Comparative analysis of lifelong learning strategies and their implementation in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden.

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1 Introduction

Most countries experience these years a shift in the focus of education. Both on the international level and on the national level we are witnessing a shift in focus from the formal education and training system especially concerned with children and youth towards a more individualised learning, non-formal and informal education in relation to adults.

These changes are due to many combined factors:
• Changes in the demographic structures all across Europe with the increase in the numbers of adults and elderly people.
• Changes in the economic structures, where knowledge-based enterprises seem to take over from the traditional industries. These changes poses new demands on the enterprises and the individual in terms of re-schooling and re-current education
• Changes in societal structures and in the working life (e.g. shorter working hours and increase in active life after retirement) leaving more people with time enough to pursue new knowledge and personal development
• Changes in the technological development which has made it possible to reach out in remote areas and for people to resume studies via distant learning and the Internet

These changes claim more emphasis to the challenge of educating adults with different learning styles, the challenge of developing adequate methods of teaching, and the challenge of reaching all adults irrespective of prior education, social status, gender or age etc. Another important aspect is how it is possible to integrate these types of adult education in the formal educational structures.

1.1 Report Design

This report is a comparative analysis of 8 country reports on lifelong learning strategy and policy supplied by the national Ministries of Education in the 5 Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) and the 3 Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania). The aim is to compare the countries’ strategies for implementing lifelong learning. A major part will also be a listing of ‘good practices’ in the countries. Such a comparison can provide basis for further educational discussion and development of future lifelong learning strategies in the 8 countries.

After a short definition of the concepts used in this analysis and a description of their historical and institutional origin, a short presentation of the 8 countries’ publicly available data will follow.

Each country has answered a line of questions based on an Outline for the national surveys presented by the Nordic-Baltic Working Group for Lifelong Learning. These questions form the national overviews and are grouped in three sections: 1. History of legislation / current legislative framework, reforms and initiatives, 2. National Strategies / policies in relation the EU Lifelong Learning Memorandum and 3. Good practices and case descriptions.

The initial analysis will consist of a juxtaposition of selected answers to each group of questions from the national overviews, followed by a list of Key Findings. After that a
comparative analysis will be carried out in relation to 4 central questions. Finally some concluding remarks and future discussion points are presented as an outline for further debates.

The 4 central questions that form the foundation for the comparative analysis are:

1) **Is it possible to trace a specific Nordic / Baltic dimension in regard to lifelong learning?**

2) **Are the differences of / within the regions sought maintained and is it possible/desirable in relation to EU?**

3) **Is the Nordic understanding of lifelong learning different from the one proposed by the EU, and is there a Nordic contribution to EU lifelong learning policy?**

4) **Are the Baltic countries’ lifelong learning strategy influenced more by EU than by the Nordic countries, and what are the consequences of such a choice?**

The analysis will stay as close to the national overviews as possible and not include any legislation, strategies or good practices not described in the answers. The reason for this is that the national overviews represent the way in which the countries perceive and want to present themselves and therefore ought to be taken as ‘face value’. To look for supplementary information in other documents would undermine the country’s report, and is as such not a part of this comparative analysis. So it is explicitly stressed that this report might be incomplete in some areas, and that this strategy is intentional.

### 1.2 The Concept of Lifelong Learning

Even though the concept of adult education, let alone lifelong learning, almost didn’t show in the national agendas and policy documents until the mid-1990s, the formal and official idea of lifelong education can be dated back to 1960, when it first appeared at a UNESCO-conference in Montreal. However little attention was paid to the concept.

But the concept of lifelong learning became the centre of attention in the UNESCO-report *Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow* from 1972, where also adult illiteracy problems were addressed. With the UNESCO-report *Learning: The Treasure Within* from 1996, the focus point is no longer adults at risk, and ‘learning throughout life’ becomes one of the educational ‘buzz words’. This marks the turning point for perceiving lifelong learning as the way to address education in the future. The Commission behind the report lists four pillars as the foundation for education in the 21st century: 1) Learning to Know, 2) Learning to Do, 3) Learning to Live Together, and 4) Learning to Be. These pillars have to be addressed throughout a person’s life.

UNESCO is not the only international organisation addressing the concept of Lifelong Learning. The concept also figures in the reports from OECD. In 1973 OECD enters the educational political debate with the report, *Recurrent Education: A Strategy for Lifelong Learning*, where the coherence between recurrent education and lifelong learning is seen as an interrelation between work and education throughout life. In 1996, after a meeting

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1. Except for cases, comments and corrections received later from the relevant people involved in the national overviews. These are as far as possible worked into the document without any references
in Paris between the Ministers of Education, the concept of Lifelong Learning is launched as the foundation for the educational policy and strategy of the OECD.

Historically UNESCO and OECD can be linked to two theoretically and ideologically different views on lifelong learning. OECD has an economic perception of the concept, focusing on education as an investment in “human capital”, whereas UNESCO traditionally is connected with a more humanistic perception with democracy and personal development as two of the key words\(^3\).

These two factors must be borne in mind when addressing the concept of lifelong learning in a comparative analysis like the following.

### 1.3 EU and the Definition of Lifelong Learning

Yet another actor with increasing impact on the national education systems has in recent years entered the scene. EU not only has a direct impact on education policies in the Member States, but can also be expected to play a significant role in the Baltic Sea area, as they have newly obtained membership of the EU. Also the countries outside the EU closely follow the political agendas. An analysis of the concept of Lifelong Learning in relation to the EU can therefore both be interesting and necessary.

Compared with UNESCO and the OECD, EU was relatively slow (although not completely inactive) to enter the educational scene. This is due to an acceptance of the sovereignty of the Member States on this particular field. The result of the process of policymaking within the EU can be viewed as a synthesis of the two positions held by UNESCO and the OECD.

Two White Papers\(^4\) were published by the Commission (chaired by Jacques Delors, whom also chaired the Commission behind the UNESCO-report *Learning: The Treasure Within*), in which emphasis is laid both on the concept of lifelong learning and learning to be, as seen in the UNESCO approach, and on competitiveness, employment, mobility within the Member States and social cohesion, as seen in the OECD approach. Together these two different views on the same concept have helped to shape the concept of lifelong learning in a EU context.

The concept of Lifelong Learning as it is now being defined in the European Union, has been adopted by the Commission and the Member States. According to this lifelong learning is seen as:

> **Encompassing all purposeful learning activities, whether formal or informal, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence\(^5\).**

The ‘lifelong’ part of the concept encompasses the entire population independent of age and of their labour market status. In principle this includes all learning activities ranging from early childhood to leisure education for the retired persons.

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\(^3\) Korsgaard (1999), p. 163  
\(^4\) *Growth, Competitiveness and Employment* in 1993, and *Towards a Learning Society* in 1995  
\(^5\) This definition is taken from *A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning*, p. 3 and the *Report of the Eurostat Task Force on Measuring Lifelong Learning*, article 20
The ‘learning’ part is, on the other hand, defined in the broadest possible sense, with learning expected to take place not only in formal educational settings, but also in non-formal settings in or outside educational institutions, and in informal settings like the family, social interaction, study groups, self-study or equivalent.

Together the two concepts offer a lifelong and lifewide framework for working with lifelong learning on policy level.

This can be illustrated in the following way:

Figure 1.1: “The lifelong-lifewide framework”

![Diagram of the lifelong-lifewide framework]

(Source: Report of the Eurostat Task Force on Measuring Lifelong Learning, p. 10)

What we can call initial education or basic school education is localised in quadrant no. 3. Its focus is younger people and it takes place in more formalised settings. Also quadrant no. 2 is traditionally of interest to the policy-makers and society in general, as it concerns recurrent education and training programmes and various other kinds of formal adult education. But in recent years more focus is shifting towards quadrants no. 1 and 4, as learning activities taking place in these settings get more and more attention from policy-makers. A lot of valuable learning takes place in these settings, and the aim is to be able to measure this value, as well as to integrate competencies acquired in these less formalised settings into the qualifications acquired in the formalised settings.

Thus, focus is still on the formal public education, which is highly regulated and to a greater or lesser extent compulsory, more and more attention is given to the non-formal and informal education that represent a more flexible and individual type of learning. This shift is the basis of the ‘lifelong-lifewide framework’ for lifelong learning strategy- and policymaking. The great challenge is to be able to put equal attention and effort into developing the two areas, so that all types of learning are recognised and supported.
2 The Starting Point for Implementing Lifelong Learning

Different factors can be said to play a role in adopting and implementing a coherent lifelong learning strategy in the different countries of this survey. The similarities and differences among the countries untold, certain overriding factors need to be taken into account.

Being members of the European Union Denmark, Sweden and Finland have committed themselves to follow the objectives and policies set by the Union, either as directives, rules and regulations or as recommendations for further action. This applies for the educational field as well as for other areas. Chapter 5 in Presidency Conclusions of the European Council meeting held in Lisbon in March 2000, states that EU has set up a new strategic goal for the next decade:

...to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.\(^6\)

One of the strategies for reaching that goal is a move towards lifelong learning, as stated in *A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning*, published in October 2000\(^7\). Implementing a lifelong learning strategy can be viewed as a means of reaching a “higher” level in relation to the knowledge-based society. The underlying premise is that this “higher” level can and need to be achieved, because the EU Member States in question already have a long democratic tradition and, more important, a stable economy to build on.

The Baltic countries can, due to several societal and other conditions that are not favourable for developing or implementing a lifelong learning policy and strategy\(^8\), be said to have an aim in many respects different from EU Member States. A state of “post communist schizophrenia” is caused by the rapid changes in societal status, and the loss of past identity for all the people\(^9\). This transition is reflected in the way politicians and NGO’s address the question of adult education and lifelong learning. First and foremost implementing a lifelong learning strategy in the Baltic countries is a means of focusing more on the democratic and personal development aspects of adult education, and hence to speed up the democratisation process and to strengthen the civic society and the societal changes. But on the other hand, the Baltic countries must orient themselves towards the economic aspects of lifelong learning, as they are obliged to live up to certain economic standards. And because they, like the rest of Europe, are moving towards a knowledge-based society they must use adult education as a means of preparing to cope with the changes that follows. But the lack of a stable democratic and economic order gives a starting point different from EU Member States’. As Jelenc states: “Adult education cannot be isolated from the current development as a kind of “superstructure”

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\(^6\) *Presidency Conclusions*, Lisbon European Council, March 23 and 24 – 2000, chapter 5

\(^7\) *A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning*, p. 3

\(^8\) E.g. little or no attention given to the NGO sector during the Communist Period, slow progress in the processes of democratisation and an inherited rigidity of the system and its institutions. See also Jelenc (2001), p. 278ff

\(^9\) Jelenc (1996), p. 41
but must be an active agent in the middle of the changing processes, hence an active change agent"\textsuperscript{10}

In the case of Norway and Iceland the underlying premises regarding developed economies and long democratic traditions are the same as for the EU Member States. But being outside the union they can choose to define their own strategies and need not to follow any consensus agreements about lifelong learning.

\textsuperscript{10} Jelenc (2001), p. 279
3 Short Presentation of the Countries

To establish the foundation for the comparative analysis of the lifelong learning and adult education area a short presentation of the 8 countries will follow. Only a few points are in focus and they are juxtaposed at the end of this chapter. The data is primarily collected from the International Bureau of Education (IBE)\textsuperscript{11}, Eurydice – The information network on education in Europe\textsuperscript{12} and from ‘www.europahuset.no’ \textsuperscript{13} (except where indicated).

3.1 The Kingdom of Denmark\textsuperscript{14}
Population:
Denmark covers 43.977 km\textsuperscript{2} and has to cater for 5.237.000 people, which give a population density of 124 inhabitants per km\textsuperscript{2}. The population is evenly spread out in cities situated throughout the country. 85% of the population lives in cities and 20% of those live in Copenhagen. This gives the capital a population density of about 1928 inhabitants per km\textsuperscript{2}. The majority of inhabitants are Danish.

Language(s):
Danish is the official language. Among the most common minority languages can be mentioned: German, which is spoken by a small minority in Nordschleswig, Turkish, Serbo-Croatian, Pakistani, and Arabic. Mother tongue teaching is provided for children of migrant workers.

Religion:
The Evangelical Lutheran Church is the Danish National Church, and as such it is to be supported by the State. There is a constitutional right of freedom of belief provided that nothing contrary to good morals or public order is taught or done.

GDP and principal economies:
USD 103 billion divided into 4% agriculture, 27% industry and 69% service sector. GDP per inhabitant: USD 19.860.

Denmark had in 1996 a public expenditure on education as % of GDP on 7,7%.

3.2 The Republic of Estonia
Population:
1.439.197 people share a country of 45.100 km\textsuperscript{2}, which gives a density of app. 32 inhabitants per km\textsuperscript{2}. By ethnic division, the main ethnic group is the Estonians (65,3%). Other populations are Russian (28,1%), Ukrainian (2,5%), Belorussian (1,5%) and Finnish (0,9%).

Language(s):
The official state language is Estonian. Other languages spoken by 1.9% of the total population are Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian and Finnish.

Religion:
Freedom of religion exists in Estonia. Most of the population is Lutheran, the number of Orthodox, Evangelical Christians and Baptists being almost equal. Smaller religious groups are Methodists, Adventists, Raskolniki, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Roman Catholics, and Jews.

GDP and principal economies:
USD 10.4 billion (1994) divided on the following areas: agriculture 6.2%, industry 24.3% and the service sector (69.5%). GDP per inhabitant: USD 6,460.

The public expenditure on education in 1996 as % of GDP was 6.3%.

3.3 The Republic of Finland

Population:
There are about 5.2 million people in Finland over an area of 338,000 km²'s. The population density is on average 17 inhabitants per km². The population is concentrated in the south of the country, particularly in the Helsinki capital area, which accounts for about a fifth of the entire population, equivalent of app. one million people. Approximately 64% of the population live in densely populated areas. 94% are Finns, the remainder being Swedes and Sami people.

Language(s):
The official languages are Finnish and Swedish. Approximately 92.5% of the population have Finnish as their mother tongue, and about 5.6% speak Swedish. Although the Swedish population is concentrated on the coast, Finnish and Swedish are equal languages throughout the country when dealing with the authorities. The third of the languages spoken in Finland is the indigenous language, Sami (Lappish), which is spoken by approximately 0.03% of the population. The Sami-speaking population lives in the northernmost part of Finland, Lapland, and they have the right to receive services from society in their mother tongue.

Religion:
Finland has a Freedom of Religion Act, which guarantees the right to practise any religion, provided that the law and/or common decency are not violated. The Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Orthodox Church have special status among religious denominations; they have taxation rights, for example. The majority of the population (85.1%) are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Approximately 1.1% of the population are members of the Orthodox Church, and 12.7% are not members of any religious denomination.

