

Cyprus Lifelong Learning Strategy 2021-2027



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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
SPORT AND YOUTH

Contents

Summary Sheet	04
Overview	05
Vision and Strategic Horizontal Pillars	06
Strategic Priorities and Objectives	07
Introduction	08
Overview	09
Stakeholders	11
Method	12
1. Policy framework	14
Alignment with European Policies	15
European Targets and Benchmarks	17
National Context and Policies	18
2. Strengths and Challenges	22
3. Vision and Strategic Horizontal Pillars of the Cyprus Lifelong Learning Strategy	26
Vision.....	27
Strategic Horizontal Pillars	27
4. Strategic Priorities and Objectives of the Cyprus Lifelong Learning Strategy	30
5. Key Performance Indicators	34
6. Action Plan	40
Annexes;	42
Annex 1: Acronyms and Abbreviations.....	43
Annex 2: European and International Policies and Initiatives	44
Annex 3: Organisations who Participated in the Consultations.....	48
Annex 4: Key EU indicators and targets	50

Executive Summary

Overview

The Cyprus Lifelong Learning Strategy (CyLLLS) 2021-2027 for Cyprus responds to the national political priority of developing a framework for lifelong learning by setting the strategic objectives and targets for this reference period. The work on the strategy was implemented with the financial support of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM)*. The CyLLS 2021-2027 is coordinated by the Office for European and International Affairs, Lifelong Learning and Adult Education (MESY) of the Cyprus Ministry of Education Sport and Youth. The National and Technical Committee on Lifelong Learning is responsible for developing, supervising, monitoring and updating the strategy.

The strategy was preceded by extensive research. Secondary research included the study of numerous national and European policies related to lifelong learning to develop a knowledge base on the topic. Critical literature analysis, research and online study visits to countries such as Estonia, Austria and Slovenia, which looked at good practices and examples, provided a good overview of the factors and actions that make lifelong learning systems effective. As part of the field survey, continuous consultations, interviews and discussions were carried out with policy makers, key stakeholders, social partners and experts to identify needs and gaps, as well as to attract interest and develop future synergies between them.

The European Commission points out that education and training are essential for building the knowledge economy and promoting individual and social progress, economic and sustainable development, as well as social cohesion and inclusion. At national level, the MESY recognises that the culture of lifelong learning needs to be fostered from the early stages of education. It is also appreciated that activities related to the lifelong learning system fall under the competence of many public authorities and bodies. The CyLLLS 2021-2027 aims to align its vision with the strategic measures and actions of other national authorities, as communicated through their objectives and operating frameworks.

The lack of an institutional framework for lifelong learning in Cyprus and the absence of a dedicated authority to oversee related activities limited the opportunities for progress in the past. In addition, there is no mechanism for monitoring, aligning and evaluating the impact of different national actions in the field of lifelong learning, which could ensure the quality and assess the performance of the system. The adult learning sector also appears to be fragmented with few oversight mechanisms, due to the lack of a legislative and policy framework as well as quality assurance mechanisms clarifying its functions and standards. Learning outcomes achieved in non-formal and informal education cannot be validated or recognised, as a formal process has not yet been institutionalised.

The culture of lifelong learning needs to be fostered from the early years of school education. Teachers at all levels are therefore called upon to inspire the spirit of 'Ageing is not taught' through their practice. The identification of these needs and gaps, as well as the desired future outcomes, as described by stakeholders, has led to the development of the vision and strategic priorities set out in this strategy. In addition to the above information and data derived from the in-depth analysis, it should be noted that the coronavirus pandemic inevitably affected the labour market, as a result of reduced economic activity in recent years, with negative effects on the employability of young people.

Vision and strategic horizontal pillars

The Cyprus Lifelong Learning Strategy 2021-2027 aspires to provide a long-term strategic framework for the development of a knowledge-based society, in which everyone citizens will development have learning opportunities for their knowledge, skills and attitudes, which will be facilitates their personal and social progress, professional development, social inclusion, resilience and their well-being.

Lifelong learning is a multi-faceted system whose actions fall under the responsibility of different authorities. However, it is important to consider their impact and contribution to the lifelong learning system cumulatively. In this respect, the following concepts are considered **strategic horizontal pillars**, due to their significant horizontal influence on the strategic measures of the CyLLLS 2021-2027.

- **Digital transformation:** The digital transition is imperative at all levels for developed countries to strengthen their economies, address global challenges, maximise their dynamics and achieve their targets. Digital skills are considered essential for individuals to seize learning opportunities, compete in the labour market and participate in social life.
- **Green transition and sustainability:** The green transition entails fundamental adjustments in all sectors, aiming at a sustainable future and a positive impact on quality of life. This new approach requires specific knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable individuals to actively support their community in the successful transition towards ecologically sustainable and sustainable development.
- **Inclusion and equality: Lifelong learning** opportunities must be accessible and available to all citizens to enable them to develop their skills, participate in society and succeed in life. Equal treatment and opportunities for lifelong learning must be provided regardless of social class, gender, ethnicity, religious beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation.
- **Validation of non-formal and informal learning:** The recognition, validation and validation of non-formal and informal learning is a key feature of a successful and effective lifelong learning policy, thereby enhancing the visibility and transferability of skills acquired in education and training programmes or work experience.
- **Well-being and health:** Continuous personal and professional development enables citizens to be flexible and adaptable to their rapidly changing environment, strengthening resilience to challenges and crises. Most importantly, lifelong learning also opens up opportunities for socialisation and social participation. Socio-emotional outcomes of learning are important factors in strengthening individuals' sense of health and well-being.
- **Lifelong learning culture:** Participation in lifelong learning programmes requires positive

openness to learning. Teachers and parents have a key role to play in promoting the values of lifelong learning in children. Public efforts can also contribute to a culture of lifelong learning by reducing potential barriers for learners and providing meaningful incentives to participate in education and training.

Strategic Priorities and Objectives

To achieve the vision of the CyLLLS 2021-2027, four strategic priorities are set as key objectives to be achieved by 2027. These objectives are essential to provide the long-term strategic framework for lifelong learning towards the development of a knowledge-based and inclusive society and guide future actions:

1. **Establish the governance, monitoring and evaluation framework** including policy arrangements and action plans with clear stakeholder roles and sound financial management. In addition, key performance indicators and criteria for quality assurance and continuous improvements are needed.
2. **Reducing youth unemployment and upskilling/reskilling young people and the workforce** by providing learning opportunities that reflect labour market needs and take into account the digital and green transitions. The focus is on people at risk of unemployment and on the upskilling/reskilling of the workforce at national level.
3. **Increasing adult participation in lifelong learning** by improving the quality of the adult learning sector, motivating individuals and businesses, removing barriers, as well as increasing the visibility and strengthening of information and communication.
4. **Improving the professional practice of adult educators** and supporting trainers at all levels of education in developing lifelong learning skills.

To support and monitor the achievement of strategic priorities and objectives, specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been defined. These indicators provide the required benchmark to measure the achievement of the targets set, including the timeframe for achievement and the requested target for 2027. Finally, this strategy will be accompanied by an action plan, which will support the National and Technical Committees in fulfilling their mission. A draft action plan, which will be presented as a separate document, will be prepared in consultation with all key stakeholders and social partners. The Action Plan will include indicative actions aligned with the above strategic measures and can be used as a mapping tool to define the timing of activities and bring together other authorities' endeavours towards a common work line within the national lifelong learning system. The National and Technical Committees, responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the strategy, may review and update the action plan and KPIs as necessary during the implementation of this strategy. This strategy, including its priorities and draft action plan, should be seen as an evolving document, taking into account the dynamic nature of the external environment that may diversify until the strategy is finalised. In this process, the annual monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will provide information and recommendations for amendments, always in consultation with key stakeholders.

Introduction

Overview

New working conditions and lifestyles, technological developments, digital and green transitions to environmentally sustainable economies require changes in education and training. For individuals, communities and societies, lifelong learning is crucial to achieve sustainable development and improve quality of life. In addition to developing skills and acquiring qualifications for personal and professional reasons, lifelong learning involves fostering social attitudes and values. For the collective and multilevel improvement of society, people who embrace democratic values, respect diversity and actively participate in civic life are needed. The Cyprus Lifelong Learning Strategy (CyLLLS) 2021- 2027 provides the framework for a supportive and inclusive lifelong learning system, through which all individuals are incentivised to participate in education and training.

Lifelong learning is a process that starts from birth and continues throughout an individual's life. It covers the whole spectrum of the formal education system, learning that takes place during in-service education and training, reskilling and upskilling, as well as non-formal and informal learning, whether in person or remotely. It also includes opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills at the workplace or as part of activities for personal development and self-improvement.

The formal education system, from early childhood to tertiary education, plays a key role in developing learners to adapt, live and work in a rapidly changing world. People need to be prepared for an unknown future, for jobs that have not yet been created, for technologies that have not yet been invented and for social problems or pandemics that have not yet emerged, so that they are more resilient and flexible in the face of uncertainty. Lifelong learning can equip people with the skills, attitudes, competences and values that are necessary to adapt to the changes ahead and shape their future.

The CyLLLS 2021-2027 is expected to lead to significant developments in the field of education and training. Successful implementation will help people achieve their educational, professional and personal goals at all stages of their lives. The CyLLLS 2021-2027 is in line with current developments as described in the Strategic Plan 2021-2023 of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MESY), as well as with the strategic plans and priorities of other ministries and organisations at national level. The strategy takes into account the needs of all pupils, including those at risk, such as early school leavers, pupils with migrant biography and pupils with special educational needs. In addition, the strategy takes into account the results of international performance surveys, adult participation rates in education and training, the level of digital skills and the needs of low-skilled adults. It is important to stress that the CyLLLS 2021-2027 is not a substitute for the strategic plan of the MESY or other ministries and agencies at national level. Instead, it creates the necessary synergies to help implement it. Therefore, through the CyLLLS 2021-2027 action plan to be developed by the Technical Commission and validated by the National Lifelong Learning Commission, the strategic objectives of the NLLP 2021-2027 will complement the strategies of the other ministries and organisations at national level.

