



## **EARLALL WORK PLAN 2009-2010**

### **General aims:**

The Lisbon Agenda aims to make the EU the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world, with lifelong learning being central in this process. High quality pre-primary, primary, secondary, higher and vocational education and training are more important than ever. All our people must have the opportunity to develop the skills to enable them to meet the challenges of ever-evolving technologies, local pressures brought about by global economic changes, increasing internationalisation and demographic changes. Nowadays, lifelong learning encompasses the development of individuals from the youngest child to the oldest learner and is key to jobs and growth, as well as to allow everyone the chance to participate fully in society.

EARLALL has three broad objectives:

- Seeking to influence Lifelong Learning policy development within the European Union;
- Facilitating cooperation between its members in order to promote the exchange of experiences and best practice between European regional and local authorities; and
- Encouraging the development of joint projects, many of which are supported by EU funding programs.

Our activities include the following:

- Common position papers and responses on consultations by the European Commission;
- Monitoring of EU policy developments; and
- Participation in EU-funded projects.

### **Achievements and Work to Date:**

#### **- Mobility of workers, trainees, researchers and students**

In March 2008 EARLALL organised an awareness-raising seminar in the Committee of the Regions where members, other interested regions, CoR members and Commission officials were present. One aim of the seminar was to create criteria offering transparency to mobility exchanges between EARLALL member regions in order for participants to be able to make an informed choice when choosing the destination of their work/study/traineeship. This Criteria for interregional mobility was subsequently adopted by Members at the October 08 General Assembly in Heidelberg.

A further aim in the area of mobility has been to support the signing of bilateral and multilateral mobility agreements between EARLALL members regions. Details of these agreements are available on the Association website.

EARLALL representatives also took part in the Mobility Conference in Bordeaux under the French Presidency, where the regional perspective was presented and well received.

### **- European Social Fund (ESF) and Transregional cooperation**

The 2007-2013 ESF programme offers increased opportunities for transregional cooperation for regions. EARLALL has raised awareness among its member regions and beyond, and supported project ideas and partner-search in the broadly understood area of Lifelong learning (ie not restricted to projects in EARLALL's priority areas).

In March 08, EARLALL organised an awareness-raising seminar on ESF and transnational cooperation. The programme included speeches about ESF structures in European various regions, as well as a project market place. Following the event, Commission representatives expressed interest in co-organising a further event focussed outside the EU15 Member States.

### **- Entrepreneurship, Innovation and E-learning**

The aim in 2008 was to develop priority areas for the Association's future work, each with a particular focus/project. Regions which previously have expressed interest are: Innovation: South Denmark; E-learning: Basque Country and Entrepreneurship: Andalucia and Västra Götaland.

The October 08 General Assembly in Heidelberg was also devoted partly to e-learning and entrepreneurship and set the scene for further discussion for these two areas in early 2009.

### **- Responses to EU Consultations**

EARLALL discussed a draft response to the EC's Green Paper on Migrant Education at the October 08 General Assembly in Heidelberg. This resulted in a revised response being submitted to the Commission at the end of December 08.

The Association commented on the EC's wide ranging Communication (December 07) on The Schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Members felt, among other areas, that the document did not pay sufficient regard to the vital role of regions.

Many of the points noted in the EARLALL response to the EC's consultation on the ECVET proposals in March 07, have since been incorporated.

Further EARLALL contributions have been submitted on: the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) funding allocation; the EQF consultation; the LLP Transversal strand; general lifelong learning position statements; the development of the current ESF programme; and strengthening the lifelong learning dimension of the European Union's regional policy.

All responses can be viewed on the EARLALL website.

### **- Monitoring of EU Policy Development**

On mobility, during 2008 Members monitored the EC's High Level Working Group's recommendations and the Commissions' subsequent development of conclusions during the French Presidency. Given that the conclusions were broadly inline with the Association's agreed position, no formal commentary was necessary.

### **- Wider EARLALL Engagement**

Representatives of both the DG EMPL and DG EAC attended the March 08 General Assembly in Brussels.

Increased cooperation with the Committee of the Regions. Mr Kent Johansson was Rapporteur on ECVET and EQUAF during 08. Earlier in 08 EARLALL also involved the former Rapporteur on Adult Learning, Mrs Mary Shields, in discussions on the Association's work.