GDP and principal economies:
USD 81.8 billion divided on 5% agriculture, 32% industry and 63% services. GDP per inhabitant: USD 16,140.

Public spending as % of GDP amounts to 7.2%
3.4 The Republic of Iceland

Population:
App. 271,000 inhabitants share the 103,000 km²'s. This gives an average population density on 2,6 inhabitants per km². More than 110,000 inhabitants live in Reykjavik, which means, that some areas are even more sparsely populated than the average. There are few ethnic minorities.

Language(s):
Icelandic is the native tongue, but the Icelanders are aware of the dangers of being linguistically isolated, so in compulsory education children learn English and a Scandinavian language (usually Danish). There are no official minority languages.

Religion:
The national church is Evangelical Lutheran. Most citizens belong to the State Church, with other religious societies represented also. (State Church of Iceland: 92.2%; other Lutherans: 3.1%; Roman Catholics: 0.9%; others: 3.8%). There is freedom of religion in Iceland.

GDP and principal economies:
USD 4.5 billion (1994). The main industries are agriculture (13%), industry (24%) and service sector (63%). GDP per inhabitant: USD 17,250.

The annual expenditure on education as % of GDP is 4.8%.

3.5 The Republic of Latvia

Population:
2,504,000 inhabitants share 64,600 km², which gives a population density of 38 inhabitants per km². Approximately 68% of the population live in city areas while the remaining 32% are spread out throughout the country. 54% of the population are Latvians and 34% are Russians.

Language(s):
Latvian is the official language, but a wide network of state-financed schools where instruction is in Russian continues to function in Latvia. Thirty-two percent of all pupils attend such schools. However, in many ways these schools are not typical national minority schools, because not only ethnic Russians but also many ethnic Belorussians, Ukrainians, Polaks, Germans, Jews and others attend these schools.

Religion:
The Constitution of Latvia declares that the church is separated from the state, and everybody has the right on freedom of worship. Churches and religious organizations are free to preach their doctrines and to perform rituals. Religious beliefs count Evangelical Lutherans (31.4%), Roman Catholics (39.2%), Orthodox Christians (23.4%), Old Rite Believers (5.5%) and Baptists (0.5%).

GDP and economy:
USD 12.3 billion and the main industries are divided into agriculture (7%), industry (28%) and the service sector (65%). GDP per inhabitant: USD 4,480.

15 http://iceland.org
The public expenditure as % of GDP in 1996 reached a 6,2%.

3.6 The Republic of Lithuania
Population:
3,728,000 people have to share 65,200 km\(^2\), giving an average density of a little over 57 inhabitants per km\(^2\). Almost half of the population lives in five major Lithuanian cities - Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipeda, Siauliai and Panevėžys. 68,4% of the population live in the cities and 31,6% live in the country. 80% are Lithuanians, 9% Russians and 8% Polaks.

Language(s):
The official language is Lithuanian. National minorities have all conditions to be acknowledged in Lithuania, to teach their children their native language and the history of their nation, to foster their culture and profess their religion.

Religion:
There is no state religion in Lithuania, but the state acknowledges the traditional church (roman catholic) in Lithuania and religious organisations if only they are supported by society and if their teaching and rituals do not run counter the law and morality.

GDP and principal economies:
USD 13.5 billion spread out on following areas: agriculture 13%, industry 32% and the service sector (55%). GDP per inhabitant: USD 3,500.

The public expenditure on education as % of GDP was in 1996 5,3%.

3.7 The Kingdom of Norway
Population:
Norway has a population of app. 4,350,000 people spread out over an area of 323,877 km\(^2\), which gives an average population density of about 15 inhabitants per km\(^2\). The northern most county Finnmark has a population density down to around 1,5 inhabitants per km\(^2\). Other areas of Norway are equally sparsely populated. There are a few Sami-people, but the majority of the population is Norwegian.

Language(s):
Norway has, for about hundred years, had two official written Norwegian languages, Bokmål and Nynorsk. It is the individual municipality that decides which official language should be used in schools. All pupils learn both languages as a part of the subject Norwegian and final examinations in Norwegian include written work in both. The general rule is that pupils who have their backround from the Sami culture are entitled to compulsory and upper secondary education in their own language.

Religion:
Norway has a state church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, to which approximately 90% of the population belong. There is full religious freedom. In the bigger towns, many of the world’s religions are represented with smaller or bigger congregations, often arising from and depending on the number of inhabitants that are immigrants.

GDP and principal economies:
USD 93.7 billion spread out over following areas: agriculture (2%), industry (30%) and the services (68%). GDP per inhabitant: USD 22,170.
The annual amount of money spend on education as % of GDP was in 1996 6.9 %

3.8 The Kingdom of Sweden
Population:
8,909,128 people are spread over a total area of 449,964 km². This gives an average of approx. 20 inhabitants per km², with great variations from region to region. The Stockholm area has a population density of 287 inhabitants per km², whilst the northernmost regions (Jämtland and Norrbotten) only have 3 inhabitants per km². By ethnic division there are 90% Swedes, 2% Finnish and Sami-people, and immigrants.

Language(s):
The official language is Swedish. In some parts of northern Sweden, Sami and Finnish are spoken. There are five official minority languages: Sami, Finnish, Tornedal Finnish, Romany and Yiddish.

Religion:
Earlier, all children born in Sweden automatically became members of the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran State church, but since 1995 the Swedish church has only received as members those who have been christened. From 1st of January 2000, the church is no longer a State church.

GDP and principal economies:
The Swedish GNP amounts to USD 163.1 billion (1994) and the main industries are steel-, car- and paper industry. GDP per inhabitant: USD 18,580.

There is no data on the amount spend on education as a percentage of the GDP.

3.9 Summary
The 8 countries are due to historical and economical similarities normally divided into 2 groups, the Baltic countries and the Nordic countries. Apart from this rather common division Sweden, Norway, Iceland and Finland can be assembled in one group as they show a similar demographic structure with a relative dense population concentrated in the bigger cities and areas with a very sparse population.

The demographic structure also suggests a grouping in 2 distinct areas. The Baltic countries all have a relatively big minority of Russian-speaking people, whereas the Nordic countries have a more homogenous population.

The public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP shows a great diversity. The 7 countries (no data available on Sweden) range from a 4.8% (Iceland) to a 7.7% (Denmark). The Baltic countries show similarities as they all spend approximately the same amount of money, whereas Iceland falls behind compared to all the other countries with a 4.8%. Denmark and Finland lie in the top of the field spending more than 7% of their GDP on education.

All the countries show a similar division of labour market areas (little agriculture, more industry and a bigger service sector). (The data from Sweden is not comparable to the other countries’ data). But the two regions differ in their Gross Domestic Product. The Nordic countries have a relative high GDP, and they all (except Iceland) have an agricultural sector contributing with less than 5%. Also the GDP per inhabitant place the
countries in two separate regions, with the Nordic countries having a considerably higher GDP per inhabitant than the Baltic countries.

There are also some similarities that bind Nordic and the Baltic countries together.

Geographically the countries (except for Iceland and Norway) border the Baltic Sea, and have had easy access to trading and exchanging of ideas. They all share the same principle of freedom of belief (with Sweden and Latvia having separated the State and the Church).

It might be noteworthy to mention that the two areas also politically are closely connected. Iceland was the first country to recognise the three Baltic States as independent nations, and Denmark was the first country to re-establish the diplomatic connections after half a century’s hibernation. Also on the institutional level some similarities between the two regions are found. The Council of the Baltic States was founded in 1990 and the Baltic Council of Ministers was formally established in its present structure in 1994 with the Nordic dittos as models.

Table 1: A Schematic Juxtaposition of the 8 Countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Area in km²</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Average population density</th>
<th>Public expenditure as % of GDP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark (DK)</td>
<td>43.977</td>
<td>5.237.000</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>7,7% (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia (EE)</td>
<td>45.100</td>
<td>1.471.000</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6,3% (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland (FI)</td>
<td>338.145</td>
<td>5.126.000</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7,2% (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland (IS)</td>
<td>103.000</td>
<td>271.000</td>
<td>2,6</td>
<td>4,8% (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia (LV)</td>
<td>64.600</td>
<td>2.504.000</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>6,2% (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania (LT)</td>
<td>65.200</td>
<td>3.728.000</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>5,3% (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway (NO)</td>
<td>323.877</td>
<td>4.348.000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6,9% (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden (SE)</td>
<td>449.964</td>
<td>8.819.000</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>(...)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Based on The International Bureau of Education data, 'www.ibe.unesco.org')

Table 2: A Schematic Juxtaposition of the 8 Countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>GDP in billion USD</th>
<th>GDP per inhabitant (USD)</th>
<th>Agriculture</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark (DK)</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>19.860</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia (EE)</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>6.460</td>
<td>6,2%</td>
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<td>Lithuania (LT)</td>
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(Based on data from ‘Europahuset’, 'www.europahuset.no')

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17 Ibid. p. 12
18 No data available
4 The National Overviews - background

This comparative analysis of the adult education policy documents / legislative and structural aspects concerning adult learning in the Nordic and Baltic countries is carried out as a back-ground document for the Nordic – Baltic conference “A Human Touch – adults learning with a difference”. The analysis is based on a questionnaire that served as an outline for the national overviews. A national overview has been produced by all the 8 countries and the answers given roughly responds to the questions within the following 3 fields of interest:

1. History of legislation that regulates adult learning / current legislative framework / current reforms and initiatives.
2. National strategy / policy documents in adult learning that follow the EU Lifelong Learning Memorandum discussion / priorities / resolutions concerning adult education.
3. Good practice / case descriptions showing the practice of the policy implementation / illustrating the activities related to the goals of the conference.

Within these 3 leading fields of interest 9 questions are addressed in the national overviews.

The analysis consists of a juxtaposition of selected answers given as well as a listing of Key Findings. Not all the answers to all the questions from all the countries are listed, but answers are selected to give a general example of the country’s response. The answers are subject to the author’s interpretation and rewriting except where quotations are used. The analysis is limited to areas where similarities or differences can be of interest for future action or considerations.
5 Listing of the Answers Given in the National Overviews

5.1 1.A. Which are the most important historical events / traditions / reforms that have deeply influenced / changed the sphere of adult education in your country?

Selected answers to the question

**DK**: “Liberal adult education (…) started as a folk high school movement in the mid 19th century based on the ideas developed by N.F.S. Grundtvig’s ideas of ‘popular enlightenment’. (p. 2) “As repercussion of the economic crisis necessitating assistance to society’s marginalised persons, *day folk schools* were introduced in the 1970's”. (p. 3) **EE**: “In the second half of the 17th century was the period of founding peasant schools which provided schooling for adults.” (p. 1) “A turning point in adult education came in 1970s. (…) Another period of change in adult and continuing education started together with ‘perestroika’ in the Soviet Union in 1985. After the collapse of totalitarian empire in 1991 and the re-establishment of the independent Republic of the Estonia, a new era started” (p. 2) **FI**: “Although the educational needs of the adult population have been recognised for over a hundred years, adult education and training did not become targets of systematic education policy until the 1970's” (p. 1) **IS**: no data available **LV**: “The start of education reform was assured by the adoption of the Education Law on June 19, 1991. (…) This law spoke on improvement of vocational qualification and retraining – the terms and understandings which came from the Soviet Education system” (p. 1) **LT**: “The history and tradition of Lithuanian adult education traces to the second part of the 19th century when a famous Lithuanian bishop Motiejus Valencius widely spread ideas of education. (…) The years of Independence also mark the beginning and development of modern adult education in Lithuania” (p. 1) **NO**: “Norway has much of the same history as Denmark and Sweden. Four years could as marks: 1864: The first Folk High School was established (Sagatun, Hamar) and the first “study association”; the “Oslo University Free Education by the Students Association” (Studentersamfundets Fri Undervisning), later called the Folk University Study Association. 1964: The first White Paper in Adult Education (Adult Education for All/Voksenopplæring for alle), launched by the Labour Government and the Minister of Education, Helge Svirsten, focusing on formal EA.1977: The Act of Adult Education, which regulated formal and non-formal EA, not least the NGO sector (study associations). 1997: The Green Paper preparing for the Norwegian Competence Reform (Buerutvalgets instilling).” Norway also published a White Paper on "Lifelong Learning" as early as 1984. (Based on the comments received) **SE**: “…the first folk high schools having been established in as early as the mid-19th century when local self-government was introduced. (…) Two national schools for adults were set up, one in Norrköping (1956) and one in Härnosand (1962) to give adults the chance to obtain qualifications providing eligibility for further study through distance courses. (…) During the 1970's the municipal adult education system underwent a

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19 Not all the countries have answers to all the questions, and not all answers are directly comparable as the national reports have different set ups

20 The selected answers are listed under the country’s initials (DK for Denmark, EE for Estonia, FI for Finland, IS for Iceland, LV for Latvia, LT for Lithuania, NO for Norway and SE for Sweden)
significant expansion and in 1982 it acquired its own curriculum, Lvux 82, and status as an independent form of schooling." (p. 2f)

**Key Findings**

In the Nordic context Denmark, Norway, Finland and Sweden trace the origin of adult education back to the mid-19th century and the foundation of the first folk high schools. Lithuania and Estonia list a similar origin of the first adult educational ideas.

As a result of changes in society, especially an increase in unemployment, Denmark, Sweden and Finland all experienced an increased focus on vocational adult education and recurrent training in the 1970’s, so as to cater for the marginalized people’s need for upgrading their skills (DK p. 3), doing something meaningful or developing new competencies so they could (re)-enter the labour market. Also Norway presented a Law regulating Adult Education in the 1970’s.

A similar turning point is found in Estonia in the 1970’s, but with a different background. During that period several research and development initiatives were launched to ensure a certain level of scientific research in the field of adult education in Estonia and also provide training for university lectures. (EE p. 2)

The Baltic countries were during the Soviet occupation heavily influenced by the Soviet outlook on education, and especially vocational training based on ideological and political grounds was carried out. Estonia and Lithuania note that non-formal adult education was carried out in so-called Knowledge-societies (EE p. 1 and LT p. 1). In Lithuania “resistance schools” were operating, where the spirit of national identity and cultural awareness was kept alive by courses in singing, amateur folk dancing, craft groups and study circles (LT p. 1).

The main historical event concerning the establishing of modern adult education in the Baltic countries is mentioned to be the restoration of independence (EE p. 2, LV p. 1, LT p. 1).

Box 1.A.

- Historically the ideas of adult education and folk high schools appeared at the same time in the Nordic and the Baltic countries
- Because of the Soviet occupation the starting point from which the 8 countries can develop their lifelong learning policies in the 21st century is very different.
- The Baltic countries meet in their transition period some structural and political problems, that is not present in the Nordic countries (see also Chapter 2).
- The Nordic countries have a long and uninterrupted tradition and as well as a well-established infrastructure of adult education
5.2 1.B. What definition does your country have on Lifelong Learning?

Selected answers to the question

**DK**: “Denmark adheres to the “cradle-to-grave” concept of lifelong learning adopted by OECD and the EU Commission. Although (...) no overall lifelong learning policy or strategy paper exists in the Danish Ministry of Education...” (p. 10)

**EE**: “Strategy says that lifelong learning is all formal, informal and non-formal learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competencies within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective. There is no definition of lifelong learning in Estonian Legislation” (p. 2)

**FI**: “The concept of lifelong learning reflects the whole national education system, because it covers people’s lives from early childhood to old age. Lifelong learning takes place both in official learning environments, such as schools, and also less officially through the Internet and as on-the-job learning.” (p. 6)

**IS**: no definition is available, even though the concept is used in the national overview.

**LV**: “The definition of adult education is: Adult education – a multi-dimensional educational process of persons, which, ensures the development of individual and his or her ability to compete in the labour market during the course of a lifetime of a person.” (p. 1)

**LT**: “The definition of lifelong learning is still undergoing the process of discussion. However discussions prevail the boundaries of the most recent European Community’s definition...” (p. 2)

**NO**: “As in other countries – the objectives of lifelong learning in Norway are to provide a foundation for further learning through basic education, and to bring the opportunity of learning for everyone. The learning should both be “lifelong” and “lifewide” (formal, non-formal and informal” (p.1). “There have quite recently been a series of educational and training reforms “from cradle to grave...” (p. 2).

**SE**: “Since lifelong learning includes both formal an non-formal education, it might be more reasonable to talk about access to learning opportunities than to try to formulate rights to learning.” (p. 8)

Key Findings

It is most common that there is no official definition on lifelong learning, but the concept of lifelong learning is recognised, used and discussed at official level in all the countries.

Denmark, Norway, Finland and Lithuania recognise the EU definition of lifelong learning, which defines lifelong learning as: ...encompassing all purposeful learning activity, whether formal or informal, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence. The countries recognise that lifelong learning not only is a matter of adult education, but also must take in consideration how to deal with children and youth as well as the elderly. As the Memorandum states: “Lifelong learning sees all learning as a seamless continuum ‘from cradle to grave’.“\(^{21}\)

The lifelong and the lifewide dimension are both mentioned as part of the lifelong learning concept.

Sweden, however, notes the importance of focusing on the promotion of active citizenship, not only employability. Sweden also notes that it is more reasonable to talk

\(^{21}\) *A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning*, p. 7
about *access to learning opportunities* than *rights to learning*, as the latter means that something can be demanded and that someone can be held accountable if the demand is not met. (SE p. 8)

**Box 1.B**

- The countries lack an official definition of lifelong learning to guide their future actions and make a more comprehensive and all encompassing lifelong learning strategy possible
- Both the lifelong and the lifewide dimension is included in the use of the concept
- EU has provided the framework for the countries’ usage of the concept of lifelong learning
5.3 1.C. What laws in your country regulate adult learning? Please, indicate the name, the year of passing and the aim of the law.

There are many laws regulating adult learning in the different countries. For the sake of the general view, the laws are collected in categories. For a comprehensive list of the legislation mentioned in the national overviews, please see Appendix 1!

In **Denmark** the laws fall under these 4 categories:
- Liberal adult education, dealing with folk high schools, study centres and realisation of democracy and courses of personal interest in the non-formal setting
- General adult education, dealing with both lower and upper secondary education for adults
- Vocational adult education, dealing with vocationally oriented education and training systems that are linked with the labour market
- Provision, financing counselling, support/allowance schemes etc., dealing with these issues within the 3 other areas

**Estonia’s** legislation largely fall under these categories:
- General adult education, including basic and upper secondary education provision
- Vocational education, both municipal and private provision
- Higher education and university education
- Legislation concerning provision of labour market related education for unemployed

In **Finland** the laws fall under these 2 categories:
- Vocational adult education, dealing with a) the curriculum-based upper secondary vocational education and training, and b) the vocational qualifications taken in competence tests
- Liberal adult education, dealing with folk high schools, study centres and realisation of democracy and courses of personal interest in the non-formal setting

**Iceland** has only stated “The Upper Secondary School Act” from 1996 as regulating adult learning. But job education in the business community falls under the Ministry of Social Affairs, job training in fish processing falls under Ministry of Fisheries etc. However, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture has the overall supervision of educational affairs.

**Latvia** has 4 laws regulating adult education:
- The ‘ordinary’ law on education, dealing with general adult education items and provisions
- The general education law, dealing with general secondary education
- Professional education dealing with vocational and continuing educational programmes, formal as well as non-formal
- The law on higher education, dealing with formal education for adults

In **Lithuania** the laws fall under these 3 categories:
- Vocational adult education, dealing with the vocational education and training and on-the-job training and upgrading of skills
• General adult education, dealing with secondary education, higher education and continuing education in the formal setting
• Liberal adult education, dealing with the development of individuals, realisation of democracy and courses of personal interest in the non-formal setting

In **Norway** the following laws and reforms regulating adult education are included in the Competence Reform from 1997.

• Upper secondary education: Reform 94
• Higher Education: Reorganisation in 1994
• A quality reform in higher education 2001-2004

Further more the following laws are mentioned:

• *Law on Distance Education* (originally from 1948, but in 1993 submitted under the Law on Education)
• *Act of Folk High Schools* (from 1948/49) dealing with liberal adult education
• *Law on Education* (from 1977) including the right to basic education (passed in 2002) and secondary education (passed in 2000)
• *New Act of Folk High Schools* dealing also with formal education for adults and *Law on Competence Assessment* dealing with competence assessment in relation to secondary and higher education and working qualifications (passed in Feb. 2003)

**Sweden** has formulated the objectives for adult education in The Education Act (1985:1100), with a government bill on *Adult Learning and the Development of Adult Education* (2000/01:72) backed by the Riksdag (parliament) also outlining strategies for adult education. The Government Bill *Adult learning and the Development of Adult Education* proposed the following objective for adult learning: "All adults should be given the opportunity to extend their knowledge and develop their skills in order to promote their personal development, democracy, gender equality, economic growth and employment and the fair distribution of wealth". (p. 5)

**Key Findings**

Lifelong learning and the provision of adult education is not placed solely under one Ministry, but is involving several other ministries, especially ministries dealing with the labour market, employment and social issues.

For most countries it applies that the Ministry of Education has the overall responsibility and supervision with educational affairs.

The Laws are all from the late 1990’s, regarding general adult education, liberal education as well as vocational education and training. Exceptions are: Sweden, where *The Education Act* is from 1985 (SE p. 5), Iceland, where the *Upper Secondary School Act* is from 1996 (IS p. 2), and Estonia which in 1993 was the first Baltic country to pass a law specifically on adult education. The countries do not specify whether or not the new legislation is updates of former laws.

Denmark has noted the most extensive legislation regarding the provision and financing of adult education in all forms.
Norway and Finland both specify laws regulating competence and qualifications assessment.

Box 1.C.

- No single legislation regulates adult learning
- Liberal education as a specific area of legislation is only found in Denmark, Finland, Lithuania and Norway
- Several ministries influence the adult learning provision
- Norway and Finland both specify laws regulating competence and qualifications assessment.
- The legislation is generally new (from the late 1990’s)
5.4 1.D. What law amendments / initiatives / reforms in your country currently influence the lifelong learning policy concerning the adult population in your country?

Selected answers to the question

Denmark:
- The Adult Education Reform effective from 2001 is a major step towards turning more or less independent adult learning provisions into a “single, coherent and transparent” adult education and training system.
- The Government has launched an action plan “Better Education”, that support competence development in a lifelong perspective.
- One set of initiatives that the Ministry of Education in Denmark is embarking on under the “Better Education” Action Plan is launched under the heading “Flexibility”. This initiative aims to make the education system more flexible, so it becomes possible to acquire competencies in different ways, and with varying time consumption for the individual. Also enhanced recognition of non-formal learning should play a pivotal role in competence development of the adult population.
- A bill introduces a general principle of user payment for all general adult education single subject courses at lower and upper secondary level.
- A bill on adult vocational training aims to ensure co-ordination and greater coherence in the provision of adult vocational training including selected VET courses at the same level.
- An amendment bill for the Universities is currently under preparation

Estonia:
Law amendments in year 2002 and 2003:
- The Education Minister’s Regulation based on Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act which regulates study possibilities of adults in basic education and upper-secondary education level was changed, so gymnasiums for adults have the possibility to offer learning subject by subject. Earlier it was possible to learn only class by class.
- In 2002 Parliament changed Vocational Qualifications Act in order to accelerate development of Vocational Qualification System in Estonia. One goal of the vocational qualifications system is to recognise non-formal and informal education.
- In 2002 change of Adult Training Act and Governments regulation coming from that was prepared to create basis for popular adult education financing from state budget.

Reforms:
In 2002 an extensive higher education reform was prepared to join the Bologna Process. Since 2002 higher education legislation has been renewed step by step.

Initiatives:
In 2002 Estonian Government, Estonian Employers’ Confederation and Confederation of Estonian Trade Unions signed a tripartite agreement on Employment. It was agreed that there would be tripartite working group for the developing of financing schemes of adults continuing and re-training.

In January 2003 the structure of Ministry of Education and Research was changed and an adult education division was created to increase the ministry’s role in adult education system development.
Finland:
- **The development plan for education and university research for 1999-2004** has lifelong learning as one of the main principles underlying the development of Finnish education. The specific aims are geared to improve the following in terms of lifelong learning: the basic educational level of young people in the transition from school to working life, the basic educational level of the middle-aged, learning ability at all ages, learning opportunities available to senior citizens, formal recognition of skills and knowledge obtained outside education institutions, educational information and counselling, the criteria for funding education institutions and the enhancement of teaching skills.
- **The national strategy for education, training and research in the information society** is another government plan (launched in 1999) that takes lifelong learning into account. Its aim is to meet the growing competence requirements of the information society by systematically developing the prerequisites of lifelong learning.
- In 1997 the Ministry of Education introduced the **Joy of Learning**, which is another national strategy for lifelong learning. The concept of lifelong learning is in this strategy extended to cover individuals, as well as the community where they live and work as well as the underlying societal parameters that determine their operational environment.

Iceland:
- One of the many things that have changed the aspects towards continuing education is the increased offering of studies outside the school system
- Centres for lifelong learning have been established. The Centres are non-profit self-independent corporations run in the collaboration with the local community, local schools authorities and the local trade unions. Each centre is responsible for identifying the educational needs of the region and offer courses according to these.
- A lifelong learning week has been held for the past 4 years. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, labour unions, local centres for lifelong learning and the educational system combined, promote lifelong learning.
- Also a great number of enterprises that hold their own training and education courses are found.
- It has become increasingly common for wage agreements to guarantee the right of workers to undertake studies and also most professions and unions have training funds at their disposal.
- Legislation regarding tax benefits for investments in education and research, and the possibility of individual learning accounts are being debated.

Latvia:
Certain amendments to the legislation regulating adult education have been passed:
- The amendments to the Law of 5 July 2001, determines 2 new types of vocational programmes: further vocational education programmes and continuing education programmes
- Amendment in the Law on Vocational Education that aims to define the relationship between the content of initial vocational education programmes and of further vocational education programmes.
In October 2002 the Saeima accepted **The Concept of Education Development 2002-2005**, which sets up the goals of the development of the education system and the directions of action to achieve the goals.

**Lithuania:**
- The “**National Development Plan**” (2001) that has human resource development in the field of vocational training and improvement among 3 major priorities.
- Phare 2001 initiative “**Twinning Light**” component aims at on-the-job training, advice and other contributions to the development of the capacities of the Lithuanian civil servants to develop strategies in the areas of VET, CVT and lifelong learning, to draft proposals for White Paper and Action Plan on Lifelong Learning etc.
- UNESCO initiative “Adult Learning Week” which started in 2000, and is still running focusing on different adult education related topics.
- The establishment of the Lithuanian Education Forum in 2001 to promote quality basic education for and to guarantee preconditions for lifelong learning.

**Norway:**
Norway is meeting the challenge of making a lifelong learning strategy by implementing the so-called **Competence Reform**. The Reform is seen as “…maybe the most important in a lifelong learning context. The Reform is an essential element of fulfilling the aims of granting lifelong learning for all.” (p. 2).

The Reform consists of numerous initiatives, including:
- A right to leave of absence. Employees with a certain amount of employment may be allowed to take study leave of absence on a full-time or part-time basis in order to take part in organised education and training.
- A right of adults to a primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education
- Documentation and assessment of non-formal and informal learning in working life and in relation to the education system.
- An improvement of the study financing
- Employers financing education is exempted from tax.
- A competence-building programme to help produce innovation and development in the field of continuing education and training and to improve the co-operation between the education system and work life.
- Structural changes to the public education system in order to make possible to cater the needs for skills and knowledge at the workplace, as well as more co-operation between educational institutions at all levels and private and public enterprises to secure a high standard.
- Motivation, information, good guidance services, a reach out to adults at risk, flexible learning, and “popular enlightenment” and democratic participation are among other important goals.

**Sweden:**
“**The five-year Adult Education Initiative** is the largest ever investment in adult education in Sweden” (p. 4)

The initiative consists of four vital perspectives
1) The renewal of labour market
2) The renewal of education policies
3) More equitable distribution
4) Increased economic growth
The Adult Education Initiative is primarily been targeted at unemployed people who completely or partially lack three-year upper secondary school qualifications. The government meets the needs, by offering special funding of full-time admission places at folk high schools and municipal adult education institutions.

**Key Findings**

Iceland is the only country that doesn’t describe an overall national or governmental plan for adult education/lifelong learning policies. “In Iceland, the government has largely left it to unions and employers’ organisations to negotiate terms that safeguard the rights of the workers, rather than imposing laws and regulations.” (IS p. 2). However, several other initiatives have been launched, including a report from 1998 made by the Committee on Lifelong Learning in Iceland.

The countries’ national plans focusing on lifelong learning are aimed at both vocational and liberal adult education, and all emphasise the promotion of economic growth.

Norway, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Lithuania and Iceland have launched Adult Education Weeks/Adult Learners Week, putting focus on adult education in various aspects, as well as promoting co-operation between several providers and partners in adult education.

Denmark is the only country introducing the general principle of user payment for all general adult education single subjects at lower and upper secondary level.

Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Finland specifically emphasise the need for the development of a strong co-operation between the education system and the work life.

