

Developments: New master plan for adult education

EAEAs member, the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SAEA) has been active in policy making in the last year. They prepared a proposal with the Expert Council for Adult Education that the Ministry for Education adopted in 2019. The proposal includes:

- Starting points for preparing validated programs in adult education
- Guidelines for the implementation of counselling activities in adult education carried out as a public service

Additionally, a new programme to validate the Slovene language as a second language and one for the asylum seekers was initiated. There is also a proposal for a new Master Plan in the field of adult education for the period 2021-2030, being prepared by nine ministries. The Master Plan should proceed for approval by the end of 2020.

Overall, the situation of adult education in the last year has slightly improved. The funding situation of adult education has stayed the same. While the adult education sector in Slovenia has been slightly affected by the pandemic, the work of SAEA has not been significantly affected by it.

Slovenia implements European policy recommendations

In Slovenia there are clear policies and strategies for the implementation of Upskilling Pathways and some new initiatives to promote the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emerged during the last year. The SDGs play an important role in the 2021-2030 Master Plan. The initiatives on the SDGs are cross-cutting and include circular economy and sustainable development as targets. SAEA believes that the involvement of adult

learning and education providers is crucial to successfully implement the SDGs across Slovenia.

The European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) has been implemented in some areas, mainly in regard to basic abilities and key competencies of adults with an emphasis on vulnerable target groups (unemployed, low-educated employees, the elderly, young adults who have dropped out of school and early school leavers). SAEA has not been involved in a civil society consultation process but believes that the EPSR can play an important role in promoting new national and regional policies and frameworks. One of the ESPR initiatives provides free programs for vulnerable parts of the population and aims at participation rates above 50%. This includes access to information, counselling and basic competence programs. More funding for the adult education sector would enhance the visibility and access to these programs.

Challenges: Lack of a legal framework

One of the main challenges in adult learning and education in Slovenia is the legal framework. The Adult Education Act (adopted in January 2019) sets out legal bases to implement a public network for adult learning and education providers. Pushing for the implementation of the Act and the Adult Education Master Plan (2021-2030) will be challenges for the upcoming year. This includes negotiations about the European Social Fund and how priorities can be implemented in Slovenias Master Plan.

Improving the governance system

The focus of SAEAs work in 2020/2021 will be the preparation and implementation of professional support programs to establish a public network for adult education. Furthermore, SAEA will focus on coordinating and managing activities for the discussion and adoption of the Master Plan.

One of the challenges in the mismatch between low skilled adults and the labor market opportunities. Another ongoing project is the publication of an online questionnaire that can be used for personalised competence/skill assessment. In the next year the organisation will continue to support, advise and coordinate adult education providers, employers and trade unions on the new outreach approaches, which are specifically targeted at vulnerable populations and distance education. Overall, SAEA will also advocate for the improvement of the governance system in adult education and contribute to an inter-ministerial integration strategy .
