

### Lifelong Learning Law

Ley de Aprendizaje a lo Largo de la Vida

Basque Government / Basque Presidency, 2013

Available at <https://www.euskadi.eus/r48-bopv2/es/bopv2/datos/2013/10/1304417a.pdf>

### Rationale of the law

The law adapts goals and benchmarks contained in European Commission documents and directives to the Basque context. Ever since the consultation of the European Commission on its proposed 'Memorandum on Lifelong Learning', the Basque Government has been very active in promoting lifelong learning as an organizing principle of education policy. In 2001, the Basque Ministry of Education's structure was changed to accommodate a new vice-ministry for vocational education and training and lifelong learning. A year later, the government passed a decree (298/2002) under which the Ministry of Education offered financial aid to support the development of useful learning actions aimed at enhancing the professional qualifications, competencies and aptitudes of people aged over 25. The decree states that the object of the financial aid is to enable the structural changes necessary for the transition towards a knowledge economy. It acknowledges the positive impact that improving people's competencies and abilities has on the region's economic performance and on social cohesion, in that it contributes to the long-term employability of people and their active citizenship.

### Concept of lifelong learning

The Basque law is based on the European Commission's concept and defines lifelong learning as all learning activities undertaken throughout life with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competencies within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective.

### Main challenges

The law especially addresses groups that are at risk of exclusion. The law mandates that those with lower qualifications or at risk of social or labour market exclusion and those with special learning needs should receive special attention. It stipulates that a lifelong learning plan be drafted and that this plan should promote universal and equitable access to lifelong learning in order to foster social inclusion, promote a strong culture of lifelong learning and improve skills, knowledge and competencies that enhance employability.

### Main targets and measures

The law covers various educational sectors, including higher education, vocational education and training, adult and continuing education, literacy and basic education, and electronic learning. The law targets all people residing in the Basque Country who undertake a learning activity after their initial training, continue their personal and social development, or improve and update their professional qualifications.

Among the measures foreseen are:

- Establishment of the Basque Institute for Distance Education
- Establishment of the Basque Integrated System of Vocational Education and Training
- Establishment and strengthening of mechanisms for recognition and validation of adult learning, e.g. a Basque qualifications framework
- Establishment of an integrated system of lifelong guidance
- Establishment of local lifelong learning councils
- Development of a lifelong learning plan for the Basque Country

### Particular feature of the law

The most remarkable feature is that the law pays special attention to population groups with lower qualifications or at risk of social or labour market exclusion and those with special learning needs. Furthermore, the planned measures entail the establishment of an integrated system for vocational

education and training; a mechanism for the recognition and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning; a lifelong guidance system; a distance education institute; and councils for lifelong learning.

**Relevant documents that the strategy refers to:**

- Council of the European Union. 2000. *Lisbon Strategy*
- Commission of the European Communities. 2000. *Memorandum for Lifelong Learning*
- Commission of the European Communities. 2001. [Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality](#)
- Decree 298/2002, 17 December, regulating aid for the implementation of lifelong learning initiatives. In: Official Journal of the Basque Country no. 248, 30 December 2002
- Spain. Gobierno Vasco. 2003. [The Basque Country a Learning Region: white paper on lifelong learning](#)
- European Commission. 2010. [Europe 2020: a European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth](#)

*Stakeholders involved in the development of the strategy:*

- Schools, universities, adult education centres, trade unions and employer's associations

*Stakeholders responsible for implementation of the strategy:*

- Basque Ministry of Education
- Basque Ministry of Employment and Social Policy

**Links:**

Basque Government: <http://www.irekia.euskadi.eus/?locale=en>