**Box 1.D.**

- Most countries have launched a comprehensive strategy for adult education provision
- Adults learning weeks are established in several countries
- Vocational education and training is a major component of the initiatives launched
- Denmark introduces the principle of user payment on lower and upper secondary level
- Emphasise is put on economic growth
- Denmark, Iceland, Finland and Norway specifically recognise the importance of co-operation between the education system and working life
- In Norway employers financing education is exempted from tax

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22 Mentioned in the comments received
5.5 2.A. What resolutions / policy documents / strategies have been passed / are being discussed / are planned to be passed in your country to follow up on the European Commission Lifelong learning Memorandum discussion?

In this section the answers given in the national overviews about strategies and policies are related to the 6 Key Messages presented in *A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning*. This gives an overview of which focus areas the countries concentrate on.

The 6 Key Messages from *A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* are as follows:

- **Key Message 1**: New basic skills for all
- **Key Message 2**: More investment in human resources
- **Key Message 3**: Innovation in teaching and learning
- **Key Message 4**: Valuing learning
- **Key Message 5**: Rethinking guidance and counselling
- **Key Message 6**: Bringing learning closer to home

**Selected answers to the question**

**Denmark:**

“The high priority given in Denmark to certain issues within the scope of lifelong learning, notably increased recognition of non-formal and informal learning and enhanced co-operation in the field of vocational education and training (...) has been greatly inspired by the work initiated by the EU Commission... (p. 8)”

Furthermore high priority is given to:

- Basic skills – relates to Key Message 1
- Enhanced flexibility and access to continuing education and training – relates to Key Message 6
- Increased recognition of non-formal and informal learning – relates to Key Message 4

**Estonia:**

In 2001 a Consultation Process based on the European Commissions Lifelong Learning Memorandum was carried through in the 15 counties in Estonia. The result of the discussion shows significant differences in the lifelong learning situations in the regions involved – the further away from the capital, the more difficult the situation. The Consultation Process came up with the following priority in relation to the Key Messages:

- bringing learning closer to home – relates to Key Message 6
- more investment in Human Resources – relates to Key Message 2
- innovation in teaching and learning – relates to Key Message 3
- new basic skills for all – relates to Key Message 1

Also several strategies in the field of education and research was made: (see also Question 2.B.)

1) Education Strategy “Learning Estonia” project 2002
2) Project Lifelong Learning Strategy (2002)
4) Estonian Employment Action Plan
5) Joint Assessment of Employment Priorities in Estonia
6) Pre-accession Economic Programme 2002
7) Estonian National Plan for implementation of European Structural Funds – 2003-2006
Finland:
In accordance with policy lines determined in the 2000 state budget some initiatives are taken:

- A system of competence-based qualifications independent of the way in which knowledge and skills have been acquired must be developed in response to the educational needs of working life – relates to Key Message 4
- For a proper implementation of a lifelong learning strategy and for a flexible labour market, it is important for people with poor or outdated education and training to have access to specialised and individual adult education services – relates to Key Message 1
- Information, individual guidance, personal study plans etc. will be developed to encourage adult to apply for education and training – relates to Key Message 5

Iceland:
In a report made by the Committee on Lifelong Learning in Iceland issued in May 1998 some proposals were made to increase and improve lifelong learning. The report was published before the Memorandum, but some of the proposals refer directly to the Key Messages.

- Second chance for study – relates to Key Message 1.
- Quality requirements – relates to Key Message 4
- Improved access to information and counselling – relates to Key Message 5
- Utilisation of information technology – relates to Key Message 6

Latvia:
“The Concept of Education Development was produced in pursuance of the objectives and directions of action set out in the Latvian Long-term Economic Strategy, the National Development Plan, the National Employment plan, the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning of the European Commission…” (p. 4). Two of the goals of the Concept of Education Development refer directly to the Memorandum:

- Granting of access to education for Latvian population in the context of lifelong education – relates to Key Message 1
- Increase of cost-effectiveness of each stage and type of education – relates to Key Message 4

Lithuania:
On official level Lithuania has taken several measures to follow up on the Memorandum:

- In February 2002 the Ministry of Social Security and Labour signed with the European Commission a Joint Assessment of Employment Policy Priorities in Lithuania. The document provides assessment of the existing situation, defines the existing problems in vocational training and provides priority guidelines for urgent action.
- National discussions of A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning have been a significant impetus for the Modification Project of the Law on Education, which despite the ongoing discussion already has the framework of the main Key Messages.
- ‘Guidelines of Education for 2003-2012’ is proposed for discussion and is expected to be certified by the Seimas as a strategic document for education development. This strategy is prepared in accordance with the European Community, European Commission, UNESCO documents, the World Bank and OECD recommendations.

On a more concrete level, the following strategies / policies /actions relate directly to the Key Messages:
• The “National Development Plan” (2001) that has human resource development in the field of vocational training and improvement among 3 major priorities – relates to Key Message 2.
• One of the initiatives proposed in the Guidelines for Education 2003-2012 is to create a tax system so as to encourage companies to invest into employees’ learning and encourage individuals to invest into education of their children and their own lifelong learning – relates to Key Message 2.
• In October 2001, the Minister of Education and Science approved a temporary procedure for assessment of knowledge and skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning – relates to Key Message 4.

**Norway:**
The Competence reform was launched before the Memorandum, but despite this a quite big and solid process with debates, hearings etc. followed the Memorandum. Norway looks closely to the Lisbon conclusions and considers active participation. “In the follow-up to the Lisbon conclusions, Norway will closely consider, together with the EEA/EFTA States, active participation in the new initiatives.” (p. 9)
In this respect relevant activities in relation to the Key Messages include:
• Developing an action plan and establishing indicators and benchmarks for lifelong learning – relates to Key Message 4

The lifelong learning strategy in Norway contains 8 key elements (please, refer to the next chapter)

**Sweden:**
Generally the Swedish legislation focuses on enhancing the basic skills for all, which refer to Key Message 1. One of the 4 perspectives in the Adult Education Initiative focuses specifically on more equitable distribution – relates to Key Message 6. The Government bill Adult Learning and the Development of Adult Education (2000/01:72) includes the following points to reach the bill’s objective:
• Teaching and working methods should be developed – relates to Key message 3
• The individual’s learning should be supported through access to advice and guidance, based on the recognition of actual, already acquired knowledge – relates to Key Message 4 and 5
• Financial support should be offered to adults to stimulate their participation in education and skills developing programmes – relates to Key Message 1
In addition to this Sweden comments on the Memorandum: “In the relevant ministers’ viewpoints on the European Commission’s memorandum, it emerges that it is important that the discussion on the objectives of lifelong learning also deals not only with the promotion of employability, but also with promotion of active citizenship.” (p. 8)

**Key Findings**
The number of times the different strategies and policies are mentioned in relation to the Key Messages:
• **Key Message 1: New basic skills for all – 7**
• **Key Message 2: More investment in human resources – 3**
• **Key Message 3: Innovation in teaching and learning – 2**
• **Key Message 4: Valuing learning – 7**
• **Key Message 5: Rethinking guidance and counselling – 3**
• **Key Message 6: Bringing learning closer to home – 4**
Half the countries, Estonia, Denmark, Iceland and Sweden are the only ones concerned with the Key Message 6, ‘bringing learning closer to home’ even though most of the other countries have very sparsely populated areas.

All the countries were occupied by the thought of providing basic education for all, and measuring non-formal and informal learning in order to recognise and integrate vocational qualifications and personal competencies has likewise a high priority for all countries. The wish for providing basic education for all can be seen as an overlying premise that includes bringing basic skills closer to the sparsely populated areas also, but the Key Message 6 is proposing for direct measures to be taken in order to distribute the learning opportunities more evenly.

Box 2.A.

- Most focus is placed on Key Message 1 – Basic Skills for all, and Key Message 4 – Valuing learning
- The least focus is placed on Key Message 3 – Innovation in teaching and learning
- Emphasis is placed on both the lifelong (Key Message 1) and the lifewide (Key Message 4) dimension of learning
5.6 2.B. What are the aims of these strategies / policies (planned or implemented) concerning adults in Lifelong Learning?

Selected answers to the question
In Denmark: “Main priority is given to work with enhanced recognition of non-formal (and informal) learning.” (DK p. 12). The work mentioned in question 2.A. is seen not as a specific follow-up to the national consultation process, but rather as part of an ongoing European process, carrying further work in a European context of lifelong learning.

In Estonia there is a varied selection of strategies aimed at various focus areas all connected to lifelong learning:

Emphasis is on formal education, which will be acquired through formal education system. Through the whole project the emphasis will be on creation of education system that corresponds to the needs of learning society and offers to the community members' flexible possibilities to study throughout the whole life.

2) Project of Lifelong Learning Strategy (2002)
Several focus areas include:
- Political preconditions
- Economical preconditions
- Legal preconditions
- Organisational and informational preconditions

Development of the continuous training system in co-operation of state, entrepreneurs and professional unions shall offer lifelong learning continuous training to representatives of all fields on all levels. Priority is given to engineers and technicians.

It concentrates on time schedule of lifelong learning strategy, changes in law for creating learning possibilities for adult population, introducing of national priorities in adult education.

5) Joint Assessment of Employment Priorities in Estonia (JAP)
JAP doesn’t describe the goals and ways of developing the education system, but it shows clearly, that the education system has an important role to play in employment policy.

6) Pre-accession Economic Programme 2002
It is a strategic document that includes mid-long macroeconomic prognoses and fixes general goals of economic policy for next four years.

The document is aimed at the preparation of Estonia for implementation of European Union Structural Funds and it covers the fields that could receive additional financing from structural funds. National Development Plan of Estonia handles the need for education system including adult education development.

The aims of the Finnish policy lines determined in the 2000 state budget can be summed up into following points:
- The development of vocational competence-based qualifications
- Raising the level of education among the middle-aged population
- Strengthening the status of liberal education
- Third-age education and study services
Iceland states the following aims for their lifelong learning strategies: “Over the next five years, the government shall emphasise increasing lifelong learning with a campaign aimed at increasing the offering, demand for and quality of lifelong learning” (IS p. 3)

In Latvia the general aim of The Concept of Education Development 2002-2005 is to: "Ensure changes is the education system to promote the formation of a democratic and socially integrated society based on knowledge and the raising of competitiveness of Latvian population and national economy, and simultaneously to preserve and develop cultural values typical of Latvia" (LV p. 4)

The National discussions in Lithuania following the EU Memorandum has led to the 'Modification Project of the Lithuanian Law on Education and guidelines of Education (…) for 2003-2012', which define the goal of education as: “helping individuals to acquire modern cultural and social competence and to become a person, able to learn throughout life, assisting to acquire vocational qualification on the existing technological level, giving premises for constant need for knowledge and lifelong learning for new competence and qualification.” (LT p. 7)

Also Norway states a lifelong learning strategy with several elements each with specific aims (although is was started before the Memorandum discussion):

1) Early childhood education and care as a part of a lifelong perspective
Attending a ‘barnehage’/kindergarten can prevent social isolation for both children and parents and thus reduce the risk of early drop out from education

2) Make the initial education and training system more adaptable to lifelong learning
One of the main ideas of lifelong learning is a compact basic education, which allows extension of competence later in life

3) Great diversity of supply and variety of providers of adult education
A great diversity in supply is desired:
- The supply must be adaptable to the needs of the individuals and enterprises in respect of content, organisation and pedagogy
- Provision must be more independent of time and place
- Education shall to a greater extent be developed and given on demand and as in-service-training

4) Inclusiveness
Several measures have been taken to ensure that all groups are included

5) Working life as an arena for learning
Attention should therefore be granted to the Competence Reform initiatives so that as many as possible can complete their training without having to leave the labour market

6) Co-operation with the social partners.
The aim is to continue the tradition of involving employer’s organisations and employee’s organisations in the framing and implementation of education and training.

7) Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
One of the purposes is to bring on-line learning opportunities to practically the entire Norwegian workforce

8) Culture and Cultural Activity as an arena for Lifelong Learning
To grasp the complexity of lifelong learning, the perspective must be broadened to include the competence the children, youngsters and adults pick up being members of organisations etc. Participation and democracy is another important area.
**Sweden** notes the overall goal of the Swedish education policy is: “...that Sweden becomes a leading knowledge-based nation characterised by high quality lifelong learning for economic growth and justice. Education and continuing professional development are of central importance for democracy and the participation of out citizens in society”. (SE p. 6)

**Key Findings**
In general the aim is to strengthen the co-operation between the formal education system and the working life in order to raise competitiveness. As Finland states: “One of the main challenges for adult education and training is to find a response to the knowledge and competence needs arising from changes in working life in order to secure the occupational mobility and flexibility of 2,5 million members of the work force” (FI p. 8).

But in Norway, Sweden, Latvia and Lithuania the aims of the policies described also include democracy and personal development.

Box 2.B.

- The aims of the strategies are generally two-fold: developing personal competencies and preparing the basis for a competitive economy, with most focus put on the latter
- Estonia has a whole variety of strategies aimed at different aspects of lifelong learning in relation to the accession-process
- Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden aims at democracy and personal development also
5.7 2.C. What agreements (institutional, organisational, governmental) have been established to co-ordinate the strategy / policy in your country?

Selected answers to the question

DK: “As stated in the introduction to the country report, there is no comprehensive Danish strategy paper bearing the title “Lifelong Learning” (...). In the country report and in the annex we have described both the traditions including the strong role of the social partners as well as old and new legislation in the field of adult education.” (p. 13)

EE: “There are no governmental agreements to co-ordinate the adult education policy or lifelong policy” (p. 15) but “In January 2001 structure of Ministry and Education and Research was changed and adult education division was created to increase ministries role in adult education system development.” (p. 7)

FI: “The overall responsibility for the development of adult education and training rests with the Ministry of Education. The Ministry is assisted by the Adult Education Council consisting of representatives of different interest groups. (...) The National Board of Education, which is an expert body subordinate to the Ministry of Education, assists the Ministry in preparing decisions on education policy. The Ministry of Education and the National Board of Education regulate certificate-oriented adult education, i.e. education leading to qualifications.” (p. 2)

IS: no data available

LV: “At the moment there is no division responsible for the development of adult education in the ministry” (p. 4)

LT: “Implementing the Lithuanian Republic Law on Non-formal Adult education in 1998, the Non-formal Adult Education Council was founded (...). It is an expert institution defining the general perspectives of Lithuanian non-formal adult education development, providing expertise on nonformal adult education system development projects, co-ordination activities of nonformal adult education institutions.” (…) “Lithuanian Republic Ministry of Education and Science and Lithuanian Republic Ministry of Social security and Labor founded the Human Resource development Programme Support Foundation in August 22, 2002”. (p. 7)

NO: “The Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), The Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry (NHO), and The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) are in formal dialogue with the authorities through RFA and the training councils, and are also in direct contact and co-operations with the ministries on a range of issues.” (p. 8). Norway has established co-operative units, such as the Competence Reform Contact team and Forum for Competence and Work life (on governmental level). Also the partners involved in the Competence Reform are represented in steering committee of the Competence Development Programme

SE: “Government grants for popular education are administered by the Swedish National Council of Adult Education, which is a non-profit organisation established in 1991... (...) The Council is responsible for the distribution of government grants, as well as administration, organisation an, follow-up and evaluation of activities.” (p. 4)

Key Findings

Norway has established the Competence Reform Contact team as an overall supervising and co-operating unit. No other country has stated any formal or governmental agreement that co-ordinate the lifelong learning policy or strategy.

