



Thessaloniki, 15 February 2021

## PRESS RELEASE

---

### **We are never too old to learn; what about France?**

Adults in France are very positive about learning and training, but the main reason why they do not participate is because they feel that they are too old. In a Europe-wide [survey](#), carried out by Cedefop, 89% of respondents from France said that adult learning and training should be a priority for government investment. Some 90% of adults in France also said that their job constantly requires them to keep their skills up to date, comparable with Germany (91%) and above Italy (84%).

Despite changing skill needs, fewer respondents in France (25%) had looked for information on adult learning and training opportunities than the EU average (40%). They were also slightly more critical of the quality of adult learning and training than the EU overall. However, France's adult learning and training system, underpinned by its comprehensive training law, appears to be working well. In 2019, [19.5% of people](#) aged 25 to 64 had participated in adult learning in the previous four weeks, exceeding the EU target of 15% and well above the European average of 10.8%. The high participation rate suggests that lower search rates for learning opportunities reflect a more systematic approach to and understanding of individual skill needs; while criticisms of quality may indicate that adults in France expect more of the learning and training courses they undertake.

In most countries surveyed, the main reason adults give for not participating in learning and training is that they see no need. However, France, with 36% of respondents, and Romania, with 37%, are the only two countries in which adults give feeling too old as the main reason for not participating. Demographically, it is unclear why this would be so in France. In both countries the population [median age](#), in 2019, was close to the EU average of 43.1 years. Romania's population is expected to age faster, but France's more slowly than the rest of the EU over the next 30 years.

People across the EU, including France, have many reasons for not participating in adult learning and training, such as lack of information, money, time and family constraints and unsuitable programmes. There is a strong support for the measures, in France and elsewhere in Europe, that seek to address these problems. However, unsurprisingly, there are no measures to address 'feeling too old' or 'having no need', which are perceptions rather than material needs, such as more time and money.

'Feeling too old' is really a type of 'having no need' and both may reflect a lack of incentives as the benefits of adult learning and training, particularly those related to jobs and pay,

reduce with age. As France's and Europe's population ages, the issue of incentives for older people to continue to participate in learning and training may become more important, especially as the pace of change and the constant need to learn new skills underlines the importance of never being too old to learn.

#### **Note**

Cedefop's [second opinion survey](#), published in 2020, provides insights into what Europeans think of adult learning and continuing vocational education and training (CVET). The survey informs policies to make VET a more attractive and effective learning option. It was carried out between May and July 2019 and comprised 40 466 telephone interviews of people aged 25 and over living in the EU, Iceland and Norway. The survey findings are in two volumes. The first volume looks at Member States, the second volume, to be published in 2021, considers the views of demographic and socioeconomic groups across the EU.

- Read Cedefop's press releases [here](#).
- Subscribe to Cedefop's other media products (newsletter, magazine, briefing notes, etc.) by creating [a user account on our website](#).

#### **Contact**

Press Officer: Rosy Voudouri

Tel: +30 2310 490012, email: [rosy.voudouri@cedefop.europa.eu](mailto:rosy.voudouri@cedefop.europa.eu)

Head of Department for Communication: Gerd Oskar Bausewein

Tel: +30 2310 490288, email: [gerd-oskar.bausewein@cedefop.europa.eu](mailto:gerd-oskar.bausewein@cedefop.europa.eu)

#### **About Cedefop**

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) is the European Union's reference centre for vocational education and training, skills and qualifications.

Connect with us

