



'ADULT LEARNING, NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN'

Final version as adopted by the General Board on 12 October 2007 in Athens

The population trend and economic and social changes call for a greater adaptation of qualifications and skills in private, social and working lives. Indeed, education and training for adults play a vital role in establishing key human capital for economic growth and social cohesion.

Time and time again it has been claimed that the crucial role of lifelong learning, including adult education, is a priority in the Lisbon strategy in that it ensures competitiveness and social cohesion and helps to uphold the European social model.

The importance of broadening the range of training offered in accordance with market needs (such as qualifications in IT and new technologies, foreign languages, entrepreneurship, etc.) enables women to become reintegrated into jobs for the future or jobs in which they are under-represented, and increases their employability and their chances of upward mobility on the company.

The **EPP Women** reassert that education and training for adult women is a political priority and wish to promote any policies and measures which encourage the reconciliation of family life, working life and lifelong learning.

The EPP Women call on the Member States and the competent European authorities to take all possible measures to promote the growth of a learning culture, and

1. Whereas different roles are still attributed to women and men in our society in the familial, professional, political and socio-cultural spheres, what causes unequal opportunities for women and men; appropriate (individual) learning programmes have to be proposed and developed;
2. Notes that where there are unequal opportunities for women and social exclusion is immanent, special capacity building is needed to achieve active citizenship and personal development;
3. Urge the Member States to introduce a lifelong learning culture, in accordance with the basic universal, fundamental right to education, primarily relating to education, training and capacity building for adult women, by implementing policies and actions geared to promoting the acquisition of knowledge and making it more accessible, and updating qualifications; in vocational training the content and methods of testing should correspond to the professional and- or job qualification;

4. Underline that language learning is a key factor for cultural understanding and social integration: women have to be considered as a target group in the language learning programmes;
5. Point out that financial incentives (tax incentives, allowances, grants and co-financing) are necessary so that women have access to and benefit from training and learning, allowing them to develop and become integrated in terms of both employability and active citizenship; this would encourage women to see their training as a personal investment;
6. Stress that institutional frameworks, networks and partnerships of bodies or associations linked to the training of adult women should be developed in order to raise more awareness, through greater transparency and visibility, of the issues relating to education and training in terms of both personal and professional fulfilment;
7. Recommends strongly to apply, both in personal as in vocational training, the interactive methods of peer-learning. E.g. in the exchange of best practices, where participants act on equal footing as teacher / producer as well as student / consumer of information and knowledge;
8. Recommend the use of the new technologies, in particular by developing Internet access to encourage new sources and ways of learning and education for women and to allow greater flexibility in the organisation and planning of their time;
9. Strongly recommend that the Member States and social partners consider adult education, capacity building and training, primarily that of women, as a priority investment in human capital which contributes to both social and economic growth and social integration, but also to the development of active citizenship;
10. Strongly reiterate to the Member States the need to promote support measures for mothers, such as flexibility in childcare facilities, distance learning services and the promotion of information and guidance, so that they can take part in education and training measures and bring forward their professional training;
11. Reaffirm that the Member States and competent authorities should pay special attention in education and training to the needs of specific women (e.g. migrant, ethnic, disabled or those with few qualifications), in order to ensure that they become socially integrated;
12. Take the view that reconciling family life, working life and lifelong learning calls not only for greater flexibility in managing time and space, but also for social, economic and tax incentives in order to promote access for women to adult training and education;
13. Urge that social partners establish working conditions (adjustment of working hours and flexitime) so that women, including SME-employees and free-lancers, can continue their lifelong education and training whilst working; in return, employers could be granted a reduction in taxation or social security costs;
14. Strongly recommend that employers, in the context of corporate social responsibility, support professional training programmes promoting lifelong training, in particular for female staff, in order to upgrade their skills and qualifications and develop professionally;
15. Call for the practice of financing and organising training by employers for their employees to become widespread and backed up by tax concessions, since the qualifications and skills of those employees are a key aspect of innovation, productivity and competitiveness;
16. Call for representations to be made to the new European Institute for Gender Equality in order for it to launch studies on all formal, non-formal and informal education and training programmes in the Member States including, more specifically, those designed for, developed by women's groups and adapted to adult women; the Institute should also promote the exchange of good practices in this field.

The EPP Women reaffirm that women should be a key factor in the adult learning culture as they assume reconciliation of family, working and learning life and could be considered as an integration factor for their children and the future generation.

Learning all our life: an opportunity to be taken by women.