Historically and politically the Nordic countries have a long tradition of including and recognising social partners in the development of adult education. These councils work as sparring partners or as a consulting body for the government and Ministry of
Education, in questions about framework, legislation, provision etc. in relation to provision and supply of adult education.

Lithuania has recently established two councils who serve as expert institutions in questions concerning adult education.

Estonia has a division for adult education within the Ministry of Education and Research.

Box 2.C.

- The countries lack official, institutional or governmental agreements that co-ordinate lifelong learning policy, except Norway where the Competence Reform Contact Team co-ordinates the Competence Reform
- Consulting bodies, Adult Education Boards and various other divisions and councils are consulted by the governments in the countries.
5.8 2.D. What is the contribution / involvement of the level “adult education” as regards the lifelong learning strategy / policy?

Some countries might in fact have misunderstood the question, as they are not including any other educational areas than adult education as being affected by a lifelong learning strategy. In this case the question becomes meaningless, as the national outline only describes adult education in regard to the lifelong learning strategy / policy.

Selected answers to the question

DK: “Adult learning is the field where lifelong learning considerations are most frequently quoted in a Danish context”. (p. 13)

EE: “When somebody speaks about lifelong learning in Estonia mainly adult education is considered.” (p. 15)

FI: “The education system promotes implementation of the principles of lifelong learning giving young people a high level of education and, at the same time, the ability to participate in continuing education later in life. Additionally, the education system in Finland supports the educational needs of adults, so they may participate easily in versatile continuing education, which will be useful in their working lives”. (p. 6)

IS: no exact answer available

LV: “Later on it was decided that taking in mind an idea of life-long learning it is not useful to adopt special law on Adult education. More general items of adult education should be implemented in Law on Education, but more specific items in the Professional Education Law, General Education Law and Law on Institutions of Higher Education.” (p. 1f)

LT: “Theoretically it is recognized that “adult education is the major part of the lifelong learning system” in Lithuania (Concept, 1992)”. (p. 7)

NO: “The Competence Reform shall include and embrace all adults and is both an educational reform program and a labour market reform. A primary focus is the establishment of closer collaboration between the educational system an the workplace.” (p. 2)

SE: “Adult education should serve to support flexible and lifelong learning and to a greater extent fulfil people’s need for learning on the basis of individual wishes, needs and abilities.” (p. 5)

Key Findings

Lifelong learning and adult education seems to be inseparable parts of the same concept. However, by adhering to the EU-definition from “cradle-to-grave”, lifelong learning in principle should include early childhood and youth education, as well as adult education.

The Competence Reform in Norway emphasises that caring for and education of children and youth reduce the risk of early drop out from education and therefore is a prerequisite for lifelong learning (NO p. 4). Also Finland’s education system promotes implementation of the principles of lifelong learning by giving young people a high level of education (as well as providing the facilities for continuing education later on in life.) (FI p. 6)

Latvia will integrate adult education in their “ordinary” law on Education, and not have a specific law concerning lifelong education. This is a sign of adopting the lifelong learning approach, as they recognise that adult education cannot be separated from initial education in a lifelong learning perspective.
• Adult education is still the main “ingredient” in the countries conception of lifelong learning, but adhering to the “cradle-to-grave” definition of lifelong learning, the countries recognise childhood and youth education as focus areas as well
• Especially Norway and Finland incorporate children and youth education in their lifelong learning strategy
5.9 3.A. What are the main features if the projects implemented that realise the lifelong learning strategies/policies concerning adult learning in your country?

The set-up in this section is a little different. The countries’ descriptions of ‘good practices’ are divided into areas relating to the Key Messages. That way it is easier to get an overview of which programmes that can be considered for future action in relations to the Key Messages from the Memorandum. Some of the examples naturally cover more than one Key Message, but are only described once. Some of what can rightfully be considered ‘good practices’ are not listed in this section, but are found under Question 2.A and 2.B as descriptions of the policies and strategies implemented regarding adult education (e.g. the Norwegian Competence Reform or The Adult Education Initiative from Sweden etc.).

Key Message 1: New Basic skills for all

In Sweden in the municipality of Botkyrka a development programme called “Individual 2000” was launched with the aim of reaching inhabitants with low levels of education, especially immigrants, and encouraging them to resume their studies. One of the ambitions is to develop a cohesive infrastructure for adult learning, which makes the most of each individual’s knowledge, experience and interests. The project’s objective has also been to develop good methods for outreach activities and marketing to reach the set target groups. These outreach activities have been conducted using various methods. Information and guidance about studies and the labour market have been given:

- At club and union meetings
- At companies
- In different societies
- At shopping centres
- By knocking on doors
- Through street theatre performances
- At an education fair
- At local events such as markets and cultural events
- Via an Internet web site
- Via advertisements in the local press
- Through drop-in guidance sessions

From 2003 the municipal adult education in Botkyrka will consist of three divisions, with separate responsibilities:

- Botkyrka Learning Centre will be responsible for outreach activities, admission to upper secondary education, guidance and validation, procurement of flexible learning primarily in vocational subjects, orientations and motivation courses, the running of educational workshops, co-ordination of marketing activities, development of teaching methods and co-operation with other administrations and authorities
- Tumba Adult Education will be responsible for the provision of upper secondary adult education primarily in core and general subject, for college education programmes at university colleges and for the special schools for adults
- The Slagstad Strand Adult Education and Introduction Division is responsible for the implementation of basic adult education, for Swedish for immigrants, nurses’ training and the introduction of newly arrived refugees
“Development of Social Competencies and basic Skills for Adults” is a Latvian project funded by the Latvian Society Integration Foundation and implemented by the Latvian Adult Education Association (LAEA) in co-operation with 10 regional adult education centres in 2002. The objective was twofold: to foster social integration of ethnic and social minorities and to raise their social and basic skills in order to raise their employability.

The project is a follow-up on activities carried out in relation to a LAEA prison education project in 1997, and the IALS studies carried out by OECD and published in 2000. The project consisted of seminars held in 10 local, mainly rural, municipalities. 11 educators were prepared for the work and 189 participants took part.

The experiences gained in the project are summarised in a publication called “To learn, to understand, to use”. In this publication educators and organisers of the project share their experiences about methods used in the seminars, literature, case studies and personal reflections.

**Key Message 2: More investment in human resources**

The Lithuanian Phare 2001 initiative “Twinning Light” aims at on-the-job training, advice and other contributions to the development of the capacities of the Lithuanian civil servants to develop strategies in the areas of VET, CVT and lifelong learning, to draft proposals for White Paper and Action Plan on Lifelong Learning etc.

In Latvia in 1999-2001 the Latvian Association of Education for Adults in co-operation with the Nordic Folk Academy and the German Adult Education Institute implemented the project “Building Learning and Social Integration Pathways for Excluded Youth and Young Adults”. It is a project within the Socrates programme called “Development of transferable adult education modules and creation of a regional strategic adult education programme”. The aim of the project was to discover the actual circumstances in adult further education on rural Latvia, and to create personal developmental plans for youth (young people age 15-25). The target group was youth with primary education presently not studying or having a permanent job.

A significant effort was made to create and develop co-operation networks among governmental and municipal institutions, private and non-governmental enterprises in order to assist the target group to integrate in society, to find relevant education opportunities an to enter the labour market.

The aim of the project was *not* to create new work places or to link and take the participants to school. Instead a methodology was worked out in order to find out what kind of activities should be implemented in order to inform, raise motivation and interests of the target group. As a result of this the project participants investigated themselves, their own capabilities in their professional development and continuation of education.

The project will be continued in 11 other districts, and the materials have been compiled in the publication “Education for everyone – planning adult education and human resource development in 11 districts of Latvia”.

“The MOVE-project: sector co-operation, motivation and learning for people with a low level of educational attainment” is a Danish ‘good practice’. The joint educational entrepreneur offered education and training and job rotation projects in order to remedy the unemployment, but also to train the workforce in the business. To ensure the motivation of the participants, the courses were organised with emphasis on a supportive social environment, and the personal experience was made the point of departure for the learning. The creative and debating elements were given higher priority than target-oriented learning – in line with the special profile of adult liberal education. MOVE is co-financed by the EU ATTAK-programme.

Continuous Development Program for Lower-level Managers in AB Lietuvos Telekomas is an example of ongoing development of employees. It is aimed at promoting the initiative of long-life learning of managers while providing high-quality training services and applying innovative long-life training patterns. The training programme was aimed to facilitate in attaining sustainable professional, business and social competence of the lower-level managers, and the need for regular updating of knowledge became the stimulus in finding a new and innovative way for further improvement of knowledge – the Club of managers. The Club also serves as a means of encouraging managers to be more active in their own and their subordinates’ development process.

The training programme consists of two stages:
1. Training programme with 3 parts. 1) Factual information about the actual business, strategy, products and service. 2) Improving managerial skills and people management skills. 3) Improving knowledge and skills in the sphere of management of changes and communication.
2. Activities in the Club of Managers provide for furthering the process of development by innovative means like a follow-up or continuation of the Training Programme.

Key Message 3: Innovation of teaching methods
In 2000-2002 the Latvian Association of Education for Adults, together with the Nordic Folk Academy, the Lithuanian Association for Education for Adults and the Estonian Association of Non-formal Education for Adults were implementing a project for Adult trainers, called “Learning 4 Sharing/KomPas”. The main goal was to provide a possibility for Baltic adult educators to create training models for adult education practitioners.

Sub-goals of the project were:
• To develop criteria for the competence of trainers of adults and for their assessment
• To promote the training of adult trainers and multipliers in the participation countries
• Developing and implementing a new training programme

The expected results of the project in Latvia were:
• A new programme for training of adult trainers
• A “Handbook for Trainers of Adults”
• A draft of the white paper in training for trainers of adults
• A model for certification of trainers of adults
• Well-trained trainers/multipliers for training of adults.
The project delivered three main benefits:

1. The international work and networking provided new partnerships between different organisations and expertise on a wide range of topics, e.g. theory of adult education, adult education management, and civic education, distance learning and others.

2. The criteria defined for the competencies of adult trainers provide a new approach for the further training of adult educators: to focus on what are the characteristics of a good adult educator.

3. A new education for adult educators dealing with different groups of practitioners such as educators, social workers, in-service consultants, trainers etc.

Denmark notes that a good practice regarding new teaching methods is found in the project “Learning model under continued development from 1989 and onwards in Frit Oplysningsforbund – FO (independent adult education association)”. The target groups are employed and unemployed adults, who find themselves under pressure from demands for changes and adaptation, extending beyond the acquisition of formal professional competencies. The decisively innovative aspect is that teaching is directed simultaneously at all personal competencies during a course that integrate school-based subjects, creative and vocational activities, practical training, educational and vocational guidance and job search in a total personality developing courses. The basic idea behind is the non-formal and informal learning methods used in liberal education that gives inspiration and tools to enable the participants to decide on the agenda for their own development and learning.

In Lithuania “The Development of Distance Professional Learning System in Utena Target Region” is a Phare 2000 ESC project aiming to establish high quality service of distance education in the Utena region. The educational institutions co-operating in Utena region will deliver the services, and the network consists of two learning distance centres at Utena College and Visaginas Polytechnic School and six classrooms in Utena, Anyksciai, Alanta, Ignalina ans Zarasai. The starting date of the project is September 2002 and it ends in August 2003. Distance learning courses are being developed basing on the results of the market needs analysis. The courses will last for 2 months with 100 people being trained during the testing of the centres, classrooms and courses.

The Furubuda Competence Centre is a Swedish development project aimed at establishing a national resource centre with focus on education of adults with different handicaps. The Competence Centre increases the possibility of offering a varied selection of effort-areas to meet the wishes and needs of the individual student. The Furubuda Folk High School has also launched a Mentorship as Method-project aimed at educating teachers and staff with different educational backgrounds, so they become able to meet and strengthen the individual learner in achieving his or her individual target.

**Key Message 4: Valuing learning**

One example of good practice in Finland is found in the Competence-based Qualification System. It is designed for the adult population as a flexible way for taking a qualification. Knowledge, skills and experience are demonstrated in authorised tests of
competence. Adult students may demonstrate their vocational skills in competence tests regardless of how and where they have acquired the skills.

**Key Message 5: Guidance and information**

In Iceland the *Lifelong Learning Week* is held once a year. During that week the educational system, labour unions, local centres for lifelong learning and the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture work together promoting Lifelong Learning and educational opportunities.

Also Lithuania has held *Adult Learning Weeks* with information about adult education. The Adult Education Weeks unite the academic researchers and practitioners of adult education, producing a considerable influence and impact on the national system of adult education and promotion of lifelong learning in the society.

Norway, Finland, Denmark and Sweden are also having *Adult Learning Weeks*.23

**Co-operation between the municipalities** of Kalmar, Torsås and Mörbylånga in Sweden is a project that aims to reach people with information and guidance. This includes people who have left school early, but also people with disabilities. The initiative has led to an increase in the number of disabled people taking part in adult education.

One method has been to take the opportunity to provide information at events that people attend to take part in something else. Other outreach activities involve information stands on display in various locations, talking to people in their home environment on farms and out in the fields, a “Goofy Caravan” and a mobile computer training trailer, which makes it possible to provide computer training in remote rural areas without internet connections. A platform called *Which Way Next* is established so local inhabitants can receive information about available adult education opportunities. Which Way Next serves as a common point of entry for information about different educational alternatives, so information seekers only have to look for information in one place.

See also the Swedish Botkyrka initiative under Key Message 1.

**Key Message 6: Bringing learning closer to home**

In Estonia, the State and big enterprises have launched a very extensive project called ‘*Look at the World*’. The Look@World foundation started in April 2002 a project to provide free of charge basic computer and Internet training for 100,000 persons – the equivalent of about 10% of Estonian adult population. The target group of the project is all adults, who have not used computer and Internet before. The courses will take place at 200 points all over Estonia to achieve maximum geographical coverage. By February 2003 more than 4000 courses have been held to almost 38,000 people.

The overall objective of the project is to increase the number on Internet users in Estonia, and this is sought achieved by financing of public Internet access facilities, training of the public, and more favourable terms for purchasing computers. The aim of the project is to increase access to the Internet, make it more users friendly, provide

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23 According to the corrections given; nothing is stated in the national overviews
increased public sector services online, and help the private sector promote Internet use for obtaining information and services.

