well as 5 in-person events, and is proud that **all of its members contributed to the year through these initiatives**. The year has given skills and lifelong learning a refreshed focus, and has allowed EARLALL and its member regions to increase the exchange and visibility of best practices related to skills at the local level. EARLALL warmly welcomed the year, and commits to continue to its efforts through its lifelong learning priorities.

What is the European Year of Skills?

The Year of Skills was proposed by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion in October 2022 and a political agreement was reached on 7 March 2023, agreeing to launch the year officially on May 9 2023 and to close it on May 9, 2024.

The Year set out to act as an impetus for lifelong learning, creating a new momentum to reach the EU 2030 social targets of at least 60% of adults in training every year, and at least 78% in employment.

The European Year of Skills had four priorities:

1. Attracting People – Attracting people from third countries when needed within the Union
2. Matching Aspirations – Matching people's aspirations and skills-set with labour market opportunities
3. Skills Relevance – Strengthening skills relevance through close cooperation
4. Investment – Increased, more effective and inclusive investment

EARLALL – the European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning – welcomed the European Year of Skills initiative, and set out to empower the voice of regional and local authorities in the years' discussions and beyond.

“A shared reflection (on skills) is much more valuable than any monologue.”

- Mr Jokin Bildarratz Sorron, EARLALL President and Regional Minister of the Department of Education of the Basque Government, during the Regional Exchange of Lifelong Learning: Policies and Practices, June 2023



Participation in events organised at the EU level

Feb - 2023

European Committee of the Regions' 153rd Plenary Session

On 9 February 2023, the European Committee of the Regions 153rd Plenary session hosted a Debate on the European Year of Skills 2023. During the debate, Noelia Cantero, Director of the European Association of Regions and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning (EARLALL), highlighted the importance of the role of regions and the EARLALL network.



March - 2023

OECD Briding the Great Green Divide Webinar

Noelia Cantero, Director of EARLALL was invited to share examples from the network, including RegALE – Regional Capacity Building in Adult Learning Education.

June - 2023

Making Skills Count (European Commission)

The 'Making Skills Count Conference' brought together policymakers, experts, and stakeholders from across Europe to explore the significance of skills in various contexts. Two of EARLALL's projects were presented during the event: LCAMP (the Learner-Centric Advanced Manufacturing Platform) by project coordinator, Iñigo Araiztegui Arraiz, Director of Internationalisation at the Basque VET Applied Research Centre (Tknika) and, SMALEI (Sustainability Matrix for Adult Learning and Education Institutions) by colleagues from EAEA.

Sept. - 2023

Skills! Skills! Skills! (European Parliament and European Commission)

To explore the role of skills in our future, the "Skills, skills, skills! Skills for people, skills for competitiveness, skills for sustainability" event brought together a diverse range of experts, policymakers, and professionals to the European Parliament.

Participation in events organised at the EU level

Oct.- 2023 **Mind the Gaps: steps towards the skills revolution, (CEDEFOP)**
 Cedefop, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, organised a flagship event on skills transformation and revolution on Thursday 12 October in Brussels.

Nov.- 2023 **EU Social Forum (European Commission)**
 The EU Social Forum 2023 looked into the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the world of work. EARLALL Secretariat and TKNIKA (Basque Country, Spain) participated together with policymakers, national, local, and regional authorities, representatives from businesses, social partners, civil society and academics to assess the current challenges and opportunities brought about by artificial intelligence in the world of work.

Feb. 2024 **Meet the Champions of Excellence (European Commission)**
 Garikoitz Mujika, a champion of excellence in mechanics and 3D printing the Basque Country (holding EARLALL's Presidency), participated at the plenary and explained how he combined work with studies and encouraged young people to feel confident with their abilities.

March. -
2024 **Mons Summit of Regions and Cities (European Committee of the Regions)**
 The 10th Summit of Regions and Cities in the Belgian city of Mons was an opportunity for regional and local representatives to debate the green transition, innovation, gender equality and integration, among other key topics for the future of Europe

March. -
2024 **Pact for Skills Forum (European Commission)**

April - 2024 **Lifelong Learning Conference of the Belgian Presidency**

EARLALL's secretariat was invited to participate in the conference and hold a stand during the Lifelong Learning Festival, where they networked with relevant stakeholders and discussed EARLALL's work.