In September 08 the Board met Mrs Bulgarelli, Director General of CEDEFOP (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) to discuss potential areas of cooperation. CEDEFOP expressed an interest in supporting and cooperating with EARLALL and contact points in both organisations were established.

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In July 08, Mr Kent Johansson had a fruitful meeting with the President of FREREF (Fondation des Régions Européennes pour la Recherche en Education et en Formation), Mr Jean Vanoye. EARLALL was present at the Summer University in Thessaloniki in September 08, which was jointly organised by Cedefop and FREFEF.

A new information brochure was launched at the March 08 General Assembly.

### **Priority Themes for 2009-2010:**

These proposed Priority Themes are presented in this draft document under 4 main headings. The content below is designed to stimulate debate and contributions from Member regions, with a view to agreeing a final document at the March 09 General Assembly. That agreed document will then shape the focus of the Association's work over the coming years. Member regions are, therefore, invited to submit to the Coordinator amendments, contributions, project and/or activity proposals to the following:

#### **- Mobility**

The theme of learner mobility will continue to be a priority of the EU throughout the coming years. Indeed, at a time of global economic downturn, with the consequent pressures on local employment, it is more important than ever that our young people are equipped with the skills and experience necessary to make them more mobile in the labour market. This theme, therefore, will continue to feature strongly within EARLALL's work. A number of member regions have signed bilateral or multilateral agreements for student mobility, and this needs to be further expanded to incorporate more partner regions, greater volumes of participating students and more variety in the type of mobility action (eg work placement, training placement, practitioner mobility, virtual mobility etc). EARLALL will continue to play an important role in facilitating this.

EARLALL also needs to consider ways in which it can better support the development of member regions' mobility actions. Currently, model bilateral agreements and criteria for transparency in mobility are available. The Mobireg project also produced some useful tools – such as the Mobireg website – for which the Association now needs to develop and facilitate implementation. The Association can also broker specific activity in areas such as: dissemination of current good practice (building on the 12 Ldv projects); the development of pre-placement materials; the production of information / guidance documents on student mobility within specific regions; facilitating virtual mobility actions; partner search requests etc.

The Association also needs to consider the value in supporting the development of specific networks, or a sub-group, to facilitate progression of this work for all EARLALL members.

#### **- Gender**

The issue of gender identity impacts in different regions in different ways, and has been noted as a priority area for consideration under the Swedish Presidency in the second half of 09. The findings of the 1<sup>st</sup> European Conference on Politics and Gender in Belfast (21-23 January 09) could help inform the development of EARLALL's network, which will be the subject of further discussion at the General Assembly in March 09. EARLALL Members should seek to contribute to EU thinking on the issue, particularly through participation in Presidency events.

#### **- Distance / E-Learning**

Discussion at the October 08 General Assembly highlighted a wide range of issues in this area for future consideration and potential collaboration. These include areas such as platform development, product sharing, open source platforms and pedagogical issues. Member regions before the March 09 General Assembly will wish to contribute views and project ideas in this area to inform future business planning.

#### **- Employability**

Within Member regions and across the EU more generally, education and training policy is increasingly being linked more closely to better preparation of our young people and adults for the world of work. The Council of Ministers, for example, have stressed the need to integrate school and

work – education and labour policies. EARLALL has a role in facilitating the transfer of policy and programme ideas and good practice between Members, most notably through the SMOC project. Indeed, some bilateral agreements and action are already starting to take place between Member regions. Areas for consideration can include work culture, curriculum review, entrepreneurship programmes, transfer of innovation activity, engagement of social partners etc. The theme can be considered to broadly encompass work underway in most Member regions and, therefore, provide the opportunity to promote a high level of joint programme development. The proposed International Conference on entrepreneurship education in Wales in 2009 could, for example, help facilitate this.

#### **General Objectives and Measures for 2009-2010:**

##### **- Increased interaction with the European Commission (DG EAC and DG EMPL), the Committee of the Regions and CEDEFOP**

The Association needs to ensure continued cooperation with the Commissioner Špidla and Figel Cabinets, preferably through joint action on specific project or areas of activity (such as the planned ESF seminar).