The 8 priority areas are:

**Accessibility**
1) Creation of public Internet Access Points
2) Looking for possibilities to reduce the price of home Internet connection
3) To include employers in order to bring computers to more families

**Training**
4) Basic training of computer and Internet use to 100,000 people
5) Teacher in-service training in use of computers and the Internet and creating easier access to the Internet

**Motivation**
6) Advertising of Internet use
7) Supporting development of services offered through the Internet
8) Finding support in society and to raise awareness of citizens.

“Computers for Beginners - a new approach for creating flexible e-courses” is a Latvian project for raising the computer literacy of employed people living in rural areas, in order to give the participants a chance to participate more fully in mainstream society.

The course lasted for 1 month and was organised in three face-to-face seminars in a computer lab. The rest of the month the students learned from CD ROM materials, which allowed them to study at their own pace. Their own professions and experiences were the starting point of the courses, in order to enable the students to use the computer and the gained knowledge in their everyday lives.

The course material was aligned with the European Computer Drivers Licence first level curriculum and divided into 18 chapters with clear learning objectives stated for every chapter. A few tests were added.

The course proved to be a success and several businesses, schools and National TV and radio showed interest in the project and helped financing and promoting a second similar project.

See also the Swedish ‘Co-operation between the municipalities of Kalmar, Torsås and Mörlånga project’ under Key Message 5

**Other good practices**
Latvian higher education institutions and municipal adult education centres participate in Grundtvig2 partnership projects (not described in further detail):
- A European basic model for validation of foreign professional competence
- DELOA – basis for designing a social economic intervention project of rural population
- European Summer Academy – sustainable development and implementation of concepts of intercultural learning
• Sustainable development and modern information technologies
• Best Practice to develop learning cultures for lifelong learning
• Theology – factory net
• Adapted adult education in prison and how to follow up after release
• CIAO! Communication via IT for adults on-line project
• Education and training in ecotourism
• Active citizenship in Europe.

The Multiplicity Project at Eslövs Folk High School/The University of Lund is a Swedish project aimed at decreasing the social exclusion and imbalance at University level by increasing the amount of adults from backgrounds who are underrepresented at university. The target groups are adults who have a foreign background or come from homes with no study traditions, and have recently left or dropped out of secondary schools or other adult education provision.

Key Findings
‘Good practices’ are found in relation to all the Key Messages listed in the Memorandum. Also ‘good practices’ in areas not directly related with the Memorandum is found in the countries.

Reforms, initiatives and strategies are found in all countries, and even though they are not listed as good practices, they contain elements of practice that can be of interest in relation to implementing these practices in other countries.

There is no apparent correspondence between the strategies and policies planned or implemented in relation to the 6 Key Messages from the Memorandum (question 2.A) and the ‘good practices’ carried out or implemented (e.g. Key Message 4 gets a high priority on policy level, but the countries lack examples of good practices on this particular field).

Especially Sweden focuses on increasing the access to education for adults with handicaps, and focuses also on research and development within this particular field.

Box 3.A.

• ‘Good practices’ are found in relation to all 6 Key Messages
• Special focus directed towards reaching adults with low or insufficient educational level
• Information and guidance get a high priority
• More investment in Human Resources also get a high priority
6 Central Themes

Dealing with the educational issues in the Nordic as well as the Baltic countries, some very interesting questions arise. 4 questions will be the pivotal point of the following comparative analysis.

6.1 Is it possible to trace a specific Nordic / Baltic dimension in regard to lifelong learning?

In chapter 2 and 3 the differences and similarities between the Nordic countries and the Baltic countries were explicated. Despite the interregional differences, the similarities on the historical level as well as the political and demographic level legitimise a division into the two regions. In the answering of the above question, it will be analysed if this division holds for the educational level also.

Macro-level

If we look at the macro-level some major interregional differences appear. This supports the thesis that it is also possible to distinguish between a Nordic and a Baltic dimension in adult education and lifelong learning.

In Chapter 2 the overriding factors for implementing lifelong learning strategies were stated. First of all the starting point is somewhat different for the two regions. Being members of the EU and having a stable democracy, a stable economy and a stable educational infrastructure, the Nordic countries’ lifelong learning policy can be seen as a superstructure that will lead the countries into the knowledge-based society.

The Baltic countries, on the other hand, have two focus areas to concentrate on. Firstly adult education can be used as a means of stabilising the economy, developing the democratic structures and creating the educational infrastructure. Secondly adult education is a means of bringing the countries on a competitive level in the knowledge-based society by raising the educational level of the countries’ citizens. This dual purpose, being both a democratic and an economic means, is a serious challenge to the Baltic countries.

In Chapter 3 the comparison of the different countries also suggests that it is possible to divide the countries into two regions. This division can among other things be justified due to similar public spending on education within the two regions.

Historically the Nordic countries are connected linguistically (except for Finland), socially and culturally, as are the Baltic countries. Both regions equally attach national importance to their specific region and more or less perceive themselves as being part of a certain region. On the institutionalised level a considerable co-operation among the governments and ministers within the regions are found. The Nordic Council was established in 1952, and the Nordic Council of Ministers was founded in 1971. Hence in the Nordic countries the political affiliations with each other go back a long time, and the welfare state has been an assembling factor for all countries.

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25 see also ‘www.norden.org’ – nordisk identitet
Similar political connections are found in the Baltic countries. The formal regional Baltic co-operation was established in 1934 with the signing of the Treaty of Good Understanding and Co-operation in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The Council of the Baltic States was founded in 1990 and the Baltic Council of Ministers was formally established in its present structure in 1994. The Baltic countries’ common destiny has also been underlined by the Soviet occupation.

When it comes to the answers given in the national overviews which all relates specifically to the (adult) educational field, there is some evidence that the initial division into two separate regions is still valid. Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland trace the origin of adult education back to the mid-19th century. This is also the case for Lithuania and Estonia. But because of the Soviet occupation, the liberal education tradition as exemplified by the folk high school-idea, has been neglected to a point where only a limited number of folk high schools are operating in the Baltic countries today, most of them also being non-residential\textsuperscript{26}.

**Micro-level**

If a division of the two regions should apply also for the micro-level, it should be possible to find two distinct traditions that also differ in their political and strategic educational make-up.

None of the countries officially provide a definition on lifelong learning, but the countries adhere to the European Commission definition on lifelong learning, which is conceived and used as the common definition. Also the amount of legislative framework is somewhat similar in all the countries, except for Denmark and Iceland that with many respectively few laws regulating adult education represent two extremes. It is not possible to place certain legislation under one specific region, as legislation regulating general education, liberal education, vocational education, higher education etc. is found in both regions.

The focus on vocational education and training and the attempt of finding a way of recognising and valuing non-formal and informal learning in relation to the formal educational structure cannot be limited to one region, either.

Countries in both regions also mention the significance of education in relation to the concept of democracy. However, in Sweden education is seen as having central importance for democracy and the participation of the citizens in society, and therefore can be viewed as a *preserving* component. In Latvia, on the other hand, the main aim is first and foremost to form a democratic and socially integrated society and therefore adult education can be seen as a *creating* component.

Only one of the ‘good practices’ described by the 8 countries, show a sign of regional coherence. Latvia describes the co-operation between NFA, Latvian Association of Education for Adult, Lithuanian Association of Education for Adults and the Estonian Association of Non-formal Education for Adults (see question 3.A). The Baltic countries also more often engage in projects or initiatives funded by EU, and especially Estonia and Lithuania have listed several EU-related projects (The Phare projects in Lithuania, Joint Assessment of Employment Priorities in Estonia and the Pre-accession Economic Programme in Estonia)

\textsuperscript{26} Kulich (2002), pp. 178-190
Summary
On the macro-level dealing with historical and political aspects, all evidence supports the thesis, that it is possible to trace a Nordic respectively Baltic co-operation. It is possible to divide the 8 countries into two more or less homogenous areas – the Nordic Region consisting of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, and the Baltic Region consisting of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

But moving down into the micro-level of policymaking, ‘good practices’ and definitions, the picture is not as clear. The answers produced in the national overviews don't give any support for the thesis, as no definition or no type of legislation is reserved solely for one region. All types of ‘good practices’ are also found in both regions. The only exception is found with the Baltic co-operation in the Learning 4 Sharing / KomPas adult trainer-project, described in the Latvian report.

So an unambiguous answer cannot be given to the question of a Nordic respectively Baltic dimension on lifelong learning, although it can be of practical value to distinguish between the two regions.

6.2 Are the differences of / within the regions sought maintained and is it possible/desirable in relation to EU?

The above-mentioned thesis suggests that there are some regional differences, which can justify a division into two separate areas. But at the same time the national overviews show that there are differences among the countries in each region. These differences are due to many factors: EU-membership, political status, economy, the composition of the population etc.

One of the key questions regarding these interregional differences is whether the differences are maintained or whether they are sought levelled out in relation to EU policy. The next question that immediately comes to mind is whether or not such differences can or should be maintained, especially in relation to the increasing influence from international institutions such as EU?

The first part of the question can only be answered by looking at the national outlines. There is no evidence in the national overviews that suggest that the countries actively seek to maintain their regional or national differences. The countries all recognise the EU definition of lifelong learning, and EU, which indicates the terms on which the funding is given, funds several projects. Also many of the policies and strategies are similar to the ones proposed by the Memorandum, showing that some harmonising of policies is taking place. Especially Denmark describes how the implementation of lifelong learning policies and strategies must be seen as a part of an on going European process; a process that didn’t stop with the national consultation on the Memorandum. (DK p. 12)

Countries outside EU like Norway and Estonia also explicitly describe that they closely follow the movements of the EU strategies in order to be able to act upon them. This can be regarded as a sign of ‘voluntary’ adaptation to EU standards.

One crucial point in relation to the question is that many of the initiatives launched in the Nordic countries, started before the Memorandum was presented. So even though some harmonising can be said to take place in both regions, and all countries seem to
closely follow the development and progress of the lifelong learning strategy in EU, the regions again have a different set-off. The Nordic countries are taking action prior to the Memorandum and the Baltic countries are taking action after the Memorandum.

In the Nordic case we therefore can note that they might in fact (unintentionally) maintain their regional characteristics. The Nordic dimension in adult education was already well established before the process accelerated in EU. And since many of the proposals for a common European strategy are actually aligned with the Nordic countries, it can be claimed that the Nordic approach to lifelong learning and adult education have had a significant impact on the Memorandum, and not the opposite way around.

In answering the second part, whether or not it is in fact possible to maintain the differences, we must turn to the background and prerequisites for the answers given.

A Memorandum of Lifelong Learning set forward by EU is the overall premise that the answers in the national overviews (especially in questions 2.A-2.C) are given in relation to. Several factors are worth to have in mind. First of all, only three countries (Denmark, Finland and Sweden) are at this point members of the EU and only these countries are therefore obliged to act on and follow the rules and regulations set by EU. Secondly, a decentralised approach is applied from EU in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, and the Memorandum states that: “It is the Member States who, in the first instance, are responsible for their education and training systems – each according to their institutional circumstances.”27 Thirdly, the Memorandum is not a directive, but serves as the starting point for a discussion regarding lifelong learning. This means that even though the Memorandum serves as a guide for the discussion and might be said to lead the way in the national debates, the countries are in fact free to choose their own approach on adult education matters, if they feel it is more reasonable. In other words, the countries are free to maintain national differences, or maintain their regional cooperation, if they so wish.

The third part of the question, whether or not it is desirable to maintain the regional differences is a highly political question. However, the question is addressed, as it is of utmost importance for discussing the development of the national strategies and policies on adult education and lifelong learning.

A reason for maintaining the regional characteristics
EU emphasises the importance of the principle of subsidiarity, and as such encourages maintaining the regional characteristics. At the structural level it is possible for one region to move forward in the same direction. The former analysis shows that there are no apparent barriers in relation to keeping one’s distinctive national character, and thus maintaining the differences within the regions.

At the historical and cultural level another aspect is added to the picture. Differences in education systems and structures are rooted in specific historical traditions and cultural premises. This applies not only for the two regions in question, but also for other regions in Europe. Distinct educational traditions can be traced, which still today have an impact on the respective education systems and their curricular all over Europe. This is worth noting because EU documents are created and suited to fit everyone’s “taste”. National educational policy can be said to be a result of these educational traditions,

27 A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, p. 5
which each value different types of knowledge, have different views on man, and have different philosophical backgrounds.

In a European context 4 different traditions can be listed: The essentialist tradition, the encyclopaedic tradition, the naturalist tradition, and the polytechnic tradition. The first 2 traditions are mainly connected with the British and the French educational traditions, and will not be elaborated further. Instead more attention is paid to the naturalist tradition and the polytechnic tradition, as these two historically have had a great impact on the Nordic and the Baltic region.

The naturalist tradition
This educational tradition is characterised by its emphasis on learner-centred pedagogy, the family/local community and focus on the working life. Especially the last 2 aspects have been in the centre of Nordic educational thinking. Initially inspired by the thoughts of Jean-Jacques Rousseau the naturalist tradition focus more on “reality”, that is life and learning outside the school environment. This is seen by the recognition of the educative aspects of the local community, especially in regard to development of democracy through engagement in the communities. Also the vocational and practical relevance as opposed to an academic relevance has been in the centre of Nordic education. There are several common naturalistic features that can be traced in the Nordic countries, even though Sweden holds a special position by a traditionally stronger centralisation.

The polytechnic tradition
This tradition was predominant in the Soviet Union, and through the Soviet hegemony found its way to the Baltic curricula. The polytechnic tradition is closely linked with educating children and young people to participating in society and to contributing to the economy, and therefore fitted in well with communist ideology. “Polytechnical education implies that education, in its widest sense, should be combined with production and the economic life of society”. On the other hand the Soviet polytechnical curriculum theory is more a theory of general education than of vocational education, as it insists that the building-up of a socialist consciousness is paramount to training young people to produce goods and services.

The educational tradition has to be taken into account when analysing the transition period in the case of the Baltic countries. But the underlying tradition also plays a role in how the Nordic countries are redefining their adult education strategy in relation to EU. Every educational influence from EU (or anywhere else) must be mirrored against the educational tradition, which penetrates the national education systems. And every internal resistance or structural rigidity that might occur might be due to the historical factors grounded in an underlying educational tradition. Even though the Baltic countries try to distance themselves from the Soviet influence, the transition period, especially regarding adult education, seems long and often up-hill. “The States, for the most part, treat adult education as a child and a relic of Communism, giving it no support.”

To avoid too many structural drawbacks and minimise the internal resistance, changes must be made with close consideration to the educational tradition however unwanted it is. So even though changes are wanted and needed, they must come slowly. Just changing the system for the sake of changing and level out regional and interregional

differences might give more problems than maintaining the regional characteristics. It could also be advantageous to establish and develop the educational infrastructure on the base of the regional similarities already established in the Baltic countries.