The existing policies, actions and programmes of national actors, in the field of education and training, inevitably create synergies through agreements and partnerships aligned with the strategic priorities of the CyLLLS 2021-2027. Examples include the project "Development of a National Alternate Monitoring Mechanism

Lifelong learning spectrum

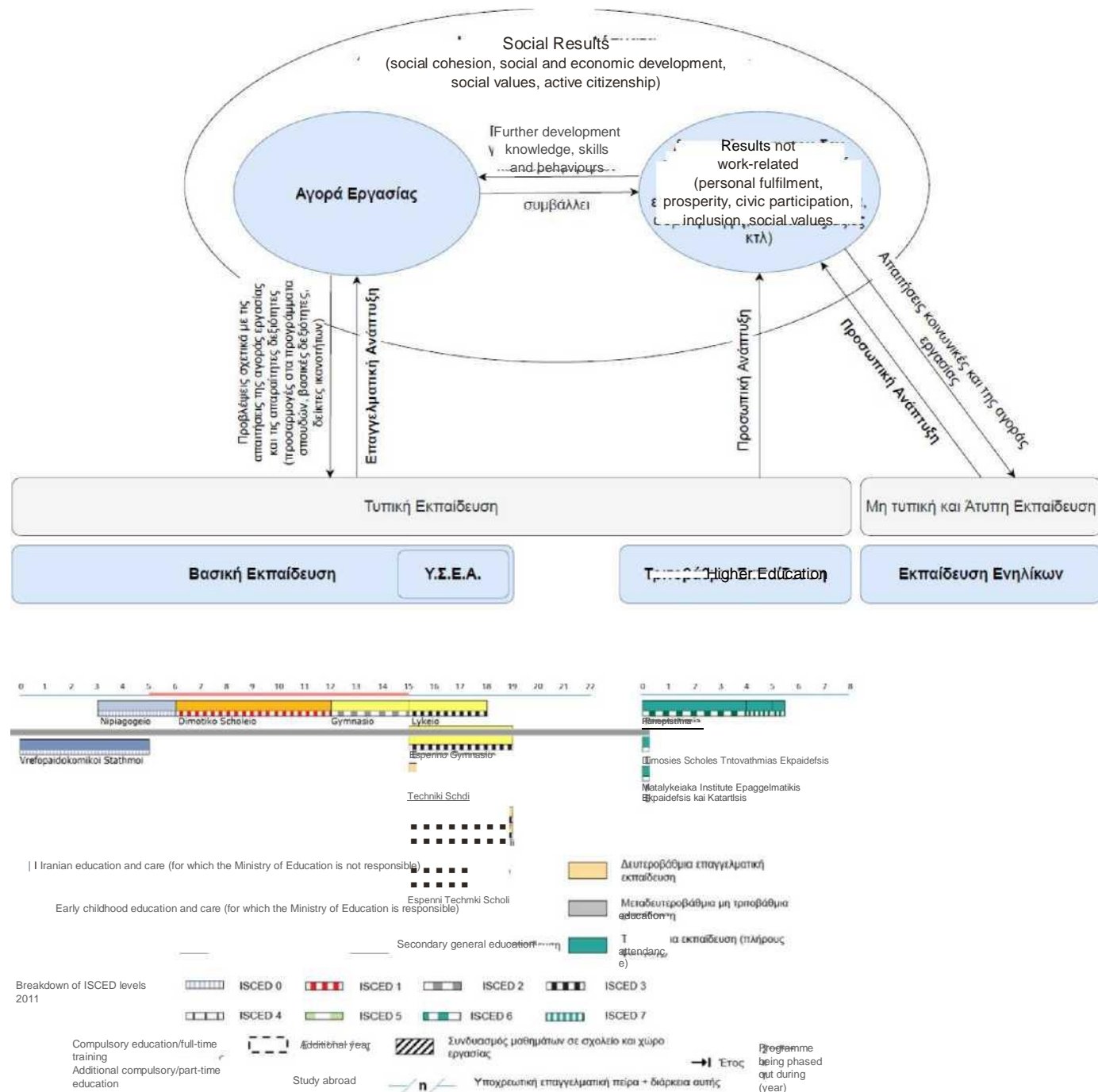


Figure 1. The scope of lifelong learning in Cyprus¹

Higher Education and the Planning and Implementation of Employers' Skills Survey', implemented by the Directorate for Higher Education (DHE) of the MESY, the recent initiatives by the Directorate for Medium-Technical and Vocational Education and Training and the focus on skills development of the 21st century. These initiatives can contribute to the implementation of the priorities of the CyLLLS 2021-2027, such as reducing unemployment, in particular among young people, or providing information on labour market needs, graduate career prospects and skills mismatches. Continuous and systematic forecasting of labour market trends and anticipation of the future environment can also contribute to the adaptability of human capital and labour market flexibility. In this context, the Human Resources Development Authority (HRDA) systematically monitors labour market developments, providing forecasts and estimates of employment and training needs. Given technological progress and the increase in digital jobs, lifelong learning will create new opportunities for people to acquire new skills and competences to enter or re-enter the labour market. In this respect, the CyLLLS 2021-2027 will reinforce key objectives of the Republic of Cyprus, such as digital transformation, by fostering the digital skills of people, especially those with low skills and qualifications. Furthermore, with increasing adult participation in lifelong learning as a key priority, it will contribute to promoting active citizenship, social cohesion, inclusion and empowerment.

Therefore, bearing in mind that lifelong learning is expanding through numerous systemic interlinkages between all actors involved in the education system, the CyLLLS 2021-2027 will develop synergies and agreements between these stakeholders, with the aim of activating those factors that will lead to the achievement of the priorities set.

Recognising the systemic nature of education, it was preceded by a comprehensive needs analysis of all key stakeholders of the CyLLLS 2021-2027. The results highlighted the importance of the selected strategic pillars and priorities for the next five years. These priorities focus on specific age groups and issues where shortcomings were identified. For example, special attention is given to low-skilled adults, young people and people at risk of unemployment. In this context, coordination and cooperation between the bodies providing formal and non-formal education (e.g. evening schools, Public School of Higher VET, Adult Education Centres, programmes of the MLWSI and the HRDA and programmes of the Cyprus Youth Organisation (ONEK)) is further promoted and strengthened. Similar examples are the development of synergies arising from the National Youth Strategy 2017-2022 and the National Industrial Policy 2019-2030 towards common objectives.

These actions are expected to alleviate major challenges at national level, such as youth unemployment, unemployment among young graduates or low participation in lifelong learning. Monitoring to achieve these objectives will be implemented through concrete actions and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), as agreed by stakeholders. The CyLLLS 2021-2027 includes proposed actions to be taken by stakeholders to implement the strategy. The Education Directorates of the Ministry of the Interior and the Services/Departments of other Ministries, as well as other authorities, will be invited to contribute with specific actions and recommendations to the 2021-2027 CyLLLS action plan. The CyLLLS 2021-2027 is dynamic in nature, recognising the contextual factors from the European and national socio-economic environment that affect it. Therefore, priorities, objectives and indicators will be continuously monitored and modified as necessary.

¹ the schematic diagram of the structure of the Cypriot education system comes from the Network's report Eurydice, The Structure of the European Education Systems 2021/22, which does not cover the International Classification Standards in Education and a number of private sector initiatives.

Stakeholders

The Cyprus Lifelong Learning Strategy (CyLLLS) 2021-2027 responds to the national political priority of developing a lifelong learning framework, setting the strategic objectives and targets for the next six years. The overall design of the strategy, including the previous research and analysis, was supported by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM), as requested by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, and Youth (MESY). The strategy was developed by the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) with the support of the CARDET International Research and Education Centre. The CyLLLS 2021-2027 is coordinated by the Office for European and International Affairs, s, Lifelong Learning and Adult Education Office of MESY. The National and Technical Committee on Lifelong Learning is responsible for the development, supervision and monitoring of the strategy.

National Committee

- Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth
- Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance
- Permanent Secretary of the Directorate General Growth of the Ministry of Finance
- Director of the Public Administration and Personnel Department of the Ministry of Finance

Technical Committee

- Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth
- Permanent Secretary of the Directorate General Growth of the Ministry of Finance
- Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance
- Director of the Department of Labour of Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance
- Head of the European Social Fund Unit of Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance
- Director of Human Resource Development Authority
- Director of Cyprus Productivity Centre
- Director of the Public Administration and Personnel Department of Ministry of Finance
- Chairman of the Youth Board Cyprus
- Director of the Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes
- Head of the Office for European and International Affairs, Lifelong Learning and Adult Education of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth

Method

The first phase of the strategy's development included extensive research and numerous in-depth consultations. Secondary research included the study of a large number of European lifelong learning policies and initiatives to achieve adequate alignment with the European vision and guidelines. In addition, several national strategic documents were studied for an in-depth analysis of the country's context and the way forward, in line with the government authorities' vision. In order to shape the framework conditions in the coming years, notably in education and the labour market, which are the main focus areas of this strategy, the upcoming trends in education and labour market forecasts have also been taken into account. In addition, a literature review and online study visits to Estonia, Austria and Slovenia, which looked at good practices and examples, provided a good overview of the factors and actions that make lifelong learning systems effective. The table below summarises the most important sources of data used to develop the strategy:

Summary of data collection and consultations	
Number of documents reviewed	100+ Policy documents & reports
	50+ Scientific articles and studies
Number of interviews conducted	35
Number of consultation meetings (internal and external)	17
Number of study visits	3 (Estonia, Austria, and Slovenia)
Number of stakeholders consulted	32 (including Public authorities, European offices, Universities, Social partners and more) ²

The implementation of lifelong learning actions in Cyprus falls within the activities of many bodies from the public and private sectors. Consultations and discussions with policy makers, key stakeholders and experts were necessary and valuable in the context of field research to identify needs and gaps, as well as to attract interest and develop future synergies. During the initial stages of the survey, stakeholders from various Directorates and Departments of the MESY (e.g. Cyprus Pedagogical Institute), Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance (MLWSI), Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA), Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes (FFMELLP), Youth Board of Cyprus (YBC), Cyprus Employers & Industrialists Federation (OEB), Cyprus Productivity Centre (CPC), Directorate General Growth of the Ministry of Finance (DG Growth, Ministry of Finance), and Ministry of Interior (MoI) among others, were invited to a strategic vision workshop to discuss the key themes and priorities of this strategy. In

addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with 35 key stakeholders and social partners representing employers and employees from the public and private sectors, adult education providers, universities, the Cyprus Vocational Education and Training (VET) expert group and civil society organisations. It was preceded by continuous consultations and reflections on the different plans of the Strategy, and additional revisions were carried out with key stakeholders until the final version was prepared. More details can be found in the research report preceding the CyLLLS 20212027.

The key priorities of this strategy respond to the two main challenges (as the request of the MESY and part of the national political agenda), which relate to increasing adult participation in lifelong learning and reducing youth unemployment, and which are also crucial issues for the Ministry of the Interior. On the basis of research and analysis of the national framework, two further priorities were identified necessary to achieve the strategic objectives. These priorities relate to the creation of an institutional framework for the lifelong learning system, the development of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and the strengthening of the capacity of adult teachers and trainers to integrate the culture of lifelong learning into their practices. This strategy, including its priorities, should be seen as an evolving document, taking into account the dynamic nature of the external environment which may vary over the next five years. In this process, the annual monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will provide information and recommendations on any necessary amendments, always in consultation with key stakeholders. The National and Technical Committee on Lifelong Learning is responsible for implementing the strategy and making any necessary adjustments to the action plan and KPIs.

1. Policy Framework

Alignment with European Policies

The European Commission points out that education and training are essential for building the knowledge economy and promoting individual and social progress, economic and sustainable development, as well as social cohesion and inclusion. As announced by the European Commission in the context of the European Education Area³, education must be “at the heart of the European way of life” (p. 1), because it can enhance economic and social development by promoting the values of democracy, freedom, diversity, human rights and social justice. The CyLLLS 2021-2027 for Cyprus is in line with these ideas, as expressed through European policies and frameworks. More than a hundred key documents were considered to align national efforts with the European targets ([Annex 2](#)) with the most important ones presented below.

