

eucen 2026 Policy Talks in Brussels

Thursday 17 September 2026 | 09:00 to 13:30 CET

Special Announcement

Enhancing Europe's Skills Ecosystem for Competitiveness: The Strategic Role of University Lifelong Learning

In a rapidly changing global landscape, Europe's competitiveness increasingly depends on its capacity to develop, renew, recognise, and mobilise the knowledge, skills and capabilities of its citizens. As economies undergo the green and digital transitions, traditional education pathways alone are no longer sufficient. Universities have a critical role to play in supporting continuous upskilling and reskilling, helping individuals, employers and societies adapt to changing skills needs while fostering innovation, productivity and social cohesion.

In this context, **University Lifelong Learning (ULLL)** is a strategic pillar of Europe's skills ecosystem. Universities are uniquely positioned at the intersection of education, research, innovation and society, enabling them to support learning across the life course. Through continuing education programmes, micro-credentials, validation of prior learning, and strong partnerships with employers and communities, universities can help widen participation, respond to emerging labour market needs and make learning more accessible and relevant for diverse learners.

However, significant challenges remain. Access to high quality ULLL opportunities continues to be uneven across Europe, with barriers relating to access, funding, recognition, employer engagement and the flexibility of learning pathways. Addressing these challenges will be essential if universities are to fully support Europe's ambitions for a highly skilled, adaptable and resilient workforce.

This edition of the **eucen Policy Talks** will bring together policymakers, higher education leaders, practitioners and stakeholders to explore how ULLL can strengthen Europe's competitiveness through more responsive, inclusive and flexible approaches to skills development. Discussions will examine the role of universities in supporting lifelong upskilling and reskilling, fostering stronger connections with employers and communities, and ensuring that learning and skills - wherever they are acquired- can contribute effectively to individual opportunity and economic resilience.

By bringing together policy perspectives, institutional experiences and innovative practices, eucen seeks to strengthen the contribution of University Lifelong Learning (ULLL) to Europe's Skills Agenda and the Union of Skills, with its four pillars of building skills, upskilling and reskilling, circulating skills, and attracting, developing and retaining talent. The workshop will also examine the enabling conditions that universities need to maximise their impact in these areas, reinforcing their role as key partners in building a more competitive, inclusive and sustainable Europe.

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Preliminary Programme

08:45 Registration. Welcome Coffee

09:00 **Opening Remarks** | Ester BORRÀS ANDREU, Representative, Government of Catalonia
Pascal PASCHOUD, president d'eucen

09:20 **Keynote Address** | *The Skills Agenda and the Future of European Competitiveness*

09:45 **Short Presentation** | *What are learners saying? Insights from the MESHE project*

10:00 **Policy Panel** | *Beyond Training: Why Universities Matter in Europe's Skills Ecosystem?*

10:55 Networking Coffee Break

11:15 **Lightning Talks** | ULLL in Practice: Responding to Europe's Skills Agenda

12:00 **Roundtable** | *What needs to change to unlock the full potential of ULLL in Europe's skills ecosystem?* | Moderator: Emeritus Professor Matthew WEAIT (UK), eucen

13:15 **Closing Reflections** | Pascal PASCHOUD, President of eucen

13:30 Networking lunch

Audience | Civil Society and European Policy Makers. Representatives of eucen
National Networks will be also invited.

Venue | 227 Rue de Loi. BE-1040 Brussels (BE)

Registration | <https://forms.gle/YCajZAViGfnWb6KR7>

Further information | events@eucen.eu