To the previous question the answer was given that the Nordic countries actually manage to influence EU policy on the area of adult education. If the Nordic countries want to have a continuous impact on policy-making in EU and maybe even contribute more to that process, a common Nordic approach characterised by being mutual respectful and effective and an elaborated regional co-operation could be of value. This might call for an even tighter and more standardised co-operation within the region. This solution is not new, but has been stated in The Golden Riches in the Grass in 1995. “The Nordic countries have excellent opportunities of complying with the recommendations issued by the EU, and of exerting an influence on development of lifelong learning in Europe, if we succeed in achieving a visible profile and developing our own distinctive profile”. 30

A reason for not maintaining the regional characteristics

The overall strategic goal for EU in the next decade has in the Presidency Conclusions from the Lisbon Meeting in 2000 been defined as becoming the world’s most dynamic knowledge-based economy.

In the succeeding Communication from the Commission “Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality” several target areas are prioritised in striving to accomplish the overall strategic goal set at the Lisbon Meeting. These target areas are developed on the basis of the national discussions following the Memorandum and are very similar to the 6 Key Messages identified in the Memorandum. One of the key words relating to this process is transparency. The Communication distinguishes between the strategies that need to be implemented on the formal level (standardisation of certificates, diplomas etc.) and on the informal and non-formal level (how to recognise and value these types of learning.

One of the aims of the European Community is to improve the quality of education in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century and to achieve the strategic goal. The Communication encourages the Member States to co-operate, support and stimulate the process of implementing lifelong learning.

Especially on the formal level a standardisation of the national differences can be desirable and will create a more transparent system. Increased transparency is intended to promote social mobility, flexibility and education across the borders.

A levelling out of the national differences could also be desired as a means of recognising and valuing informal and non-formal learning. The fewer the regional differences, the easier it is to create a transparent and coherent system across Europe, and hence improve the quality of education so Europe becomes the world’s leading knowledge-based economy.

In the Baltic case the polytechnic tradition have been the underlying principle for Baltic adult education (and education in general), which is considered a limiting factor in terms of reforming the education system. The national overviews show that they consider educational reform to start with the independence from the Soviet regime giving a fresh start and a new perspective on educational needs and matters (LT p. 1; EE p. 2; LV p. 1).

30 The Golden Riches in the Grass, p. 57f
The Baltic countries are looking for an alternative educational approach that can support and enhance their efforts to reform the education system and develop a democratic society. And if this means that differences need levelling out, this could be a step worth taking.

Summary
As mentioned above this question is a highly political one, and as such must be left to the national parliaments to decide upon. Seen from a national perspective there is nothing that prevents a country from choosing another path than the one set forward by EU, not even being a Member State. On the other hand, increased transparency and close co-operation are some of the means of achieving the goals for the Community and will enhance the chances of becoming the world’s leading economic and educational factor. This is a tempting prospect, not only for the Member States and acceding countries, but also for the neighbouring countries in the region. As the Communication states: “The key challenge, therefore, is to ensure that Member States remain free to develop their own coherent and comprehensive strategies, and to design and manage their own systems, while moving forward in the same direction.”

Seen from a specific Nordic point of view some harmonising of the educational systems, when it happens as a consequence of Nordic influence, give the Nordic countries a special status in regard to further development of other areas in Europe. Also the Nordic countries can contribute to set the standards based on the long tradition of adult learning already established in the countries. But this might demand an increased co-operation, as the Nordic countries, in order to achieve maximum influence, must speak with “one voice”.

The Baltic countries will by increased standardisation receive a new and alternative approach to adult education that will distance them more from the former Soviet polytechnic educational tradition and help to make a more definite separation. But there are several dangers in adopting an alternative educational tradition unconditionally. One of them is that the educational structures are too rigid to incorporate new thoughts. Another one is that teachers and students need time to adjust to new modes of thinking and teaching. A third problem is that an EU approach doesn't necessarily is a good example as the other European countries themselves fight problems like unemployment, racism, poverty, social differences and corruption – problems that have arisen despite stable economies and democracies. To get the best lifelong learning policy, the borrowing from other countries must be measured against the national characteristics and educational traditions.

Kulich colourfully describes the prospects of future co-operation for the two regions: “If we resist the temptation as ‘do-gooders’ to force our models and solutions on the quite different situation and needs in the region, and if our colleagues there will resist the temptation for ‘quick fixes’ and for accepting uncritically models from abroad, and if they learn from their own past, they themselves will enrich significantly our knowledge and practice of individual and social change, and the role adult education can play in these processes.”

31 The Commission, Making an European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality, p. 25
6.3 Is the Nordic understanding of lifelong learning different from the one proposed by the EU, and is there a Nordic contribution to EU lifelong learning policy?

The answers given in the national overviews indicate that there are no definite and common understandings of lifelong learning. This third question will try to define the characteristics of the Nordic understanding of adult education, as to cast light on the similarities and differences between the Nordic understanding of lifelong learning and the EU ditto.

As the question 6.1 indicated a common Nordic tradition can be traced. But it can be difficult to speak of a special Nordic model in a strict sense, as the ‘good practices’ and the policies and strategies show, that the Nordic countries have chosen different ways of implementing and approaching lifelong learning.

But traditionally the co-operation between the countries has been strong, and they share the same historical, political, linguistic and demographic background, which has, as it has been shown, had a significant influence on the education system in all of the Nordic countries. A high standard of living and high levels of social equality and social security, universal participation in the labour market and in the democratic process are all considered to be part of a common Nordic norm. Also the naturalistic educational tradition caters for a common history of education that colours the Nordic understanding of lifelong learning. This background is most vividly seen in the liberal adult education approach and the emphasis on the informal and non-formal types of learning.

A further elaboration on this specific Nordic contribution to educational thinking can be the key to understand the role the Nordic countries have or can (or might) play in the European lifelong learning debate.

The concept of people (folk) can be seen as the key word in the Nordic tradition of adult education. In the liberal adult education tradition, “folkeoplysning”/people’s enlightenment is seen as an essential idea founded by Grundtvig and manifested in the folk high schools. To fully grasp the nature of this tradition a further definition on the concept ‘folk’ is necessary. “There is an ineluctable relationship between folkeoplysning and the concept folk. Without the folk component, the term loses its meaning”34. The Danish scholar Ove Korsgaard distinguishes between 3 different definitions of folk. ‘Folk’ as a social category is used prior to the establishment of democracy. ‘Folk’ as a political category/demos has its origin in the French revolution, where ‘the people’ was introduced as a sovereign entity, marking the shift to democracy. ‘Folk’ as a cultural category/ethnos originated in Germany, where the perception of a distinctive folk bound together by a common language, history and spirit, irrespective of the form of governance.

The ‘folkeoplysning’ tradition is associated with all three categories, although the association changes over time, and differs slightly from country to country. ‘Folkeoplysning’ is not solely reserved to one definition of ‘folk’, but refer to the education of people as a social, a political as well as a cultural category.

33 The Golden Riches in the Grass, p. 17
34 Korsgaard (2002), p. 8
This position is also expressed in the naturalist tradition where focus is put on the community in the development of a democratic society and is also mentioned various places in the national outlines (e.g. DK p. 2, NO p. 9; SE p. 6)

This could be the “secret” of the Nordic understanding of the concept lifelong learning compared to the understanding given by the EU Memorandum.

In relation to the EU Memorandum the concept of lifelong learning has mainly been connected with promoting employability and creating the basis for further economic growth. Even though promoting active citizenship and promoting employability are put forward as two equally important aims for lifelong learning in the Memorandum, most emphasis throughout the paper is put on economic growth, needs of the labour market and the competitiveness of the EU. As it is stated in the final Swedish report from the national consultations following the debates launched by the Memorandum: “The Memorandum is written mainly from an employment perspective and this permeates large parts of the labour market requirements and the skills required in the knowledge-based economy.” Also in the corresponding reports from Denmark and Finland specific comments are made that the focus on employability in the Memorandum takes away focus on active citizenship, the development of democracy and personal development as a target area for adult education.

If the EU position is to be integrated into the above definition of folk in relation to the Nordic folkeoplysnings-tradition, the Memorandum explicitly deals with folk as a social category; e.g. unemployed adults with a low level of basic education.

Instead the Nordic countries ask for a more comprehensive view on folk, adding the demos-aspect, as well as a personal development element which can be regarded as in line with the more humanistic view on lifelong learning originally proposed by UNESCO.

The Nordic impact can be traced in the succeeding communication from the Commission Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality, published approximately one year after the Memorandum. This document is in line with the overall European lifelong learning strategy, but is also taking into consideration the comments and experiences collected from the national debates on the Memorandum. Especially one chapter (chapter 1.4) takes a few steps away from the former EU education policy that lie close to the labour market and employment policy. In the communication the two goals from the Memorandum are divided into four mutually supporting objectives: personal fulfilment, active citizenship, social inclusion, and employability/adaptability. Also the lifewide dimension of learning receives more attention in the communication from the Commission.

In the process of creating a democratic super-national structure, EU can advantageously look to the Nordic countries for inspiration. A democratic EU demands the development of a European demos, and, according to Korsgaard, the Nordic folkeoplysnings can serve as a midwife, as it happened in the mid-19th century when folkeoplysnings played a significant part in establishing democratic citizenship within the frame of the Nordic nation-states.

35 A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, p. 5  
37 Korsgaard (2002), p. 15
Summary
The Nordic “folkeoplysnings”-tradition is still of value and interest, not only to the Nordic countries and surrounding areas, but also in whole of the EU. In the process of creating a democratic structure, that will facilitate the creation of a European citizen, the Nordic adult education approach can prove to be helpful. The focus on several perceptions of the concept folk can give the lifelong learning debates new input and add interesting aspect to the creation of a comprehensive and co-operative European union. But this demands that the Nordic countries can maintain a common strategy, which can enhance their influential powers. Also required is the willingness and openness of other European areas to adapt the Nordic view on adult education.

6.4 Are the Baltic countries’ lifelong learning strategy influenced more by EU than by the Nordic countries, and what are the consequences of such a choice?

On the basis of the national overviews it is not possible to establish an ‘either or’ from where the Baltic countries are most influenced.

Nordic Influence
There are indicators that point to Nordic influence. Lithuania mentions the support received from several Nordic partners (Nordic Council of Ministers, Nordic Folk Academy, each individual Nordic country) and the German partners in establishing the Lithuanian Adult Education Association. This report, the conference “A Human Touch – adults learning with a difference” and the co-operation following this conference are also signs of the Nordic-Baltic co-operation, and it is most likely to influence the lifelong learning strategies in the Baltic countries (as well as in the Nordic countries) in the future. Also the support on political level shows that the influence from the Nordic countries is considerable.

There are good reasons for looking this way for inspiration. In the democratisation process of the Baltic education system, the Nordic countries can contribute with democratic “expertise” as well as a clear notion of how to educate and engage people in their local communities. Also the historical connections between the regions and the fact that both regions are placed in the perimeter of Europe, makes the Nordic influence understandable. The Nordic countries also have a substantial experience in navigating as small countries on the European political scene, which might be another reason for the Baltic countries to look for Nordic influence.

EU influence
On the other hand all the Baltic countries mention projects, initiatives or reforms initiated or supported by EU (e.g. the Phare initiatives in Lithuania, several Grundtvig2 partnership projects in Latvia, the Joint Assessment of Employment Priorities in Estonia and Lithuania). The accession-process might be the motivation for these priorities. It is a natural process as the countries are gearing their systems to adapt to the new European approach and way of thinking, as well as creating the basis for transferability and mobility among the other Member States.

The common feature of those projects is that they some way or another are related to vocational training and the labour market policies. This is in line with the focus that EU hitherto has put on the labour market and employment aspects of lifelong learning.
The Baltic countries also have several good reasons for choosing EU as the main influential partner. First of all is it part of the accession process and will make future co-operation easier, but it is also necessary in order to create a flexible, mobile and transparent system that can lead the whole area into the knowledge-based society on the same level as the other Member States. Another reason could be that EU has dispose of considerable funds, which can help re-build the whole adult education area. A third reason could be that looking to EU for policy advice and ideas would leave out one link in the decision-making process. Because the Nordic countries can be said to have a reasonable influence on the lifelong learning policy in EU anyway, there is no reason why the Baltic countries should look only to the Nordic countries for inspiration, as they can get the same Nordic ideas by looking to the EU.

**Summary**

There is no easy answer to where the Baltic region should turn for inspiration or where they are able to influence the most themselves. Many factors need to be considered. But the historical, political and societal connections already established between the Baltic and the Nordic regions are a good foundation for future regional co-operation within the EU. But the national overviews suggest that the Baltic countries are looking more and more to the EU for support and project funding, which can take their adult education and lifelong policies in direction that lead away from the Nordic path.

One of the consequences of such choices might be that the tight bonds between the Nordic and the Baltic countries loosen a little, which will affect all countries in the region. The Baltic Sea region has an outstanding opportunity of influencing the EU policies on various matters. If the close co-operation will cease to exist, the whole Baltic Sea Area will miss out on important influence by not speaking with “one voice”.
7 Concluding Remarks

The interplay of lifelong learning and adult education is receiving more and more attention. The national governments are reacting on the demographic and societal changes described in the Introduction. The increase in number of older people, the changes in work culture, and the need for constant development to meet the requirements of the labour market and society, all pose severe challenges to the continuous development of modern societies.

Internationally as well as nationally there seems to be a general consensus that lifelong learning is one of the best ways of reacting to ensure this societal and economic development.

But at the same time there are many opinions about how to implement, develop and facilitate lifelong learning in order to cater for people’s as well as society’s needs and requirements.

These concluding remarks will try to sum up on the 8 countries’ answers.

- In general the countries are taking the societal changes seriously. In the 1970’s when an increase in marginalized persons were found some of the countries responded by offering educative measures. Also faced with the demands from the labour market and the demographic changes today, new legislation regulating adult education is passed.

- Extensive debates on lifelong learning are held, especially following the EU Commission’s Memorandum on Lifelong Learning.

- All countries report some good practices, which means that initiatives are actually launched and are working according to the plans set forward by each country.

- No official definition is presented, but the countries adhere to the definition offered by EU.

- Some of the countries have launched comprehensive strategies for lifelong learning including children and youth education, and well as formal, non-formal and informal learning arenas. This is a sign of recognition of the “cradle-to-grave” approach within a lifelong and lifewide framework.

- Information and guidance are major elements in the initiatives and practices launched by the countries. This is carried out in Adult Learning Weeks and by outreach activities in certain target areas.