In its effort to create a common strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training, the Council of the European Union agreed on five priorities to guide actions over the next decade and reflect the objectives of the **European Education Area (2021-2030)**⁴:

- Strategic priority 1: Improving quality and equity, inclusion and success for all in education and training.
- Strategic priority 2: Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality for all.
- Strategic priority 3: Enhancing competences and motivation in the education profession.
- Strategic priority 4: Reinforcing European higher education.
- Strategic priority 5: Supporting the green and digital transitions in and through education and training.

Quality education is a social right. Due to the constantly changing living and working conditions in modern societies, the continuous acquisition and development of skills is essential to maintain people’s employability and achieve personal fulfilment. In this respect, the concept of lifelong learning is of particular importance as it reflects the vision of education in the European Union. Lifelong learning encompasses all levels and types of education and training and is seen as an essential instrument for “*shaping Europe’s future*”⁵(p. 2). While the value of non-formal and informal learning is recognised as a means of a holistic approach to education, further progress in quality and validation of educational outcomes, as well as the flexibility of learning pathways are among the main concerns for the future of lifelong learning in Europe. This strategy is geared towards a more modernised lifelong learning system that offers learning opportunities for citizens of all ages and backgrounds. The provision of learning must be future-proof, flexible and have real value for learners.

To cope with the future transformations of *modern societies*, education and training should aim at developing people’s appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes. From this perspective, the **European Skills Agenda**⁶, based on this need, seeks to show the path towards sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience to crises such as the coronavirus pandemic. This agenda covers five building blocks consisting of calling for cooperation, matching skills and jobs, promoting lifelong learning, ensuring adequate funding and setting ambitious targets for upskilling and reskilling.

. As it is indicated, “to succeed, lifelong learning for all must be a reality in Europe” (p. 19). It is also emphasized that basic education alone cannot ensure adaptation to the rapid societal transitions for individuals but learning throughout life can better reflect the ongoing needs and developments. As part of its objectives, the European Skills Agenda emphasizes that nations should instil a lifelong learning culture and support everyone regardless of their employment status. Access to education, guidance, validation of learning outcomes, and quality of training is also among the national concerns taken

Recognising the importance of lifelong learning for the adult population, in particular for the most vulnerable

³<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0625&from=EN>

⁴[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021G0226\(01\)traceabilityfrom=EL](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021G0226(01)traceabilityfrom=EL)

⁵[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021G0226\(01\)traceabilityfrom=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021G0226(01)traceabilityfrom=EN)

⁶<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0274&from=EL>

groups, the Council adopted a series of initiatives to improve adaptability to changes in the labour market and society. **The new European Agenda for Adult Education 2021-2030**⁷ aims to promote the adult learning sector by focusing on upskilling or reskilling, employability, life skills, equity and success in adult learning and active citizenship. Adult participation rates in formal, non-formal and informal learning are used as a central indicator determining the achievement of the objectives of the Agenda, which is also a priority in this strategy. Following these objectives, the **Upskilling Pathways** initiative⁸ is an initiative aimed at ensuring that all adults are equipped with the minimum level of basic skills (i.e. literacy, numeracy and digital) and qualifications (i.e. level 3 or 4 of the European Qualifications Framework).

The challenges of an ever-changing future increase uncertainty for young people, who are often unable to address ongoing issues such as unemployment, inequality and discrimination. To support the adaptability and resilience of young people, specific measures need to be targeted at young people and ensure the provision of the necessary opportunities and resources to succeed in their lives. The **European Youth Strategy 2019-2027**⁹ is one of the main documents of European youth policy. This strategy focuses on three key areas reflecting opportunities for participation in democratic life, connectivity and tools to empower young people. Education and training are considered essential for young people to develop life skills and attitudes that will support their employability and civic engagement. It is also noted that the recognition of non-formal and informal learning through youth work should be systematically applied as a means to improve their professional development and prospects. Similarly, this strategy outlines that lifelong learning brings benefits directly related to the employability of young people as a means to tackle and reduce high unemployment rates at national level. In full line with these targets, the Member States of the European Union in 2020 have committed to implementing the reinforced **Youth Guarantee**¹⁰, which aims to combat youth unemployment and facilitate the transition from education to employment. The programme is funded by the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) and has been developed to ensure that all young people receive a quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving the training. Another important instrument for active youth citizenship and informal or non-formal education is the **European Solidarity Corps**¹¹, which encourages young people to participate in projects for the benefit of their communities and beyond.

Taking into account economic and social changes, the European Union regularly refers to the green and digital transitions. As Europe aspires to move towards a sustainable, climate-neutral economy and technological innovation, people will need to acquire the skills needed to adapt and support future job demands. To facilitate the digital transformation in education and training, the European Commission published the **Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027**¹². This policy sets out the European strategic vision for the digitalisation of education by responding to the challenges and opportunities of the coronavirus pandemic, encouraging cooperation and improving the quality of learning from a pedagogical point of view. It examines and promotes the values of inclusion and accessibility for students and teachers, focusing on two priority areas: (a) the development of digital educational ecosystems and (b) the development of digital skills and competences. In addition, the **European Green Deal**¹³ is the European Union's response to climate change and the environmental crisis. The plan consists of promoting sustainable development and improving social well-being by guiding actions in many sectors, such as industry, transport and construction. As a consequence, people need to acquire from an early age the necessary skills to support this ecological transition, contribute to the growing employment sectors and be prepared to adapt to the green economy.

Erasmus +¹⁴ is the European Union's instrument to support education, training, youth and sport across Europe and continues for another programming period (2021-2027) with an estimated budget of EUR 26,2

⁷[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021G1214\(01\)traceabilityfrom=EL](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021G1214(01)traceabilityfrom=EL)

⁸[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016H1224\(01\)traceabilityfrom=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016H1224(01)traceabilityfrom=EN)

⁹https://europa.eu/youth/strategy_en

¹⁰<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=en>

¹¹https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en

¹²https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/digital-education-action-plan_en

¹³https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

billion. The general objective of the Programme is to contribute to the quality and inclusion of education systems across Europe, to offer non-formal and informal learning opportunities and to equip citizens with the right skills and qualifications for a successful professional life and civic engagement as active citizens. The focus areas for the coming years are social inclusion, the green and digital transitions and the participation of young people in democratic life, taking into account the dynamically changing social environment and the necessary recovery process from the coronavirus pandemic. Erasmus + offers a wide range of opportunities for mobility and cooperation across all levels of education, from early childhood to vocational training and adult learning.

The European Commission has recently announced the **Recovery and Resilience Facility**¹⁵ (RRF) to financially support Member States' reforms and investments to improve the resilience of economies and recover from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. This large-scale financial support of EUR 672,5 billion, as part of NextGenerationEU¹⁶ (EUR 806,9 billion), is provided in the form of loans and grants to countries after the submission and approval of their national plans. The main objective of this mechanism is twofold: the transition to greener economies and digital transformation. In addition, one of the seven flagship areas for reform and investment promoted by the Commission is education and training with a focus on reskilling and upskilling of people, in particular digital skills.¹⁷

European Targets and Benchmarks

In order to align efforts at national level with the European vision and the contribution of Cyprus as a Member State to the European Community, the EDLLP 2021-2027 takes into account the European targets and milestones to be achieved in the coming years. The Council of the European Union sets seven objectives to be achieved by 2025 or 2030 in support of the strategic priorities adopted in the **European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030)** and monitoring performance in education and training. However, Member States are invited to set their respective national targets. The seven objectives at European Union level are:

1. Low achievement of 15-year-olds in basic skills: The share of low-achieving 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science should be less than 15 %, by 2030.
2. Underachievement in digital skills of individuals in their eighth year of schooling: The share of low-achieving eight-graders in computer and information literacy should be less than 15 %, by 2030.
3. Participation in early childhood education and care: At least 96 % of children between 3 years old and the starting age for compulsory primary education should participate in early childhood education and care, by 2030.
4. Early leavers from education and training: The share of early leavers from education and training should be below 9 % by 2030.
5. Educational attainment level: The share of 25-34 year-olds with tertiary educational attainment should be at least 45 %, by 2030.
6. Vocational Education and Training (VET) graduates benefiting from work-based learning: The share

¹⁴<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/>

¹⁵https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en

¹⁶https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/recovery-plan-europe_en

¹⁷[http://www.cyprus-tomorrow.gov.cy/cypresidency/kyprostoavrio.nsf/all/B37B4D3AC1DB73B6C22586DA00421E05/\\$file/Cy-Prus%20RRP%20For%20Upload%202020052021.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.cyprus-tomorrow.gov.cy/cypresidency/kyprostoavrio.nsf/all/B37B4D3AC1DB73B6C22586DA00421E05/$file/Cy-Prus%20RRP%20For%20Upload%202020052021.pdf?OpenElement)

of recent graduates from VET benefiting from exposure to work-based learning during their vocational education and training should be at least 60 %, by 2025.

7. Adult participation in learning: At least 47 % of adults aged 25-64 should have participated in learning during the last 12 months, by 2025.¹⁸

From the perspective of the **European Skills Agenda**¹⁹ focusing on lifelong learning, as well as socio-economic recovery and accelerating the green transition, the Commission sets four quantitative targets to be achieved by 2025:

1. Participation of adults aged 25-64 in learning activities in the last 12 months: 50 %
2. Participation of low-qualified adults aged 25-64 in learning activities in the last 12 months: 30 %
3. Share of unemployed adults aged 25-64 with recent learning experience: 20 %
4. Share of adults aged 16-74 with at least basic digital skills: 70 %

National Context and Policies

The CyLLLS 2021-2027 is coordinated by the Office for European and International Affairs, by the European and International Affairs, Lifelong Learning and Adult Education Office of MESY. The National and Technical Committee on Lifelong Learning is responsible for the development, supervision and monitoring of the strategy. In this respect, the implementation of the strategy requires a collective effort by different parties, as described below.

