



CULT Committee

Questions for the Hearing of the candidate Commissioner responsible for education and culture

1. Life-long learning

Background

Organising and funding education and lifelong learning are Member States' responsibilities. However the EU supports Member States' action to help them contribute to the Europe 2020 Strategy's overall EU economic and social objectives. The Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020) is the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training.

In his Agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change, President Juncker explicitly insists on the need "to stimulate investment in new technologies, improve the business environment, ease access to markets and to finance, particularly for SMEs, and ensure that workers have the skills industry needs." This boost for innovation should also impact on education policy; promote lifelong learning and upscaling of professional skills and competences at every stage of life.

So far, the Europe 2020 Strategy acknowledges lifelong learning and skills development as key elements in response to the current economic crisis, to demographic ageing and to the broader economic and social strategy of the European Union. Moreover, the New Skills for New Jobs initiative sets out to promote better anticipation of future skills needs, develop better matching between skills and labour market needs and bridge the gap between the worlds of education and work. Yet little has been done to promote training of older workers and life-long learning among older people.

AGE recommendations

While we support the emphasis put on younger workers by President-elect Juncker, we feel that specific attention must also be given to help older workers upgrade their skills and find a new job in order to support longer working lives, including those who have lost their jobs in economic restructuring processes.

Life-long education and training are a vital means to improving skill levels for workers of all ages who may find themselves out of a job. In today's economic context, it is important that all EU citizens, irrespective of age, should have the opportunity to acquire and develop the mix of knowledge, skills and aptitudes they need to succeed in the labour market. AGE



therefore calls for the new Commissioner to ensure that the Erasmus+ programme will offer support to activities in favour of older adult learners.

AGE also calls for an EU initiative to promote basic digital literacy among older people with least access to ICT to support longer, more productive careers and autonomous lives in later life.

Questions to candidate Commissioner

- What measures will you take to promote life-long learning for older people of working age and in later life?
- How will the Commission support training and re-qualification of older workers at risk of being pushed to early retirement and, more broadly, to empower senior people to remain active in the labour market?

2. Active citizenship

Background

On 15 July, President Juncker explained to the European Parliament that he wants “to regain citizens’ trust in the European project”. This objective calls for support to active citizenship. The EU has adopted funding programmes to support citizens’ participation in the community, such as the “Europe for Citizens Programme”. The aim of this programme is to bring the EU closer to its citizens and to enable them to participate fully in the European construction. Through this programme, citizens have the opportunity to be involved in transnational exchanges and cooperation activities, contributing to developing a sense of belonging to common European ideals and encouraging the process of European integration.

AGE recommendations

To regain citizens’ trust in the European project, it is necessary to engage them more in the EU processes. The European Commission should ensure that opportunities will be open for such civil dialogue and funding opportunities will be available to support active citizenship and build the capacity of citizens to get involved regardless of their age.

Questions to candidate Commissioner

- What measures will you take to facilitate the active participation and lasting engagement of senior citizens in the European decision-making?

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