A traditional definition of lifelong learning is “all learning activity conducted throughout life with the goal of enhancing knowledge, skills, and competences within a personal, civic, societal, or employment-related viewpoint” (European Commission, 2001). Over the years, the European Union has placed a strong emphasis on the development of the knowledge triangle “education, innovation, and research,” as well as the development of skills. Lifelong learning has been deemed a high political priority by numerous EU organizations with a series of decisions and resolutions (European Commission, 2021). It has been acknowledged that to ensure an individual's life development and self-fulfillment, it is vital to regularly update knowledge and competences as a result of increasing skill differentiation and globalization.

To sustain Austria's high standard of living and social cohesion, citizens' high levels of qualification must be further enhanced, and less educated people must be drawn into the modern knowledge society. Five core principles guide Austria's Lifelong Learning Strategy: life phase orientation (all ages), learners at the center, lifelong guidance meaning facilitating the learning process, competence orientation (recognition of informal learning), and promotion of lifelong learning participation. Some main challenges include providing free second-chance education, helping to ensure fundamental competences for adults; providing continuing education in order to improve employability and competitiveness; introducing mechanisms in all educational areas for the validation of non-formal and informal competencies. The targeted measures include increasing the employment rate among elderly persons (55–64 years); in rural areas, increasing participation rates in non-formal continuing education; developing quality standards for educational programs aimed at retired persons (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2011).

In Estonia, The Lifelong Learning Strategy's overall purpose is to provide all people with learning opportunities that are suited to their needs and talents throughout their lives, in order to maximize possibilities for dignified self-actualization in society, at work, and in family life. Learning is a lifestyle, development possibilities are recognized, and smart solutions are explored, according to the general vision. One of the Strategy's current issues is skills development. A third of the working-age population in Estonia lacks a professional or vocational education, and there is a significant mismatch between available and required skills. In order to build a lifelong learning system, educational institutions and employer representatives must work together more closely. In addition, persons with low levels of education and the elderly have a low rate of engagement in lifelong learning. Another issue concerns labor market: gathering of information about labor market
and economic trends is not systematic, and career counseling varies in terms of quality and accessibility. The measures include the change in the approach to learning: implementation of an approach to learning that supports each learner's individual and social development, the acquisition of learning skills, creativity and entrepreneurship at all levels and in all types of education; diversification of lifelong learning options and career services (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2014).

The Czech Republic's Strategy for Lifelong Learning is a foundational document for various cross-sectional and individual concepts and policies in this area, and it represents a comprehensive lifelong learning concept. Among the main challenges there are: low social partner involvement in the development of lifelong learning; lack of a comprehensive system for determining educational needs, as well as an accessible, tailored advice and information system; low levels of collaboration between higher education institutions, a lack of applicability to practice, and a lack of employer collaboration. Main targets lie in encouraging individuals and businesses to pursue further education; boosting investment in higher education; obtaining systemic financial support for higher education; aligning educational possibilities with labor market needs. The Education for Competitiveness Operational Program and The Human Resources and Employment Operational Program are two key programs to promote further education and lifelong learning with the emphasis on establishing a system of lifelong learning that fosters a conducive environment for research (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2007).

The notion of lifelong learning is dedicated to the broad goal of promoting education as Germany's most valuable resource for economic success and personal progress. The realization of lifelong learning is reported to affect all aspect of one's life. Promoting self-reliant learning motivation in early childhood education, school, vocational and higher education is a prerequisite for continued education participation. The main challenge a low rate of engagement in continuing education (compared to many other countries), which is especially the case for those with low qualification. The measures pursue the goals of improving counseling services and developing an "education alliance" to make continuing education more accessible. Increasing civil society integration through education and learning promotion as well as gaining a better understanding of the processes and implications of learning over the course of one's life are deemed main targets (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2008).

A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning accepted by European Communities states that all Europeans, without exception, should have equal opportunity to adapt to the demands of social and economic change and to actively participate in creating Europe's future. Lifelong learning must become the guiding premise for provision and participation throughout the entire spectrum of learning context.

References: