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**PRESS RELEASE**[Read online](#)**Adult learning: high esteem but low participation**

Most EU Member States have consistently underperformed in their efforts to reach the targets for adult participation in lifelong learning, set by the European Union to satisfy the needs arising from demographic trends and technological change.

In 2010, the EU had set a target of 15% of adults participating in lifelong learning by 2020. Then this was raised to be close to 50% by 2025, clearly reflecting Europe's need for reskilling and upskilling its workforce.

However, only a handful of Member States met the 2020 target. The EU average in 2019 was 11.8% and fell to 9.2% in 2020, mostly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To get to the bottom of this issue, Cedefop launched a pan-European opinion survey on adult learning and continuing vocational education and training (CVET) in 2019 and developed policy recommendations.

The survey results affirm adults' positive views about learning, CVET and the need for new skills. They also reveal that not enough adults take part in CVET, even though a significant proportion of the adult working population lack certain skills. This indicates that the need to improve skills is not always sufficient motivation and participation needs to be linked with other forms of 'reward'.

Raising adult participation may require new, more learner-centric policies built on partnerships with the learner at the centre and where responsibility for and the benefits of learning are shared. The premise of learning is not to react to a new skill need; it is a continual process that supports adaptation to changing circumstances. It addresses individuals' learning and circumstantial needs and helps them manage the labour market transitions that are particular to them.

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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.

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