The MESY is responsible for national education policy and the continuous development of education provision at all levels. As part of its strategic objectives, described in the **Strategic Plan 2021-2023**²⁰, as of 1 December 2019, the Office for European and International Affairs (GEDY) was renamed the Office for European and International Affairs, Lifelong Learning the European and International Affairs, and Adult Education Office and also took over the management of issues and the development and promotion of policies related to Lifelong Learning and Adult Education. The existing Lifelong Learning Programmes are currently managed by the respective Directorates of the Ministry. For example, the Adult Education Centres operate under the responsibility of the Department of Primary Education. The Department of Secondary General Education manages the State Institutes of Further Education (KIE), Evening Schools, and the Career Counselling and Educational Services (CCES). The Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training System, offers a wide range of secondary technical and vocational education, initial training, lifelong training programmes and higher vocational education and training to graduates of secondary schools and secondary schools. These pathways are known as Middle-Technical and Vocational Education (morning), Vocational Education and Training Apprenticeships, Nursing Technical and Vocational Education Schools (second chance schools), Lifelong Learning Programmes for Vocational Education and Training and Public School of Higher Vocational Education and Training (MIEEK). The project 'Upgrading Technical and Vocational Education' is being implemented by the Directorate for Medium-Technical and Vocational Education and Training. Initially implemented from October 2015 to December 2021, it is now continuing under the new programming period until 2027 with an increased budget. The overall objective of the project is to further develop and improve public vocational education and training (VET) in Cyprus by providing learners with the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to be fully equipped to address labour market challenges. Indicative

¹⁸[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021G0226\(01\)&traceability=EL](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021G0226(01)&traceability=EL)

¹⁹<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0274&from=EL>

actions and initiatives include the development and introduction of new curricula in the Middle Technical and Vocational Education and Public School of Higher Vocational Education and Training, aligned with existing and future labour market needs, the purchase of modern technical equipment and access to modern infrastructure, the evaluation and improvement of curricula in VET, the organisation of promotional campaigns to increase students' participation in VET sectors; the provision of high-quality vocational training to VET teachers, the development of a national monitoring system to monitor the labour market access and success of VET graduates, the creation of new Technical Schools, etc. In addition, the Ministry of the Interior recognises that the culture of lifelong learning must be fostered from the early stages of education by stating that "quality early childhood education is fundamental for lifelong learning, social inclusion and personal development" (p. 58). In this context, it implements several European Programmes promoting adult learning and lifelong learning at national level, such as the European Agenda for Adult Education and the European Electronic Platform for Adult Learning (EPALE) in Cyprus.

The Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance (MLWSI) has made the integration of citizens into the labour market a strategic measure to tackle unemployment. The Euroguidance European Guidance Network, coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior, can also play a catalyst role in informing young people about educational opportunities in other Member States by promoting seminars, conferences and individual meetings for studies and careers and by providing links to other Euroguidance Centres. Several of the policies and programmes of the Ministry of the Environment, Energy and Climate Change, as well as projects for the vocational training and development of the country's human capital, are implemented by the Human Resources Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA).

Key activities for the upgrading of human resources include the integration of the unemployed and the dormant potential into the employment and lifelong learning of the employed. Quality assurance of the system for training and development of human resources is currently achieved through the operation of the Professional Qualifications System (CIS) and the Evaluation and Certification System of Training Provider Actors, which are implemented by the HRDA. In addition, the AnAD conducts studies and surveys on trends and forecasts of employment and training needs, the evaluation of its projects/activities, the analysis of VET systems and infrastructures, as well as specific reports on the labour market.

The findings are an important guidance tool that helps improve the labour market relevance of education and training. As a result, much of the actions and initiatives of the HR are reasonably linked to the aims of this strategy and, in particular, to linking lifelong learning with professional skills and qualifications.

Erasmus + is an important instrument for Cyprus to fund and support lifelong learning activities in all sectors (school education, higher education, VET, adult learning and youth). Alongside improving skills and employability, the programme aims to modernise the education and training sectors and promote transnational partnerships between institutions and organisations to strengthen cooperation and bridge the worlds of education and employment. The Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes (FFMELLP) is the National Agency for Erasmus + (education and training sectors) which implements the management of the relevant grants and the participation of Cypriot beneficiaries in the activities promoted. In addition, it coordinates the National VET Team to promote European tools and instruments for VET and the eTwinning programme, which supports cooperation between teachers in school education.

Youth is an important target group of the lifelong learning system because it is considered to be an essential part of the country's workforce both now and in the future. The **National Youth Strategy 2017-2022**²¹, drawn up by the Youth Board of Cyprus (YBC)(ONEK), underlines the value of investing in young people and responds to their needs for national social and economic progress. The provision of equal learning opportunities, the establishment of vocational counselling services, the creation of links between education

²⁰<https://bit.ly/3a7NgW2>

²¹<https://youthpolicy.onek.org.cy/en/national-youth-strategy/>

and the labour market and the improvement of the national lifelong learning system are key actions falling within the objectives of the Youth Strategy, which are also addressed by CyLLLS the 2021-2027 for Cyprus. ONEK is the body responsible for Erasmus + youth and non-formal education programmes in Cyprus, which include youth exchanges, cooperation partnerships, mobility and participation activities and training opportunities. Another important instrument to strengthen young people's active citizenship through the creation of volunteering activities and work projects is the European Solidarity Corps. ONEK is the National Agency for the European Solidarity Corps and is responsible for managing the programme at national level.

The results of education and training acquired outside the formal education system are often valuable. Cyprus has not established a formal framework for the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning, however, several developments have taken place in recent years. For example, the Council of Ministers approved in 2017 the establishment of the National Qualifications Authority as an official body responsible for the implementation of the Cyprus Qualifications Framework. As regards vocational training and qualifications, the HRDA has developed the System of Professional Qualifications (PCT) and the System for the Evaluation and Certification of Training Providers. The HRDA also plans the design and implementation of micro-credentials and individual learning accounts. In addition, on the basis of the policy decision of the Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Qualifications (KYSATS), higher education institutions may certify to students up to 10 % of the total credits required for an official degree, as a mechanism for recognising prior learning in a non-formal context. The LLL, in its capacity as National Agency for the Erasmus + programme (in the fields of education and training) and as coordinator of the "VET Expert Group", launched a series of consultations aimed at creating a national framework for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes.

With the aim of strengthening research and innovation and accelerating the digital transformation of Cyprus, as proposed by the European Union, the Government established in 2020 the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy (HDPC), which took responsibility for the digital strategy, thus demonstrating the political commitment to accelerate Cyprus' digital transformation. In line with the National Digital Strategy, Cyprus has set the objective of becoming a knowledge-based society and economy fit for the future and supported by digital and emerging technologies, which will drive economic prosperity and competitiveness, making the country a resilient regional player in the European digital economy and a regional hub for science and high-tech. The Deputy Ministry adopted and undertook the implementation of the **National Framework for Strategic Research and Innovation 2019-2023**²² ("Innovate Cyprus"), which focuses on nine strategic pillars. Lifelong learning is seen as an essential investment in fostering academic and research excellence in human capital in terms of skills, competences and attitudes necessary for the workforce of the 21st century, as outlined in a strategic objective. It is also recognised that lifelong learning plays a key role in cultural change through the development of new societal values, perceptions and attitudes. Moreover, as part of the digital transition which is a key priority of the Deputy Ministry, the development of citizens' digital skills is among the important and necessary steps to achieve its ambitions. This approach is in line with the EDLLP 2021-2027, as both strategies consider the digitalisation of society and the economy to be particularly important. The recently finalised National Digital Strategy (2020-2025) is developed as part of four key initiatives:

1. Promoting eGovernment by redesigning the internal business architecture and governance model of the Deputy Ministry, optimising the service delivery model, providing a resilient, robust and secure Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) infrastructure.
2. Facilitating the connectivity of ultra-high-speed networks and increasing usage, ensuring the security of data and networks and increasing public trust in electronic transactions.
3. Creating a stronger digital economy and increasingly digital and competitive industries.

²²[https://www.dmid.gov.cy/dmid/research.nsf/All/93BD79089C22336BC225853400356CCB/\\$file/Innovate-Cyprus-CYRI-Strategy-Framework-2019-2023-NBRI-May-2019.pdf?OpenElement](https://www.dmid.gov.cy/dmid/research.nsf/All/93BD79089C22336BC225853400356CCB/$file/Innovate-Cyprus-CYRI-Strategy-Framework-2019-2023-NBRI-May-2019.pdf?OpenElement)

4. Promoting an accessible and inclusive society with the skills and incentives to implement the national digital transformation and to actively participate in digital communities.

In this context, the Digital Society Portfolio aims to move towards a user-centred, accessible and inclusive digital society that enhances citizens' digital skills and encourages them to participate more actively in the digital world by offering them everything they need to do business in the digital age, including the use of devices, increased connectivity, the uptake of e-identities and access to infrastructure enabling them to make electronic payments.

Basic digital skills are essential at all levels of society and a key enabler for a holistic digital transformation of societies and economies. The digital transformation is therefore a multidimensional effort to develop and provide digital solutions while empowering citizens' digital capacities to promote a wider participation of citizens in the actions of a digital society.

To facilitate the enhancement of digital skills, the Deputy Ministry will set up a Digital Citizens' Academy with educational materials covering all the above needs and objectives, accessible to all target groups. The main aim is to create a dynamic, user-friendly and easily accessible e-learning platform, containing a self-assessment tool, an index of all available programmes and material for digital skills and cross-sectoral competences, such as project management.

The new **National Industrial Policy for 2019-2030**²³, as defined by the Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry (Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry), aims to develop a competitive industrial ecosystem by investing in sustainability, innovation, digitalisation, infrastructure and skills. One of its six pillars focuses on reskilling and upgrading existing skills to support economic growth and progress. The initiatives promoted under this strategic objective are the Universities Liaison Offices in eight Universities, the Post-Secondary Institutes for Vocational Education and Training (MIVET) and certain programmes of the UHD (e.g. integration of unemployed and inactive people into employment, lifelong learning of workers, the Vocational Qualifications System (EWS) and the System for the Evaluation and Certification of Training Providers). Recognising the importance of digital competences for workers, the strategy also encourages the provision of digital skills trainings offered by the Department of Electronic Communications (HECHP) and the Cyprus Productivity Centre (CEFR). In the context of the 2019-2022 Action Plan, the Ministry of Education also proposes several actions to implement in-service training programmes tailored to the needs of the labour market, to redefine the direction of technical and vocational education and to enrich school curricula and lifelong learning programmes in order to meet the requirements of modern society. Several of these aims coincide with the strategic measures of this National Strategy in terms of a smooth transition from education to employment and providing people with opportunities for continuous professional development.

Building on the funds of the Recovery and Resilience Facility, Cyprus has recently received approval for the **National Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026 (RRP)**²⁴, which documents the use of EUR 1,2 billion for economic resilience through concrete initiatives and measures to be implemented by 2026. Among other components, reforms and investment in education are an important sector area of the recovery and resilience plan, aiming to modernise the education system and up-/reskill people. Although these are horizontal concerns of the national education system, the funds are expected to cover various needs to achieve the objectives of CyLLLS. For example, the proposed targets under this investment area concern the acquisition and enhancement of digital, green, blue and entrepreneurial skills through targeted training programmes managed by Hrda and CPC, in cooperation with DMRID and social partners. To address the skills mismatch and monitor the transition from education to employment, the Higher Education Department (DHE) of MESY will implement with the financial support of the Recovery and Resilience Plan the programme "Developing a National Alumni Tracking Mechanism, and designing and implementing a survey on employers' skills", as part of the research project "Tackling the skills mismatch between education and the labour market". In particular, MESY²⁵ has planned four reforms with a total cost of EUR 39.2 million and

²⁴[http://www.dgepcd.gov.cy/dgepcd/dgepcd.nsf/All/ACCC6F07CA46FD2EC22586DC00233297/\\$file/Cyprus%20Recovery%20and%20Resilience%20Plan%202021-2026.pdf](http://www.dgepcd.gov.cy/dgepcd/dgepcd.nsf/All/ACCC6F07CA46FD2EC22586DC00233297/$file/Cyprus%20Recovery%20and%20Resilience%20Plan%202021-2026.pdf)

²⁵<https://meci.gov.cy/assets/modules/wnp/articles/202012/86/docs/neaviomichaniki.pdf>

2. Strengths and Challenges

three investment actions of EUR 57.7 million.

