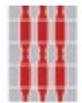**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE ADULT LEARNING SECTOR:**

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE EUROPEAN PEER REVIEW METHODOLOGY AND SUGGESTED

IMPLEMENTATION AREAS

International Conference

Adult Education and Learning: Putting Quality into Action

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Major lines of the Adult Learning Quality Assurance system expected development

➤ Defining a common framework to guarantee the quality of life-long and life-wide learning;

➤ Enhancing the diversification, flexibility and adaptability of quality assurance methodologies used;

➤ Supporting the development of a culture of quality in the AL organizations and institutions.

Defining a common framework to guarantee the quality of life-long and life-wide learning: contribution to the fulfilment by Peer Review adapted to AL

The adaption to AL of the cognitive framework and the instruments of the European Peer Review methodology takes into account some key features of learning in adulthood, as well as some peculiarities of the field of dult Learning significantly affecting the conditions of quality of learning for this target group

The additional contribution produced by PRALINE project is coherent with EQAVET+ but goes beyond the review of some descriptors and consists in the introduction of new criteria and their related indicators constituted in the Quality Areas, in order to fully take into account the distinctive characteristics of the sector and to be able to describe, in details, specific aspects of the adult learning offer.

All the adaptations and integrations of the European Peer Review methodology within the PRALINE project have been made with the aim to put it at disposal of both AL providers and institutions, a framework able to take into account what characterizes quality in adult learning and to provide a common basis for self-evaluation and external assessment

How to implement the recommendation by policy makers and VET/AL providers?

➢ Systematize the framework of the European Peer Review methodology in a transversal way to the different fields of education and training, in order to have a system valid for IVET, CVET and AL – an overarching framework encompassing educational sectors.

➢ Clearly position Peer Review in the larger quality assurance system of adult learning sector in order to ensure further use of Peer Review and its recognition as external evaluation methodology at national and European level.

Enhancing the diversification, flexibility and adaptability of quality assurance methodologies used: contribution to the fulfilment by Peer Review adapted to AL

- The Peer Review methodology is an approach to quality assurance and quality improvement in VET and AL that can be easily integrated with other methods and devices

- Especially for those organizations working in the field of AL that provide not funded training, and thus not necessarily accredited, and/or for organizations (such as companies) that do not have education as their priority mission, Peer Review methodology adapted to AL puts at disposal a framework and a set of criteria and indicators for the evaluation and the continuous improvement of quality not only more sustainable than other tools and certification systems, but also more easily correlated to significant dimensions of their educational offer and organizational action.

- Peer Review methodology, considering great flexibility and autonomy with respect to the choice of Quality Areas investigated, enables organizations to focus on those aspects of the quality they consider most relevant to the improvement of their performance, their effectiveness and efficiency, and therefore for the purposes of their competitiveness.

How to implement the recommendation by policy makers and VET/AL providers?

➢ Encourage connections between different policies and instruments in order to create synergies and promote greater transparency and consistency between sectors that also operate separately to each other.

➢ Consider the possibility of adaptation to the specificities of the organizations and of the educational offer, in order to include everyone in the process of improvement, starting from the sharing of a common framework.

➢ Integrate Peer Review methodology with other Quality Assurance methods, proposing this as a starting mechanism in the process of defining and developing a system of "performance-based awarding schemes".

➢ Support an approach that is adopted on a voluntary basis through institutional and shared forms of recognition and visibility, as Registers of Peers, the Peer Review European Label, etc.

➢ Identify links between European and national levels for a sustainable introduction and mainstreaming of the European Peer Review methodology in the adult learning sector – and in lifelong learning. Despite the variations made to integrate the methodology in the existing systems, the presence of a common methodology and its criteria and indicators serves as a point of reference for comparison and dialogue at transnational level.

Supporting the development of a culture of quality in the AL organizations and institutions:contribution to the fulfilment by Peer Review adapted to AL

Several characteristics of the European Peer Review methodology are connected to its impact on relevant dimensions of a culture of quality:

- The application of the Peer Review methodology in its different phases is not possible without a strong commitment of and support by the management of the organization involved.

- The Peer Review Methodology requires for its implementation the active involvement of different roles inside and outside the organization and at every level of the organization.

- The preparation and realization of a Peer Visit stimulates a process of organizational learning

- The Peer Review encourages and promotes the development of competencies of the staff roles involved

- The Peer Review requires for its application and at the same time it encourages the strengthening of some soft skills (leadership, relational efficacy, teamwork, problem solving, communications etc.) that are essential for the development and strengthening of a culture of quality.

- The realization of a Peer Review puts in motion processes of empowerment of key roles in the learning process (teachers and trainers, guidance counselors, tutors, administrative staff etc.) in various ways involved in managing the quality system of the organization

How to implement the recommendations by policy makers and VET/AL providers?

➢ Support opportunities for interaction and exchange between VET providers and AL providers in order to feed and strengthen a common vision in terms of the quality of learning offer.

➢ Develop quality network among providers, valuing and rewarding initiatives of mutual evaluation among organizations also from different sectors, in order to promote mutual-learning and quality development from the bottom.

➢ Promote information and training meetings on the issues of the quality of learning offer addressed not necessarily, or not only, to quality specialists, in order to support the use of a language and an approach that make more evident the links between quality assurance criteria, tools and procedures and their meaning and impact in terms of expected benefits for organizations and learners.

➢ Promote the professional qualification and continuing training of personnel responsible for education and training, in particular on issues of quality assurance and the consequent recognition of these skills as relevant within their professional profile.

➢ Support the use of the conceptual framework of the European Peer Review methodology (Quality Areas, criteria and related indicators) for self-evaluation and in order to raise awareness about the importance of a culture of quality among different AL providers.