Even though the countries are well on their way in implementing lifelong learning strategies, it is important to note that the development of an all-inclusive lifelong learning strategy, both on national and international levels must be subject to an ongoing discussion as several concerns lie within.
With the intense focus on lifelong learning, some major shifts in the conception of certain aspects are happening. Originally education was conceived as a state responsibility in order to enlighten its population. But as it is stated in the Swedish report: “Lifelong learning means that the responsibility is shifted from the state to the individual. Its realisation is dependent on the individual, how motivated he is and his ability to search for and make the most of opportunities in the sea of learning” (SE p. 7). This is a heavy duty on the shoulders of individuals that might not have positive experiences with schooling and education, and they might not be motivated to or capable of pursuing lifelong learning opportunities.

Another consideration to make is that the increased official focus on the lifewide dimension poses a danger to the non-formal and informal learning arenas. In trying to recognise and value those two types of learning the risk appears of taking away the joy and spontaneous nature from the non- and informal learning arenas. This will have catastrophic consequences, as those are some of the characteristics of these two forms of learning. Learners and students choose non-formal and informal learning to escape the pressure and stress of formal education and to enjoy the personal developing aspects. To try to decrease the gab between informal, non-formal and formal learning by standardising and bridging the three different forms of learning can alienate learners and instead of enhancing the outcome, maybe even achieve the opposite.

Many of the statements regarding lifelong learning have a superior and paternalistic tone, where the individual is given no alternative than to learn throughout his or her life. In once sense it is true, that the human development at no stage in life must be regarded as completed, but it doesn’t necessarily follow that one has to be exposed to systematic and organised education until the very end. All kinds of initiatives and programmes are already launched to reach everybody, and constant learning is regarded as the most important element of living in the 21st century because stagnation is a sign of fiasco. People risk being forced to resume studies, take study leaves, or constantly acquire new competencies in order to keep a simple job, because the amount of overqualified unemployed workers is increasing, and because stability almost appears as the certain death regarding one’s future. Thus the concept of lifelong learning risk turning into a “totalitarian” concept, where individuals cannot escape well-intentioned learning efforts.

One of the aspects that hasn’t been touched upon in this report is the specific content of lifelong learning, that is which subjects must be taught at what stages in life to live up to the demands from the knowledge-societies. All the countries agree that basic skills are most important, and that computer and Internet skills also are necessary. But besides those “hard skills”, focus is put on the “soft skills”. The “soft skills” have become important in order to “learn to learn”, and to meet the fast societal changes. Personal competencies such as flexibility and adaptability, social competencies, democratic competencies, problem-solving, personal development etc. become the new target for educational efforts. These competencies have traditionally been acquired in the non-formal and informal settings and as such they are acquired on an optional basis. But now the “soft skills” are subject to formal interest are sought measured, valued and validated in relation to formal qualifications. One of the challenges for policy makers, NGO’s and adult educators is to create a curriculum that foster those personal skills and prepare the individual to be adaptable without losing sight of the individual adult’s right voluntarily to choose what he or she wants to learn.

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38 Sennett (1999) p. 95
Implementing lifelong learning is not an easy task. Many aspects must be considered in both regions, including prerequisites for policymaking, educational tradition, demographic structure, educational content, economic parameters, and not least, individual choices, preferences and needs. This report is based on the national overviews, which are examples of the considerations, the countries are making regarding lifelong learning. Important discussions are started and legislative framework has been set up. But to guide the future work the countries must have an underlying notion of what constitutes a good society and how such a society is achieved. There are, however, as many opinions about this as there are countries in the region, which is the reason for the difficulties in implementing a lifelong learning strategy that appears as a comprehensive and satisfying learning opportunity for all. But it also underlines the importance of continuous exchanging of ideas, co-operation and inspiration within regions, as new perspectives will be added to one’s own efforts to create a good society for all.
8 Future Discussion Points

The following points are based on what seems to be missing in the strategies, policies and initiatives presented in the reports. They should primarily serve as a departure point for further discussion in the countries as well as within the regions. It is intended that the points can be discussed at all levels, by NGO’s, governments and practitioners. Naturally they do not apply for all countries, as some of the countries have already discussed and reached agreements on the issues.

- Definitions of lifelong learning suitable for each individual country
- Integration of primary, secondary and adult education into a comprehensive lifelong learning
- A supervising body to co-ordinate lifelong learning strategy and policy
- Creation of systematic knowledge on the field of lifelong learning
- Implementation of policy and strategy into good practices
- The possibility of a specific Nordic approach in order to increase influence
- The possibility of a the specific Baltic approach in order to increase co-operation
- Integrating alternative lifelong learning strategies in accordance with the educational tradition
- Specific target areas as wells as overriding societal goals
- A specific curriculum content in order to achieve the goals
- Alternatives to a ‘totalitarian’ concept of lifelong learning
- How to ‘bring learning closer to home’ and maintain the democratic aspects of non-formal and informal learning
9 Appendix 1

List of the laws regulating adult education in the 8 countries

Denmark:

**Liberal Adult education**
- Consolidated Act No 479 of 31 May 2000 on folk high schools, continuation schools, home economics and textile design schools
- Consolidated Act No 924 of 5 October 2000 as amended by Act no 149 of March 2002 on allocation of financial support to Adult Liberal Education, association life, etc.

**General Adult Education**
- Consolidated Act No 658 of 3 July 2000 on Special teaching for Adults with Handicaps (physical or mental).
- Consolidated Act No 668 of 7 July 2000, as amended by Act No 145 of 25 March 2002, on General Adult Education (AVU) and Adult Education Centres (VUC).

**’Vocationally Oriented Adult Education and Training’ (continuing and further education and training)**
- Consolidated Act No 870 of 23 October 2002 on VET, including Adult VET.
- Act No 488 of 31 May 2000, as amended by Consolidated Act No 905 of 12 September 2000 and Act No 343 of 16 May 2001, on Basic Adult Education (GVU) and three advanced levels of further education in the Adult Education System.

**Provision, financing, counselling, support/allowance schemes etc.**
- Consolidated Act No 311 of 13 May 2002, on Open Education (Vocationally Oriented Adult Education) etc. This act regulates the terms, including financial terms, of provision of vocationally oriented adult education at all levels, from VET etc. to continuing and further education at higher levels; the Amendment Bill on Labour Market Training proposes that CVT is also included).
- Consolidated Act No 310 of 13 May 2002 on the Labour Market Institution for Financing of Education and Training (AUF) (financing terms for CVT and VET single subject provision for adults, as part of the Adult Education Reform 2001 – the Amendment Bill on Labour Market Training proposes that this Act, which has already been amended in 2002, is now repealed).
- Act No 418 of 6 June 2002 (later technical amendments in 2002) on Institutions of Vocational Education and Training [new common legislation for VET schools and CVT centres]
• Consolidated Act No 308 of 13 May 2002 on Centres for Higher Education and other independent or self-governing institutions of higher education etc. [institutions for medium-cycle higher education, both initial education and further education].
• Act No 490 of 31 May 2000 (later technical amendments in 2000) on State Education Support for Adults [covering General Adult Education at lower and upper secondary level including Preparatory Adult Education as well as further education at higher levels]
• Consolidated Act No 600 of 26 June 2002 on allowance to adults [CVT and VET single subjects for adults]
• Consolidated Act No 1177 of 22 December 1999 on Universities (amendment Bill is currently under preparation)

Estonia:
General adult education:
• **Adult Education Act (1993).** The law has following chapters: general issues, provision of training, organisation of training, and financing of training. The Law has changed since 1993, but the changes have been relatively small.

Vocational adult education
• **Vocational Educational Institutions Act (1998)** and based on that Education Minister’s Regulation (2001) regulate work-related training possibilities of adults in vocational schools. Government’s Decree based on Vocational Educational Institutions Act regulates ensuring study possibilities for people with special needs.

Higher education and private adult education
• **Applied Higher Education Institution Act (1998)** and **Universities Act (1995),** both changed in 2002 and 2003. Estonia has set the goal to join the Bologna process and that is the main reason of making changes.
• **Private School Act (1998)** regulates creation and operation of private schools. According to the law all private training institutions that provide training more than 120 hours have to create a private school and apply for a licence in Ministry of Education and Research.

Labour market related adult education
• **Employment Service Act (2000)** regulates provision of Labour Market Services for job seekers and unemployed people. It gives to unemployed people possibilities to apply for vocational counselling and Labour Market training. Under Labour Market training is understood work-related training or other training, which helps adaptation to the Labour Market.
• **Social Protection of the Unemployed Act (2000)** regulates social guarantees for unemployed people. One of them is scholarship for work-related training, which is provided for unemployed persons, who participate at least 80 hours in work-related training.
• **Rural Development and Agricultural Market Regulation Act** (2000, changed in 2002) creates possibilities to offer training support to people from agricultural sector

Finland:
• **The Vocational Education Act (630/1998)**, effective from the beginning of 1999, governs the organisation of curriculum-based upper secondary vocational education and training for both young and adult students.

• **The Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998)** provides for the upper secondary vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications taken in competence test irrespective of the method of acquiring the vocational skill, as well at the preparatory training for the tests.

• **The Liberal Adult Education Act (632/1998)**, according to which institutions of liberal adult education include adult education centres, folk high schools, study centres, physical education centres and summer universities. The Act determines that the purpose of liberal adult education is to support the development of individuals and the realisation of democracy and equality in the basis of the principle of lifelong learning.

**Iceland:**

• **The upper secondary School Act, Law no. 80 from 11th of June 1996**

**Latvia:**

• **Education Law from October 29, 1998** (section 49) regulates adult education programmes.

• **General Education Law from June 10, 1999** regulates general secondary education. There is no specific section for adults, but adults are allowed to acquire general secondary education and receive the same documents as full time students.

• **Professional Education Law from June 10, 1999** determines 2 new types of vocational programmes: 1. Further vocational education programmes (formal education programmes) and 2. Continuing vocational education programmes (non-formal education programmes).

• **Law on Higher Education Institutions from November 2, 1995** regulates formal education for adults. To ensure the process of lifelong learning higher education institutions are providing distance education and continuing education courses.

**Lithuania:**

• **Republic of Lithuania Law on Employment from 1990** (from 1999, the Law on Support of the Unemployed) regulate individuals right to vocational training in order to acquire necessary skills or to upgrade their qualifications.

• **Republic of Lithuania Law on Education from 1991** establishes the foundation governing the structure, activities and management of educational institutions (except higher institutions). The major goal is “to provide possibilities of a continuing education for the residents of Lithuania.”

• **Republic of Lithuania Law on Vocational Education and Training from 1997** establishes the structure and administration of the VET system based on the cooperation of the state government institutions and social partners.

• **Republic of Lithuania Law on non-formal adult education from 1998** aims “to regulate the system of Non-formal education, establish the basic principles of its structure, activities and management. The objective is “to provide participants, providers, and social partners with legislative guarantees, to help the implementation of inborn human right for lifelong development of one’s personality, to warrant individual with opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills it requires to be a citizen of democratic state and to be specialist in a certain profession, to contribute for the creative and sensible use of leisure”
Norway:
Following reforms are the most important in terms of fulfilling the objectives and key elements of the Norwegian LLL model:
• a core curriculum was implemented in 1993
• early childhood education and care: The day-care Institution Act in 1995
• Primary and Lower Secondary Education: Reform 97
• Upper secondary education: Reform 94
• Higher Education: Reorganisation in 1994
• A quality reform in higher education 2001-2004
The Competence Reform – a major ongoing national reform of adult education that is both an educational reform and a labour market reform.

The following laws are stated as regulating adult education:
• Law on Distance Education (originally from 1948, but in 1993 submitted under the Law on Education)
• Act of Folk High Schools (from 1948/49) dealing with liberal adult education
• Law on Education (from 1977) including the right to basic education (passed in 2002) and secondary education (passed in 2000)
• New Act of Folk High Schools dealing also with formal education for adults (2003)
• Law on Competence Assessment dealing with competence assessment in relation to secondary and higher education and working qualifications (passed in Feb. 2003)

Sweden:
• The Municipal Adult Education system was established in 1968.
• In 1982 Lvux 82 was implemented as the curriculum for the municipality adult education, and adult’s educational opportunities were highlighted by means of a special Adult Education Act.
• The Education Act (1985:1100) formulates the objectives for adult education
• The Government bill Adult Learning and the Development of Adult Education (2000/01:72)
10 Reference Documents

Denmark:  
No reference documents are mentioned except the ones included in the report

Estonia:  
Books  
• Märja, T; Käpp, E. Past, Present and Future situation in Adult Education in Estonia. The Institute for International Co-operation of German Adult Education Association. 1994

Legal acts:  
• Adult Education Act  
• Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act  
• Vocational Education Institutions Act  
• Applied Higher Education Institution Act  
• Universities Act  
• Private Schools Act  
• Employment Service Act  
• Social Protection of the Unemployed Act  
• Rural Development and Agricultural Market Regulation Act

Web sites:  
• Ministry of Agriculture – www.agri.ee  
• Ministry of Finance – www.fin.ee  
• Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication – www.mkm.ee  
• Ministry of Social Affairs – www.sm.ee  
• Project Look at the World – www.vaatamailma.ee

Finland:  
No reference documents are mentioned except the ones included in the report

Iceland:  
No reference documents are mentioned except the ones included in the report

Latvia:  
No reference documents are mentioned except the ones included in the report

Lithuania:  
• General Concept of Education in Lithuania – Vilnius 1994  
• Law on Non-formal Adult Education (1998)  
• Law on Support of the Unemployed, No. I-1191, 01-02 1996  
• Law on VET (1997)  
• National Development Plan 2002-2004  
• Order of the Minister of Education and Science No. I-1353, Concerning the Temporary Procedure of the Assessment and Recognition of Knowledge and Skills Gained through Non-formal and Informal Training, 01-10-2001  
• Vet-related Laws. Lithuania, National Observatory in Lithuania, 1997
Norway:
No reference documents are mentioned except the ones included in the report

Sweden:
- Municipality of Botkyrka, *Application for government grant for the development of adult learning and Application for government grant for adult education in 2003*
- Municipality of Botkyrka, *Newsletter about the Adult Education Initiative*
- Municipality of Botkyrka, *Project application for “Individual 2000”*
- Municipality of Kalmar, *Application for government grant for the development of adult learning and Application for government grant for adult education in 2003*
- Government Bill 2000/01:72, *Adult Learning and the development of adult education*
- The National Agency for Education 2000, *Lifelong and lifewide learning*
11 Literature and Sources

Primary Literature:

- National overviews from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden

Secondary literature:

• *Presidency Conclusions*, Lisbon European Council, 23 and 24 March 2000


**Internet Sources:**

• http://europa.eu.int
• http://island.org
• http://www.bcmvs.net
• http://www.eu-oplyssningen.dk
• http://www.europahuset.no
• http://www.eurydice.org
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• http://www.ijnet.org/Archive/2001/4/6-9085.html
• http://www.norden.org
• http://www.vaatamaailma.ee
• http://www.youropa.dk