These reforms are the following (component 5.1 'Modernising the education system, upskilling and reskilling'):

- Skills mismatch between education and the labour market (secondary and tertiary) through a programme developed by the Department of Higher Education in cooperation with universities, adapting undergraduate studies and secondary general and technical and vocational education to the needs of society.
 - A new system for the evaluation of teachers and schools.
 - Digital transformation of schools to enhance digital and STEM education-related skills.

Cyprus has the conditions to become a leader in lifelong learning. One of the main advantages is the high value that Cypriot society gives to education. This is illustrated by high tertiary attainment levels (58.8 % of 30-34 year-olds), high participation in early childhood education (95.3 %) and a relatively low rate of early leaving from education and training (9.2 % of 18-24 year-olds) compared to other European countries. Public spending on education accounts for 5.2 % of the country's GDP, which is above the European Union (EU) average (4.6 %)²⁵. In addition, recent reforms in education, such as the new teacher evaluation system and the new teacher appointment process, aim to improve the overall education system.

In recent years, systematic efforts have been made to modernise the vocational education and training (VET) sector. These developments have led to an increase in the enrolment rate of pupils in VET, reaching 16.7 % in 2018 – however, participation remains the lowest in the EU. Another reform was the establishment and operation of the post-secondary vocational education and training institutes (MIEEK) in 2012, which were upgraded to a Public School of Higher Vocational Education and Training from April 2017, offering higher vocational education and training programmes adapted to labour market requirements. These measures have strengthened the links between VET and employment by improving the attractiveness of the sector and increasing the interest of employers. In addition to formal education, the Human Resources Development Authority (HRDA) continues to offer several projects facilitating the integration of recent graduates and unemployed into the labour market, as well as in-service training programmes in enterprises.

At executive level, to better support the governance of the lifelong learning system in Cyprus, the Council of Ministers approved the establishment of the national and technical committees for lifelong learning.

In addition, MESY established European and International Affairs, Lifelong Learning and Adult Education. In an effort to coordinate activities in the field of lifelong learning and adult learning.

Research and analysis preceding the development of this strategy revealed a number of challenges. More details can be found in the MESY survey report. One of the main challenges is the lack of a political and internal framework for lifelong learning in Cyprus, which hinders a uniform understanding of its concepts, structures and implementation mechanisms. The absence of a dedicated authority, accompanied by appropriate resources and staff, had reduced opportunities for coherent progress, as well as for systematic monitoring, implementation and monitoring of the Lifelong Learning Strategy. As a result, many stakeholders act independently, which prevents strong and sustainable partnerships and synergies in the sector. Similarly, the adult learning sector appears to be poorly defined and fragmented with few oversight mechanisms.

In addition, there is no systematic mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the different national actions in the field of lifelong learning to ensure quality, nor quantitative indicators to assess the performance of the system. Moreover, with the exception of the authorities' internal procedures and policies (e.g. Hrda), there are no mechanisms for collecting worrying data to allow the evaluation of the relevant policies and

2018 201925 data: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f2b8bedb-2496-11eb-9d7e-01aa75e-27> Labour Force Survey, Statistical Service, Ministry of Finance, Cyprus

2019

2020 22labour Force Survey, Statistical Office, Ministry of Finance, Cyprus
28 [statistics | Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/)

programmes. Therefore, the quality and effectiveness of programmes and trainers, especially in adult learning, is often questioned.

Inevitably, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the labour market due to reduced economic activity in many sectors. In 2020, the youth unemployment rate (aged 15-24) increased to 18.2 %. This fell to 14.5 % in the third quarter of 2021 due to the reactivation of the affected sectors of the economy 27. However, over the last decade youth unemployment in Cyprus has been consistently higher than the EU28 average. The lack of effective links between education and the labour market negatively affects young people's transition to adulthood and creates skills mismatches. Overall, there is limited cooperation between industry, academia and research to develop applied and sophisticated solutions for recent graduates. An additional factor relies on the limited availability of career guidance and counselling services, in particular for young and low-skilled adults, which could support them with alternative pathways. Therefore, another aspect that Cyprus should focus on is ensuring that all citizens have the basic skills. The high shares of 15-year-olds with low achievers in reading, mathematics and science and the fact that only half of all adults possess basic digital skills (45 % of 16-74 year-olds) call for the promotion of structural reforms within the compulsory education system, initiatives for upskilling and reskilling of adults, flexible lifelong learning

opportunities for different age groups, targeted career guidance services and stronger synergies between education and the labour market.

The adult education and training sector is an important component of the lifelong learning system. Nevertheless, it appears as a fragmented area because there is no legislative or policy framework, nor coherent quality assurance mechanisms to clarify its functions and standards. As a result, adult education and training provision appears to be scattered and unregulated. Similarly, learning outcomes achieved in non-formal and informal education cannot be validated or recognised, as no formal procedure has yet been established. Finally, adult education and training is not treated as a separate area, resulting in a lack of comprehensive analysis of the educational needs of adults, which makes it difficult to alleviate barriers to their participation. This can create inequalities at the expense of vulnerable groups. For example, adults with low educational attainment or qualifications have lower participation rates.

Data relating to youth unemployment (%)				
	2018	2019	2020	2021
Youth unemployment in Cyprus (15-24 years old)	20.2	16.6	18.2	17.1
Youth unemployment in the EU-27 (15-24 years old)	16.4	15.3	17.1	-
Employment rate of recent graduates by educational attainment in Cyprus (age 20-34 having left education 1-3 years before reference year) [ISCED 3-8] ²⁹	78.9	81.7	78.6	80.4
Employment rate of recent graduates by educational attainment in the EU-27 (age 20-34 having left education 1-3 years before reference year) [ISCED 3-8] ³⁰	80.9	80.9	78.5	79.6
Data relating to participation of adults in education and training ³¹				
	2011	2016		
Participation rate in education and training in Cyprus (last 12 months)	42.3	48.1		
Participation rate in education and training in the EU-27 (last 12 months)	40.9	44.4		
	2009	2019		
Adult participation in learning in Cyprus (age 25-64) (last 4 weeks)	8.3	5.9		
Adult participation in learning in EU-27 (age 25-64) (last 4 weeks)	7.9	10.8		

Recent developments on a European and global scale have accelerated the need for digital transformation

and green transition. In 2019, only 45 % of people (aged 16-74) in Cyprus were estimated to have basic or above basic digital skills. Therefore, national reforms and initiatives, in addition to focusing on upgrading the digital infrastructure, should create opportunities for upskilling and reskilling. In the same vein, a systematic analysis of labour market needs and skills forecasting is essential for the design of programmes, where graduates are effectively prepared for the future. The projections should be consistent with, and mutually influencing, the provision of education by recommending adjustments to the Detailed Programmes based on the expected skills and competences of graduates. The Advisory and Vocational Education Service (YESEA) should better guide students in order to make appropriate choices for their academic and professional paths. Graduate tracking mechanisms can provide real data to assess the current trajectory from education to employment and thereby contribute to evidence-based decision-making. Effective integration of students into the labour market is expected to contribute to socio-economic development, as well as personal outcomes, such as provocation of integration, stability, economic security, self-confidence and prosperity.

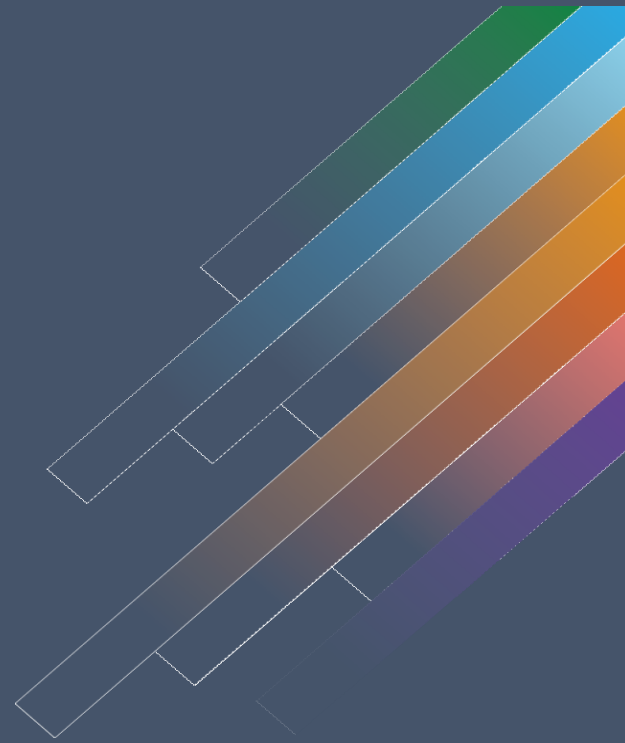
In this context, the Human Rights Council systematically monitors labour market developments by providing forecasts and estimates of employment and training needs. On a regular basis, every 2-3 years, the Human Rights Council provides ten-year forecasts of employment needs in economic sectors and occupations covering the full spectrum of the labour market in Cyprus. In addition, the AnAD conducts an annual investigation to identify the specialisations and skills that present needs in the Cypriot economy. This study collects and analyses the views of businesses, social partners and other stakeholders. The results of the AnAD studies on skills anticipation are used by policy-makers to develop strategies and policies in education, training and lifelong learning. In addition, they are used at operational level to develop detailed programmes in education, including the detailed programmes of the technical schools and post-secondary vocational education and training institutes (MIVET) of the Ministry of Education and Training. They are also used by people involved in counselling, such as career guidance teachers in secondary education and employment counsellors, as well as by the general public. The findings of the AnAD research studies on skills anticipation are an important tool for career guidance and contribute to improving the labour market relevance of education and training. On the basis of the findings, proposals/recommendations are made for the implementation of the respective activities of the Human Rights Council with a view to meeting needs and mitigating labour market problems.

Educational staff have a key role to play in fostering a culture of lifelong learning. Since these attitudes need to be transmitted to students from the early years of their schooling, teachers need to develop specific skill sets in order to be able to effectively convey the new culture. Learning to learn, digital, green, entrepreneurial and life skills are some examples of competences teachers need to have. Similarly, support should be provided for the professionalisation of adult teachers and trainers, as there is currently no mechanism to assess their qualifications, performance and effectiveness.

