



The EU Recovery Plan should be geared towards education, research and innovation

The COVID-19 virus has shaken the world to its core, testing our societies, economies and our way of living, working and learning. To get on top of this, a recovery plan is more than necessary and urgent. The European Union showed its leadership with their Recovery Plan 'Next Generation EU', with a historic budget of €750 billion.

The plan focuses on *Digital Education* and wants to ensure digital skill for all EU citizens. Although we fully support this, we believe it is unthinkable there is no stronger emphasis on education next to research and innovation. We should treat the COVID-19 crisis as a wake-up-call, not only for digital learning, but also for investing in education programs focused on a more inclusive, open and resilient system. The new standard includes improved accessibility for the most vulnerable groups, improved learning platforms, integration of digitization and distance learning, and the improved capacity of teachers to design and facilitate distance learning.

Economic and social recovery requires a consistent investment in the future 'Knowledge Society'. This applies to all European member states. We strongly believe that at least 30% of all resources should be devoted to education, training, research and innovation. The younger generations will not forgive them for not investing, nor will they forgive the workers left behind by a lack of continuous training, the community of researchers and scientists in terms of entitlement to innovation, the teaching staff for the different levels of the educational system.

Concretely, a number of key action points can be mentioned that are primordial and that implement both the care for inclusive education and for excellence:

- Creative learning environment and sustainable school buildings (including renovation for clean energy);
- Drastic investment in recurrent learning (vouchers, guidance, platforms, micro-credentials) vocational and technical education, language learning;
- Digital agenda; high-speed internet and logistic support for distance learning;
- Catch-up programs for underprivileged and migrant pupils European and national offers for their integration;
- Research programs and shared infrastructures on a European level to strengthen excellence and competitiveness; support to the European University Alliances.

The Commission intends to focus on investment and reforms for long-term growth and the resilience of economies, but when education and research is not sufficiently mentioned we risk ignoring our future generations. To drive sustainability, as the Commission aims, Europe must invest in education, research and innovation.

This manifesto is approved during the 133rd ELA International Conference on '*Safe Schools and Education Rights in a Post Pandemic Era*', where representatives of other ELA-regions were present and actively involved.