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Participation in events organised at the EU level

April - 2024

Investing in Skills in Europe's Regions and Cities (European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions)

Mr Iñigo Araiztegui, Director of the Internationalisation Department of TKNIKA, was invited to introduce LCAMP: Learner Centric Advanced Manufacturing Platform for Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs).



April - 2024

European Year of Skills: What Comes Next? (European Commission)

Closing event

The conference gathered hundreds of participants from all over Europe to look back at the achievements of the Year and reflect on the next steps. All the speakers and participants agreed that the European Year of Skills does not end here, and that everyone is committed to fostering “skills” as a top priority in the political agenda and to making a true “decade of skills.”



EARLALL's initiatives (in Brussels)

Skills for the Twin Transition Seminar



On May 16 2024, EARLALL organised a hybrid seminar on “Skills for The Twin Transition” at the Tuscany Offices in Brussels. The conference welcomed 60+ participants with speakers from DG EMPL, the OECD, ESF+ Sweden and the JRC.



EARLALL Regional Exchange on Policies and Practice for Lifelong Learning



From June 20-21 2023, representatives from across the network gathered at the Representation of the State of Baden-Württemberg to the European Union (Brussels, Belgium) in the network's flagship initiative in the European Year of Skills. The two-day conference, entitled 'Regional Exchange on Policies and Practices in Lifelong Learning', welcomed more than 50 political and technical representatives from across EARLALL's 12 members and 4 associate members to discuss internally and exchange. The event notably welcomed **Ms Sandra Boser, State Secretary, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports Baden-Württemberg** and **Mr Jokin Bildarratz Sorron, EARLALL President and Regional Minister of the Department of Education of the Basque Government**, who shared their commitment to European cooperation in the field of lifelong learning, as well as their regions' inspiring practices.

Moreover, the evening reception panel on **maximising EU-Regional synergies during the Year of Skills** brought the participation of high-level representatives including **Ms Manuela Geleng**, Director for Jobs and Skills, DG EMPL, **Mr Stefan Olsson**, Deputy Director General, DG EMPL, **Cinzia del Rio**, President of the Section of Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship (SOC) at the EESC, **Csaba Borboly**, rapporteur of the CoR opinion on the European Skills Agenda; **Patricia Couti**, Policy Advisor and Accredited Assistant to Dragoș Pîslaru, Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Employment and Social Affairs.



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European Week of Regions and Cities: Lifelong Learning in the Green Transition

On 11 October 2023, EARLALL hosted two successful sessions during the annual European Week of Regions and Cities. The focus of the two sessions was on reskilling and upskilling for the green transition, involving over 60 participants. EARLALL's members and partners participated strongly in the session, with representatives from Varaždin, Borås, Vestland, Catalonia and West Norway.


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EARLALL Brussels-Based Exchange: Skills and Talent Mobility Package



In January 2024, EARLALL's Brussels-based representatives benefited from two presentations from the European Commission's DGs on Education, Youth, Sport, and Culture (DG EAC) and Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion (DG EMPL) on two key policy subjects: 'Europe on the Move – Learning Mobility for Everyone' proposal and the Pact for Skills opportunities at the regional level.

Capacity-building initiatives



To match the ambitions of EARLALLS' members in capacity-building, the secretariat and Camilla Winter AB launched the EARLALL Academy. The initiative organised nine webinars on specific themes, welcoming 117 participants to learn from the masterclasses.

Sector Specific Skills Analysis

In 2024, EARLALL organised a series of four webinars focused on exploring the skills needs and challenges in different sectors (**agriculture, care, blue economy and textile**) across European regions. Each webinar produces a **fact sheet** that can be found under "Reports".


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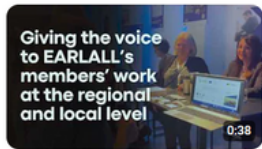
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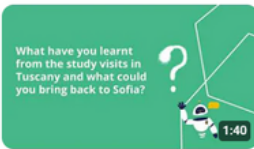
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EARLALL at the Lifelong Learning Conference (17-18 April 2024)



Interview with SKYLA Partners: Cluster of Mechatronics and...



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Interview with Sylvia Liuti: why is gender equality important in the...



About LCAMP - The Learner Centric Advanced Manufacturing Platform



Interview with SKYLA partner: Fingal County Council



Interview with Dublin Regional Skills, Fingal Stakeholder



EARLALL Highlights from the Annual Report 2023



EARLALL at the European Week of Regions and Cities 2023



Webinar: European approach to Microcredentials



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