²⁹ Education and Training Monitor 2020

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Adult Education Survey, Statistical Service, Ministry of Finance, Cyprus



3. Vision and Strategic Horizontal Pillars of the Cyprus Lifelong Learning Strategy

Vision

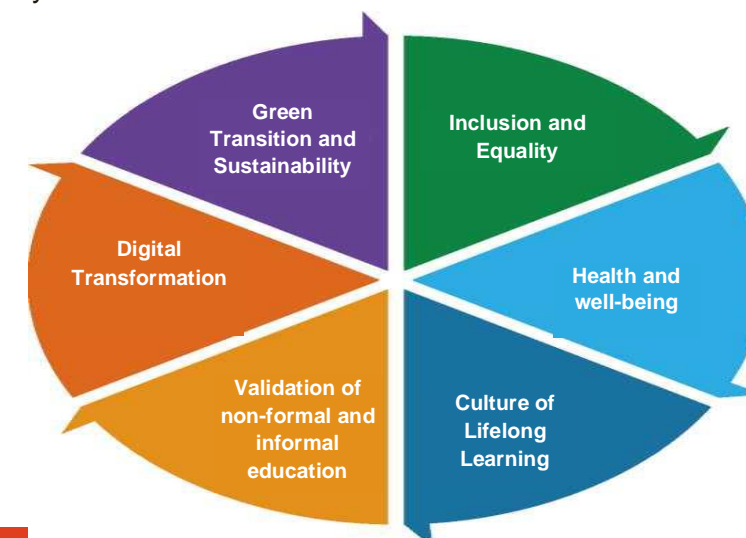
The Cyprus Lifelong Learning Strategy (CyLLLS) 2021-2027 aspires to provide a long-term strategic framework for the development of a

knowledge-based society, in which everyone citizens will have learning opportunities for development their knowledge, skills and attitudes, which will be facilitates their personal and social progress, professional development, social inclusion, resilience and their well-being.

Strategic Horizontal Pillars

Lifelong learning is a process of holistic competence development for personal fulfilment, active participation and engagement in society and professional advancement. The strategy, if it is up to date, stems from the European and national policy context, as discussed in the previous chapters. In addition, the European Framework of Reference for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning shares the philosophy of orienting lifelong learning on the basis of competences and defines eight key competences: (a) literacy, (b) mathematical competence, (c) multilingualism, (d) digital competence, (e) personal, social and learning to learn competences, (f) competences related to active citizenship, (g) entrepreneurship and (h) cultural awareness and expression. The CyLLLS 2021-2027 recognises the importance of integrating these Vcompetences into the system and culture of lifelong learning, and promotes the dissemination of other transversal skills such as communication, critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving.

Lifelong learning is a multi-faceted system influenced by a variety of forces. When these factors are considered as practical issues, they may fall within the competence of different authorities. However, it is important to consider their impact and contribution to the lifelong learning system. In this respect, the following concepts are considered to be pillars due to their significant horizontal influence on the strategic measures of the CyLLLS 2021-2027.



Digital transformation

Rapid technological developments, as well as emerging remote working and education conditions due to the coronavirus pandemic have put the digital transformation at the heart of the European Union (EU) political agenda. The digital transition is an imperative at all levels for developed countries to strengthen their economies, address global challenges, maximise their potential and achieve their goals. At the same time, digital developments should be directed towards sustainable and inclusive growth. Taking into account this necessity, the CyLLLS 2021-2027 focuses on strengthening the digital literacy and skills of citizens who are a key element of this transformation. In Cyprus, a large part of the digital transformation reforms are the responsibility of the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy of Cyprus (DMRID). Digital skills are considered essential for individuals to seize learning opportunities, compete in the labour market and participate in social life. Education and training are key factors in ensuring that all citizens are equipped with the right digital skills and that they can thrive in the digital age. Reforms towards digital education and the provision of lifelong learning programmes accessible to all are therefore the main themes of the CyLLLS 2021-2027.

Green transition and Sustainability

Climate change and the environmental crisis are major challenges that require immediate action for a more sustainable economic model. This transition requires fundamental adjustments in all areas with a view to a sustainable future and a positive impact on our quality of life. Climate-neutral ecosystems, energy-efficient industries and non-toxic environments are only some of the objectives of the green transition, which will transform the scene of our economic activity. This new approach requires specific knowledge, skills and attitudes so that individuals can actively support their community for a successful transition towards ecologically sustainable and sustainable development. At the same time, new jobs and opportunities to promote 'green employment' will emerge, while others will be replaced or redefined. The accelerated transition to a green economy in Cyprus has been included as a policy axis in the Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP). In keeping with these efforts at national level, the CyLLLS 2021-2027 aims to provide the means by which citizens can reap the benefits of this transition and adapt to the new processes, as a measure to increase employability and build a green economy.

Inclusion and equality

In line with the first principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights²⁶, everyone has the right to access quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning. Lifelong learning opportunities should be accessible and available to all citizens so that they can develop their skills, participate in society and succeed in life. Equal treatment and opportunities for lifelong learning must be provided regardless of social class, gender, nationality, religious beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation. In addition, to promote equality and ensure that no one is left behind, specific measures need to be taken to address the obstacles and challenges of people most at risk and under-represented groups. The coronavirus pandemic has further highlighted the fact that educational success follows social standards, meaning that underprivileged groups are overrepresented in all low achievers. Therefore, issues such as equal and inclusive participation in early childhood education, the provision of alternative pathways for early school leavers, upskilling and reskilling of low-skilled adults, accessible educational opportunities for persons with disabilities, possibilities for reintegration into education or an effective Vocational Education and Training (VET) system are of particular relevance for the CyLLLS 2021-2027 in Cyprus.

Validation of non-formal and informal learning

The recognition, validation and validation of non-formal and informal learning is a key feature of a successful and effective lifelong learning policy, as it enhances the visibility and transferability of skills acquired through

education and training programmes or work experience. A comprehensive validation mechanism could act as a valuable motivation and motivation for individuals, educational institutions and businesses. A number of European policies and guidelines have been defined to align and coordinate Member States' actions in this direction. However, despite a number of fragmented efforts, an integrated national system has not yet been established. Recognising the need for further developments in this area, the CyLLLS 2021-2027 supports all efforts to establish validation and evaluation procedures, introduce quality standards for non-formal learning programmes and create a link between validation and certification arrangements.

Health and well-being

Lifelong learning could serve as a means to promote individual and social well-being. Continuous personal and professional development enables citizens to be flexible and adaptable to the rapidly changing environment by fostering their resilience to challenges and crises. This can increase opportunities for professional advancement and higher wages as a means for a better quality of life. Most importantly, lifelong learning also opens up opportunities for socialisation and social participation. Socio-emotional outcomes of learning, such as self-confidence and self-effectiveness, are important factors in strengthening individuals' sense of health and well-being. In this respect, the CyLLLS 2021-2027 aims to contribute to the health and well-being of citizens by providing opportunities for education and training.

Lifelong learning culture

Participation in lifelong learning programmes requires a positive attitude towards learning. These attitudes are fostered from the early stages of school education and often lead to higher education and career expectations. For this reason, teachers and parents have a key role to play in promoting the values of lifelong learning in children. Similarly, public efforts can contribute to a culture of lifelong learning by reducing potential barriers for learners and by providing effective incentives for participation in education and training. The CyLLLS 2021-2027 recognises the importance of lifelong learning culture and aims to establish a new approach to learning that supports the development of every learner.

²⁶https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en

The strategic priorities presented in this chapter resulted from the in-depth survey carried out between July 2020 and July 2021. These priorities were finalised during consultations with stakeholders and social partners. Extensive research and consultations have highlighted the most important gaps and needs in the lifelong learning system in Cyprus. To achieve the vision of the CyLLLS 2021-2027, four strategic priorities and objectives have been identified, providing a long-term strategic framework for lifelong learning for the development of a knowledge-based and inclusive society. In parallel, experts from the national and European scene provided guidance for effective strategic planning and programming based on successful examples and best practices. The four main priorities are:

- 1. Establish the governance, monitoring and evaluation framework** including policy arrangements and action plans with clear stakeholder roles and sound financial management. In addition, key performance indicators and criteria for quality assurance and continuous improvements are needed.
- 2. Reducing youth unemployment and upskilling/reskilling young people and the workforce** by providing learning opportunities that reflect labour market needs and take into account the digital and green transitions, with a focus on people at risk of unemployment and upskilling/reskilling of the national workforce.
- 3. Increasing adult participation in lifelong learning** by improving the quality of the adult learning sector, motivating individuals and businesses, removing barriers, as well as increasing the visibility and strengthening of information and communication.
- 4. Improving the professional practice of teachers and adult educators** and supporting trainers of all learning levels in developing lifelong learning skills.



4. Strategic Priorities and Objectives of the Cyprus Lifelong Learning Strategy

Strategic priority 1: Governance, Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

1.1 Establishment of administrative and financial management

The implementation of lifelong learning brings together a variety of stakeholders and therefore requires strong management. Coordination between key stakeholders is always a challenge, but it is very important to build consensus on a shared vision and objectives. Each stakeholder should have a clear role and responsibility for the collective implementation of the strategy, so that functions and procedures are aligned. A strong and comprehensive institutional framework is therefore essential for the successful and effective implementation of the Lifelong Learning Strategy, while allowing flexibility for sustainable and long-lasting developments. In addition, as the financial resources for lifelong learning come from different public and private sources, a comprehensive financial management and detailed budget for the efficient use of resources is required.

1.2 Definition of the monitoring and evaluation framework

Monitoring and evaluation are key elements of any strategy and its successful implementation. Due to the complexity of lifelong learning, more systematic supervision is needed. The monitoring authority should also have the legal right to request evidence, monitor actions and advise stakeholders to ensure pre-defined performance levels. Access to data must therefore be ensured. Performance management and quality assurance should be based on clear, specific, predefined and measurable indicators and criteria. KPIs should be fully aligned with the priorities of the strategy.

Strategic priority 2: Reducing youth unemployment and upskilling/reskilling young people and the workforce

2.1 Aligning education provision with labour market needs

Skills supply and demand need to be aligned. To achieve this, all levels of education need to ensure that learners acquire an adequate level of basic skills, as well as positive expectations for their academic success. Alternative pathways should be provided to meet the needs of all people, while taking into account the need for a digital and green transition. At the same time, education provision should be continuously adapted to labour market requirements based on clear forecasts, surveys and reports. Also, close tracking and monitoring of graduates can ensure that mismatches are identified and addressed. The gap between education and the labour market can only be narrowed if there are close cooperation, synergies and alliances. The Lifelong Learning Strategy provides that such partnerships should start to be established systematically and methodically.

2.2 Introducing targeted measures for people at risk of unemployment

Within the values of equality, fairness and inclusion, education and training must be provided to all equally and fairly. This means providing equal opportunities for people at risk of becoming unemployed. Access to information, the availability of programmes and the availability of upskilling opportunities are key elements in the field of lifelong learning. Segmentation based on analysis is needed to identify specific target groups as well as their needs, leading to more targeted and effective interventions.

2.3 Reskilling of young people and the workforce

Human capital is a country's most valuable resource, so people need to continuously develop their skills and qualifications in line with new global developments such as the digital and green transitions. Employers and workers need to understand and appreciate that further training will make them more effective and relevant to the labour market, so they need to be given smart incentives to participate in adequate training programmes. Learning and competences acquired through work experience are a crucial step for progress and a formal validation and recognition system is therefore needed.

