

# Civil society and MEPs form a new Interest Group on Lifelong Learning

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**EAEA and European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL) have initiated an Interest Group on Lifelong Learning together with Members of the European Parliament. Hosted by MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen (Finland, EPP), the group brings together civil society representatives and MEPs to discuss various key issues connected to lifelong learning. The first meeting took place in Brussels on 16th of April 2015.**



"The idea is to have an interest group on lifelong learning with a strong emphasis on adult education. An important reason to form the group is the new European Commission and its priorities. We stand for a comprehensive and trans-sectorial lifelong learning approach, and want to stress that education is not only about employment, but is linked to personal development, social inclusion, active citizenship, and much more. The interest group works as a "watchdog" to what the European Commission is doing," explains **Gina Ebner**, Secretary-General of EAEA.

## **"Inclusive Education for Inclusive Societies"**

The focus of 2015–2016 is "Inclusive education for inclusive societies". The Group aims to fight inequalities and discrimination in education in order to reach the Europe 2020 and Education and Training 2020 headline targets and contribute to the EU growth strategy this way.



"The Lifelong Learning Interest Group represents a great opportunity to coordinate our efforts in tackling these challenges for the future of Europe in a comprehensive and participative way," says **Audrey Frith**, [EUCIS-LLL](#) Director.

The Group will create bridges between social and employment policies and education policies as well as between policy-makers, practitioners and researchers.

### **Six MEPs are involved**

In addition to MEP Pietikäinen, who is a President of EAEA's member organisation, [The Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation](#), the following MEPs were present or represented:

MEP **Julie Ward** (UK, S&D), MEP **Claude Rolin** (Belgium, EPP), MEP **Krystyna Łybacka** (Poland, S&D), MEP **Milan Zver** (Slovenia, EPP) and MEP **István Ujhelyi** (Hungary, S&D).

EAEA, EUCIS-LLL, [European Office for Catholic Adult Education \(FEECA\)](#) and [Erasmus Student Network \(ESN\)](#) represented civil society at the meeting.

"Informal learning, intergenerational learning, creative skills – all these are fundamental but are often forgotten about. We are losing people if everything is tied to formal learning," says MEP Julie Ward.

The next meeting will take place before the summer.