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PRESS RELEASE

Swedes call for an increase in adult learning investment

At least two-thirds of adults in every EU Member State agree that their government should prioritise investment in learning for adults. In Sweden the figure is 91%, the same as in Germany and amongst the highest in the EU, according to a survey by Cedefop.

The case for prioritising adult learning and training is strengthened by the 80% of adults in Sweden who totally agree that their job constantly requires them to keep their skills up to date. This is the highest proportion in the EU and level with Norway. The survey also identified possible skill gaps, with 24% of adults in Sweden saying that they lack some technical skills and 18% that they lacked some general skills to do their job at the required level. Some 47% totally agree that adult learning and training will become more important in 10 years' time, higher than the EU average of 39%.

Adults in Sweden are positive about adult learning and training; around nine in 10 believe that they bring real benefits and are important to find a job, for career progress, better pay and to reduce unemployment. Perceptions about the quality of adult learning and training are also positive, with 85% of adults rating it as good or fairly good, compared to 69% in the EU.

In Sweden, 93% of adults agree that they have many learning and training opportunities, compared to 72% across the EU. Some 79% also agree that information about such opportunities is easy to find. Nevertheless, Swedish adults are amongst those least likely to have looked for information about learning and training opportunities. Some 24% looked for information in the 12 months prior to the survey, compared to 40% across the EU.

Other countries, which like Sweden, have relatively high levels of participation in adult learning and training, such as Denmark, Norway and Finland, also have relatively low levels of adults looking for information about them. This may suggest that these countries have active policies that provide information rather than just making it available for people to find. However, 87% of adults in Sweden agreed that improving information and guidance would encourage more people to participate.

In 22 out of the 30 European countries surveyed, including Sweden, the main reason adults give for not participating in learning or training is that they have no need. This reason is given by 40% of adults in Sweden, compared to 56% in Finland and 36% across the EU.

In Sweden, where adult participation in learning and training is high, it makes sense that people will state that they have no immediate need. But there are barriers. Some 81% agree that more support with childcare and other social and family responsibilities would encourage more adults to participate in learning and training. In addition, around 90% also agree that more financial help, more flexible working hours, certification of training and adapting training more to individual needs would encourage more adults to learn and train.

Sweden has a strong record on adult learning and training and its hard work is paying off. However, rapid changes in job content, needs for new skills and the barriers that some adults face to participating in learning and training emphasise that work needs to continue and explains why people believe investment in adult learning and training should be a priority.

Notes

- 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.
- For EU lifelong targets see [Eurostat lifelong learning](#).

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