Strategic priority 3: Increasing the participation of adults in lifelong learning

3.1 Improving the quality of adult learning

Adult learning is an integral part of lifelong learning and offers opportunities for personal and professional development at individual level. It also contributes to the growth and economic stability of societies. Adult education and training needs to create prospects for all adults to develop their skills and competences, be they basic, digital, global or horizontal, etc. Capacity building can strengthen inclusive societies, sustainable and more resilient societies and lead to personal well-being, as it increases the chances of success in life. Therefore, a comprehensive national framework for adult learning and its measures will support the quality of the sector.

3.2 Introducing incentives for participation and removal of barriers

In line with the values of equity and quality, lifelong learning should be accessible and relevant for all adults. By putting in place and incentivising, in particular those most at risk, to participate in education and training, progress is made coherent and collective. Upskilling and reskilling as well as addressing barriers to participation require collaborative efforts. In this respect, financial and other types of incentives to institutions and organisations can open up new avenues for individuals.

3.3 Improving visibility and awareness

The provision of adult education and training remains inaccessible and ineffective if it is not sufficiently promoted. Open and continuous access to information and information campaigns on available programmes are essential in order to continuously communicate the scope of action in this field to the public. Targeted activities targeting specific groups of people are indeed seen as more effective. An important point to consider is that online communication activities do not always deliver the desired results, especially when targeting adults with low digital skills. Communication and information not only lead to access to information on available programmes, but also on the benefits of lifelong learning at all levels (e.g. personal, professional, social).

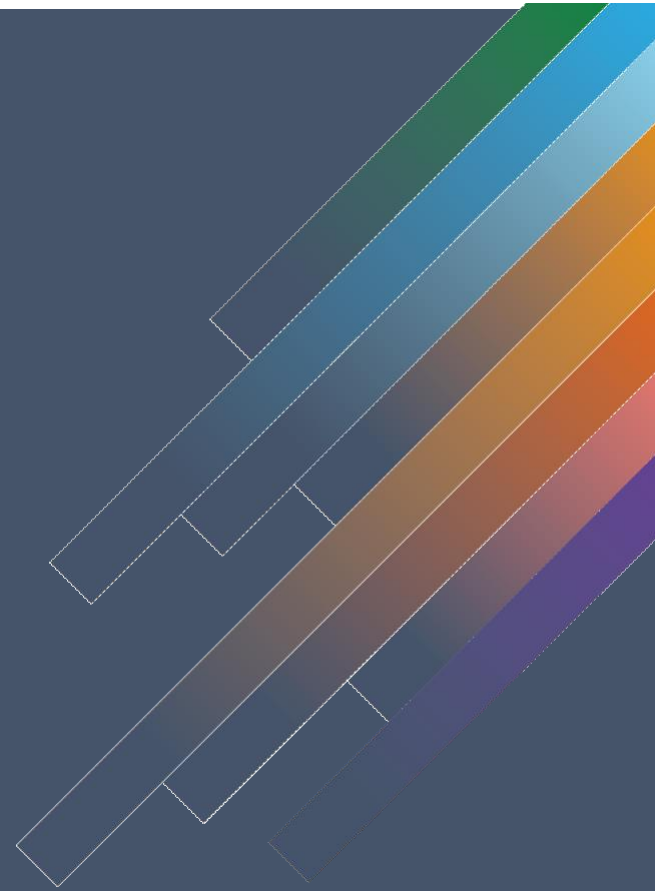
3.4 Developing and offering programmes for non-work-related learning

A holistic approach to lifelong learning should offer a balanced focus on academic subjects, professional development, socio-emotional integration, civic education and well-being, but also promote life skills. Lifelong learning should be provided in multiple forms, formats and structures. In this sense, non-work-related learning is seen as an opportunity for individuals to unfold their unique possibilities, thus offering a purpose, meaning and destination in their lives.

Strategic priority 4: Teachers, trainers, youth workers and adult educators

4.1. Strengthen the professional practice of youth workers, trainers and adult educators and support a number of teachers at all levels of education to develop lifelong learning skills.

The role of teachers and school leaders is essential in building a culture of lifelong learning and fostering passion for learning from an early age. The teaching profession is in line with the essence of lifelong learning, so teaching staff at all levels of education should be equipped with lifelong learning skills and incorporate them into their daily practice. Youth workers, teachers and adult educators need to be better supported and trained, as their profession does not imply any prescribed career paths. They are professionals with a wide variety of professional qualifications and knowledge sets from the sector, usually their specialisation and subjects, but also willing to acquire additional qualifications to provide appropriate training. However, the absence of regulatory mechanisms affects their professionalism and working conditions. It is important to focus on their vocational training and to support them with innovative approaches and resources, as this should also increase the quality of the adult learning sector.



The Key Performance Indicators (KPI) presented below were selected to support and monitor the achievement of strategic priorities. Similar to the strategic priorities, these indicators have emerged from extensive research and consultations with relevant stakeholders and take into account the national and European context. Each strategic priority corresponds to specific indicators constituting the main measures for their monitoring, including the timeline for achievement or the requested target for 2027. However, within the monitoring, quality assurance and evaluation framework, the National and Technical Committee on Lifelong Learning has the possibility to add support indicators and modify existing ones as necessary.

5. Key Performance Indicators

A/A	Index	Objective	Source of data
Strategic priority 1: Governance, monitoring and evaluation framework			
1	Integrated governance and institutional framework for the Lifelong Learning Strategy • Operational structure and organisational chart with the roles and responsibilities of the authorities and stakeholders involved (internal rules and procedures/preparation of a short document)	2022/2023	National and Technical Committee ³³
2	Detailed public expenditure on lifelong learning as a percentage of GDP and total expenditure on education • For each authority/stakeholder granting a budget for lifelong learning, a detailed breakdown will be provided for each year/period agreed by the National and Technical Committees.	Annual	National and Technical Commission
3	Internal/external evaluation process • Monitoring and evaluation procedures to ensure quality and continuous improvement. Specific roles and responsibilities for internal and external evaluators will be assigned.	2023	National and Technical Commission
4	Monitoring and evaluation framework report • The framework for monitoring the strategy will be developed on the basis of detailed KIDs and data sources.	2023	National and Technical Commission
5	Follow-up reports with recommendations • Interim and final monitoring and evaluation reports, including concrete recommendations for the improvement of the strategy and any adjustments needed.	Interim and final monitoring and evaluation reports	National and Technical Commission

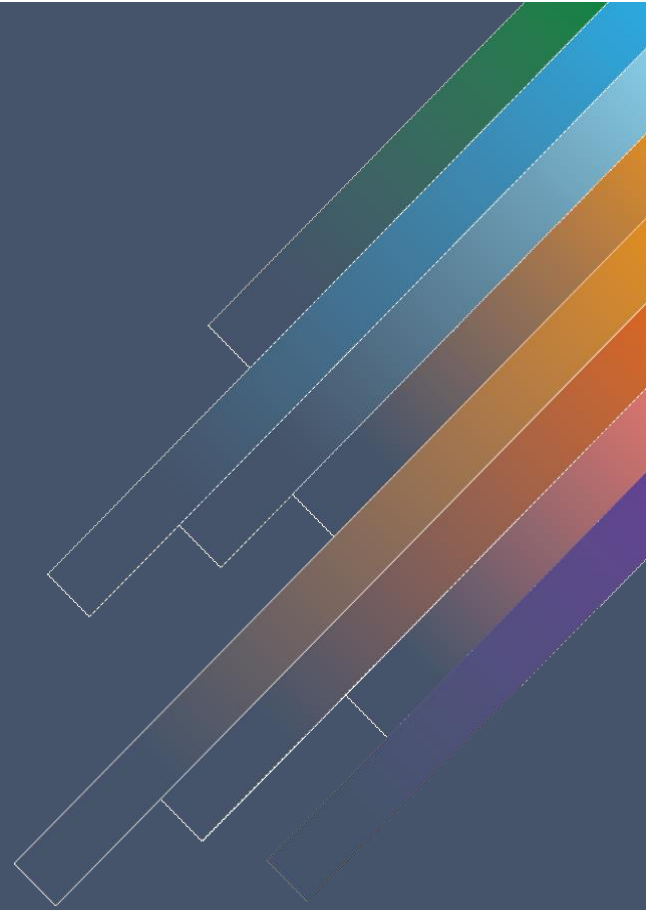
Strategic priority 2: Reducing youth unemployment			
6	Share of early leavers from education and training (aged 18-24)	9 %	Annual Education Statistics
7	Tertiary education attainment rate (30-34 year-olds)	65 %	Labour Force Survey
8	Young people out of employment, education or training (NEETs) by gender, age and employment status [15-34]	10 %	Labour Force Survey
9	Employment rate of recent graduates by educational level (aged 20-34 who left education 1-3 years before the reference year) [ISCED 3-8]	85 %	Labour Force Survey
10	Employment rate (persons aged 20-64) ³⁴	80 %	Labour Force Survey
11	Number of participants to integrate unemployed and inactive people into employment	Annual	ANAD
12	Number of participants in lifelong learning programmes for employed persons	Annual	ANAD
13	Participation rate of low-skilled adults in education and training	Annual	Labour Force Survey

³³ the authorities responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the strategy are the National and Technical Committees. These two committees will decide whether to set up a new body or review their role to improve their capacity to implement it.

³⁴ the national employment rate target is for the 20-64 age group in line with the European target (78 % by 2030). However, the target will also be monitored for the age group of young people aged 15-29, for which data are available.

Strategic priority 3: Increasing adult participation in lifelong learning			
14	Number of accredited vocational training centres, vocational training trainers and vocational training facilities	Annual	HRDA (system for the evaluation and certification of training providers)
15	Policy framework for the validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning	Until 2023	MESY
16	Share of individuals (aged 16-74) with basic or above basic level of general digital skills	70 %	ICT research
17	Central digital platform for information on available programmes and visitor numbers	Until 2023/Yearly	National and Technical Committee/DMRID
18	Adult participation rate in education and training (in the last 12 months)	60 %	Adult Education Survey

Strategic priority 4: Adult teachers, trainers and trainers			
19	Framework for the professional status of adult educators	2024	National and Technical Commission
20	Compulsory training programme offered to adult educators with no educational background	2027	MESY/CPI
21	Enhanced professional practice of teachers at all levels to develop lifelong learning skills	2027	YPAN/CPI



Indicative actions to achieve each priority will be presented in the Action Plan, which will accompany the CyLLLS 2021-2027 as a separate document. The Action Plan will be prepared in consultation with all key stakeholders and social partners to support the National and Technical Committees in fulfilling their mission and steering future efforts. It can also be used as a mapping tool to define the timeline of activities and bring together the work of other authorities towards a common work line within the national lifelong learning system. The National and Technical Committees, responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the strategy, may revise and adapt the action plan and indicators, as necessary, during the implementation of this strategy. It is also noted that the Action Plan should be used in conjunction with the horizontal pillars, strategic priorities and KPIs, as presented in sections 3, 4 and 5, to effectively align efforts with the vision of the CyLLLS 2021-2027 for Cyprus.