Contact with CEDEFOP should be maintained, with CEDEFOP representatives to be routinely invited to attend General Assemblies and, where the agenda is relevant, to specific Board meetings. Work with CEDEFOP should also be promoted with Member regions and progressed through the SMOC project.

The Association President will continue to meet CoR representatives on a regular basis and, where relevant, EARLALL Members will assist the work of CoR.

##### **- Monitoring the decision-making process and taking key initiatives**

EARLALL Members and Secretariat, will continue to monitor all relevant EC lifelong learning initiatives, with particular regard to the development of the Lifelong Learning Programme, the use of the transregional elements of the European Social Fund programmes. The Board and General Assembly will continue to receive regular EU policy updates, which will also be made available on the EARLALL website. All Members will be given the opportunity to promote and contribute to EARLALL responses to EC consultations and initiatives.

##### **- Work related to EU Presidencies**

EARLALL will follow the work programmes of EU Presidencies and identify opportunities to influence the policy making process. The Association will be organising a further seminar on ESF in conjunction with the EC and Olomouc in the Czech Republic in April 09 during the Czech Presidency. And during the Swedish Presidency it may be possible to organise the General Assembly in conjunction with the meeting of EU ministers of education which will take place in Göteborg.

##### **- Increasing the number of EARLALL members**

EARLALL's objective to be a strong and influential organisation requires an increasing number of members. Recruiting new members is an ongoing process which needs to be pursued in a structured manner.

##### **- Involving our members**

In order for EARLALL to benefit from the diversity of its members, and for its members to benefit from their EARLALL membership, the importance of members being involved in work the 4 priority areas needs to be emphasised. Amendments to the Association's structure and working practices are being made to facilitate this.

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**EARLALL CALENDAR OF EVENTS: 2008-2010**

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	ORGANISER	MORE INFO
7/02/2008	BOARD	BRUSSELS	EARLALL	
26/02/2008	SEMINAR, INFORMAL AND FORMAL EDUCATION	BRUSSELS	WALES	26/02/2008
27/03/2008	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	BRUSSELS	EARLALL/COR	
27-28/03/2008	SEMINARS	BRUSSELS	EARLALL/COR	"MOBILITY IN EUROPE" AND "TRANSREGIONAL COOPERATION IN ESF"
25/09/2008	MEETING WITH MRS BULGARELLI, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF CEDEFOP	THESSALONIKI	EARLALL/CEDEFOP	
9-11/10/2008	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG	EARLALL/ BADEN- WÜRTTEMBERG	
23 JANUARY 2009	BOARD	BRUSSELS	EARLALL	
25 MARCH 2009	PRE-GA THEMATIC WORKSHOPS?	BRUSSELS	EARLALL	
26 MARCH 2009	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	VGR/BRUSSELS	EARLALL/COR	
JUNE 2009?	BOARD	BRUSSELS	EARLALL	
OCTOBER 2009	GA EVENTS?	GOTHENBURG	EARLALL/VGR	
OCTOBER 2009	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	GOTHENBURG	EARLALL/VGR	

\*1-2 October 2009 European Ministers of Education meeting in Gothenburg (Swedish Presidency)

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**EARLALL ACTION PLAN: 2009-2010**

Issue	Action	Deadline	Lead Region	Comments
Use of the Swedish EU Presidency	Prepare proposals to maximise EARLALL participation in official programme...		VGL	
Mobility	Consider and prepare proposals on how best to support Member mobility actions			
Mobility	Publish details of bilateral agreements on EARLALL website			
Mobility	Develop proposals on how to roll-out Mobireg project website for use by EARLALL members			
Mobility	Prepare and circulate to Members information on proposed ESF/LLP mobility event for employed people – to include consideration of linking to Oct General Assembly		VGL	
EC Strategic Framework for education and Training	To coordinate and prepare EARLALL commentary on the proposals			
EuroregionSkills	Prepare and circulate to Members a paper on proposals for this new initiative		Basque Country	
Gender	To prepare and circulate a paper to all Members on proposals to inform discussion on the remit and funding for the network		Tuscany	
Distance Learning				
Employability				
Prevalet Project	To investigate final payment position and confirm / distribute to participating regions		Coordinator	