6. Action Plan

Annex 1: Acronyms and abbreviations

CARDET	Centre for the Advancement of Research & Development in Educational Technology
CCES	Career Counselling and Educational Services
CyLLLS	Cyprus Lifelong Learning Strategy (2021-2027)
CyQF	Cyprus Qualifications Framework
DG GROWTH	Directorate General Growth, Ministry of Finance (DG Growth, Ministry of Finance)
DG REFORM	European Commission's Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support
DHE	Department of Higher Education
DMRID	Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation, & Digital Policy
EAEA	European Association for the Education of Adults
EPALE	Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
FFMELLP	Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes
HRDA	Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus
KY.S.A.T.S	Cyprus Council of Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications
MLWSI	Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance
MESY	Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth
MoF	Ministry of Finance
Mol	Ministry of Interior
SVQs	System of Vocational Qualifications
YBC	Youth Board of Cyprus

Annexes

Annex 2: European and International Policies and Initiatives

European and International Policies and Initiatives taken into account by the Cyprus Lifelong Learning Strategy 2021-2027:

[UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)
[European Pillar of Social Rights](#)
[EU Strategic Agenda 2019-2024](#)
[European Digital Strategy](#)

Financing and financial support

[Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 \(MFF\)](#)
[Recovery Plan for Europe](#)
[NextGenerationEU](#)
[Recovery and resilience facility](#)
[European Social Fund](#)
[The Digital Europe Programme](#)

Skills

[Pact for Skills](#)
[Europass](#)
[Skills Panorama](#)

Employment

[European Employment Services \(EURES network\)](#)
[European Network of Public Employment Services](#)

Adult learning

[European Qualifications Framework \(EQF\)](#)
[Working Groups of the Education and Training Framework \(ET\) 2020](#)
[Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe \(EPALE\)](#)

Education and Training

[Erasmus + 2021-2027](#)
[Horizon Europe](#)

Selected Relevant Council Recommendations and Resolutions

- Commission communication on the European Green Deal²⁹
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Digital Education Action Plan (17 January 2018)³⁰
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027 – Relaunching education and training for the digital age (30 September 2020)³¹
- Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on inclusion in diversity to achieve high quality education for all (25 February 2017)³²
- Council Conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020)³³
- Council conclusions on countering the COVID-19 crisis in education and training (26 June 2020)³⁴
- Council Conclusions on digital education in Europe's knowledge societies (1 December 2020)³⁵
- Council conclusions on European teachers and trainers for the future (9 June 2020)³⁶
- Council conclusions on moving towards a vision of a European Education Area (7 June 2018)³⁷
- Council conclusions on reducing early school leaving and promoting success in school (15 December 2015)³⁸
- Council Conclusions on [school](#) development and excellent teaching (8 December 2017)³⁹
- Council conclusions on the key role of lifelong learning policies in empowering societies to manage the technological and green transitions towards

²⁹<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2019%3A640%3AFIN>

³⁰<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2018%3A22%3AFIN>

³¹<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0624>

³²[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017XG0225\(02\)traceability from = EL](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017XG0225(02)traceability%20from%20EL)

³³<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A52009XG0528%2801%29>

³⁴<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020XG0626%2801%29>

³⁵<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020XG1201%2802%29>

³⁶https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2020.193.01.0011.01.ENG

³⁷[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/GA/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018XG0607\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/GA/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018XG0607(01))

³⁸<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A52015XG1215%2803%29>

³⁹<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52017XG1208%2801%29>

- Council Recommendation of 30 October 2020 on A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee and replacing the Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee⁴⁰
- Council Recommendation of 15 March 2018 on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships⁴¹
- Council Recommendation of 19 December 2016 on Upskilling Pathways: New opportunities for adults⁴²
- Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning⁴³
- Council Recommendation of 20 November 2017 on tracking graduates⁴⁴
- Council Recommendation of 22 May 2017 on the European Professional Framework Qualifications for lifelong learning and repealing the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning⁴⁵
- Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning⁴⁶
- Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching⁴⁷
- Council Recommendation of 22 May 2019 on High Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems⁴⁸
- Council Recommendation of 24 November 2020 on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience⁴⁹
- Council Resolution on education and training in the European Semester: ensuring informed debates on reforms and investments (27 February 2020)⁵⁰
- Council Resolution on further developing the European Education Area to support future-oriented education and training systems (18 November 2019)⁵¹
- Decision (EU) 2018/646 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 April 2018 on a common framework for the provision of better services for skills and qualifications (Europass) and repealing Decision 2241/2004/EC⁵²
- Bologna Declaration (19 June 1999)⁵³
- 2015 joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) – New priorities for European cooperation in education and training (15 December 2015)⁵⁴

⁴⁰[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020H1104\(01\)&traceability=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020H1104(01)&traceability=EN)

⁴¹<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018H0502%2801%29>

⁴²https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ%3AJOC_2016_484_R_0001

⁴³<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32012H1222%2801%29>

⁴⁴<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32017H1209%2801%29>

⁴⁵<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32017H0615%2801%29>

⁴⁶https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2018.189.01.0001.01.ENG&toc=OJ:C:2018:189:TOC

⁴⁷<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018H0607%2801%29>

⁴⁸https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2019.189.01.0004.01.ENG

⁴⁹<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32020H1202%2801%29>

⁵⁰<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32020G0227%2801%29>

⁵¹<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32019G1118%2801%29>

⁵²<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32018D0646>

⁵³https://www.eurashe.eu/library/bologna_1999_bologna-declaration-pdf/

⁵⁴[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/GA/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52015XG1215\(02\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/GA/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52015XG1215(02))

⁵⁵<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32009H0708%2801%29>

⁵⁶<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32009H0708%2802%29>

- Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training⁵⁵
- Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)⁵⁶

Selected relevant documents for Cyprus

[Education and Training Monitor 2020 Cyprus](#)

[SkillsForecast in Cyprus \(CEDEFOR\)](#)

[European Inventory on Validation of non-formal and informal learning 2018 – Cyprus \(CEDEFOP\)](#)

HRDA

[Strategic Plan 2022-2024](#)

[Annual Report](#)

[Employment and Training Needs Trends and Forecast](#)

[Evaluation and evaluation of HRDA programmes](#)

[Analysis of Vocational Education and Training Systems and Infrastructures](#)

[Specialised studies on human resources](#)

[Employment Needs Forecast](#)

Annex 3: Organisations participating in the Consultations

	Organisation	Type of consultation
Policy makers/Technologists/Public Authorities	National and Technical Commission	Internal consultation/Workshop
	Directorate-General for Development, Ministry of Finance (DG Development, Ministry of Finance)	Consultation meeting/Workshop/Written feedback
Other departments of MESY	Director-General	Internal consultations
	Office for European and International Affairs, Lifelong Learning and Adult Education	Internal consultations/Consultation meeting
	Directorate for Secondary General Education	Consultation meeting/Workshop/Written feedback
	Directorate for Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training	Consultation meeting/Written feedback
	Directorate for Higher Education	Consultation meeting/Workshop/Written feedback
	Cyprus Pedagogical Institute	Consultation meeting/Workshop
Other Ministries/Other Departments of Ministries	European Social Fund Unit, Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance	Consultation meeting
	Department of Labour, Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance	Consultation meeting/Workshop/Written feedback
	Centre for Productivity, Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance	Laboratory
	Department of Public Administration and Personnel, Ministry of Finance	Consultation meeting
	Cyprus Statistical Office, Ministry of Finance	Consultation meeting/Phone call
	Civil Registry and Migration Department, Ministry of Interior	Workshop/Written feedback
	Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment	Consultation meeting/Written feedback
	Deputy Ministry Research, Innovation, & Digital Policy	Consultation meeting/Written feedback
Semi-independent organisations	Cyprus Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA)	Consultation meeting/Workshop/Written feedback

	Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes	Consultation meeting/Phone call/Workshop/Written feedback
	Youth Board of Cyprus	Consultation meeting/Workshop/Written feedback
Universities	Open University of Cyprus (OUC)	Consultation meeting
	Cyprus University of Technology (CUT)	Consultation meeting
	University of Nicosia (UNIC)	Consultation meeting
	European University Cyprus (EUC)	Consultation meeting
Social partners	POED, Pancyprian Organization of Greek Teachers	Consultation meeting/Written feedback
	PEO, Pancyprian Labour Federation	Consultation meeting
	Federation of Cyprus Industrialists Employers (OEB)	Consultation meeting/Workshop
	Cyprus Commercial and Chamber of Industry (CCCTB)	Consultation meeting
	Centre for the Advancement of Research & Development in Educational Technology (CARDET)	Consultation meeting/Workshop
	European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)	Internal consultations/Workshop
European partners	NGO Support Centre	Laboratory
	European Commission – Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL)	Laboratory
	European Commission's Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM)	Internal consultations/Workshop

Annex 4: Key Indicators and EU⁶⁴ Objectives

Index	Cyprus 2020	Key – Objective 2027	EU targets (2030) 65 66	Source of data
Share of 15-year-olds with low achievement in basic skills (2018)				CPI
Consult	43.7 %	20 %	15 %	CPI
Math	36.9 %	20 %	15 %	CPI
Science	39.0 %	20 %	15 %	CPI
Share of early leavers from education and training (18-24)	11.5 %	Less than 9 %	9 %	CPI
Share of 25-34 year-olds having completed tertiary education	57.8 %	65 %	at least 45 % (25-34)	Education and training monitor
Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET rates) [15-	15.1 %	10 %	9 %	Eurostat
Employment rate of recent graduates by educational level (aged 2034 who left education 1-3 years before the reference year) [ISCED 3-8]	78.6 %	85 %	80 % (25-64) (2025)	Education and training monitor
Employment rate (persons aged 20-64) ⁶⁷	74.9 %	80 %	78 %	Labour Force Survey
Index	2016	2027	EU objectives (2025)	Source
Adult participation rate in education and training (in the last 12 months)	48.1 %	60 % ⁶⁸	At least 47 %	Adult Education Survey
Share of individuals (aged 16-74) with basic or above basic level of general digital skills	45 % (2019)	70 %	70 %	Eurostat

⁶⁴ the table shows for each of the key indicators: the situation of Cyprus in 2020, the national target for 2027 and the EU targets for 2030.

⁶⁵ European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030): [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021G0226\(01\)traceability from = EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021G0226(01)traceability%20from%20EN)

⁶⁶ European Skills Agenda: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=el&catId=1223>

⁶⁷ the national employment rate target is for the 20-64 age group in line with the European target (78 % by 2030). However, the target will also be monitored for the age group of young people aged 15-29, for which data are available.

⁶⁸ on the basis of the proposal to the Council of Ministers of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (April 2022) on 'National targets for employment, participation in lifelong learning and poverty', Cyprus has set a national target of 'at least 61 % of all adults participating in training' by 2030 (adult participation in learning in the past 12 months) (Decision No: 93.002, Ημερ.4/5/2022).