

Manifesto

For a Europe of apprentices

Euro App Mobility

September 2021



Context

" Erasmus is also for apprentices! "

Euro App Mobility (EAM), a non-profit association founded in 2020 with the support of the Ministry of Labor, works to remove **the obstacles to long-term mobility for apprentices in Europe**.

Today, Euro App Mobility federates about twenty actors of vocational training in France and in Europe (training organizations, companies, institutions and personalities) around a common project: **the creation of a European Vocational Education and training Area as there is a European Higher Education Area**.

On September 16 and 17, 2021, at the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers, EAM organized, **under the high patronage of Mr. Emmanuel Macron, President of the Republic, the General Assembly on the mobility of apprentices**. This event brought together national and European political personalities of the highest level and nearly 250 actors of vocational training. Several thousand Internet users also followed the live broadcast on social networks from France and Europe.

At the end of these two days of exchanges, the directors and members of Euro App Mobility adopted the **Manifesto "For a Europe of apprentices"**.

State of play

International and European mobility provides added value in the training of young people, and especially VET learners following the **Council recommendation of the 15th of March 2018 on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships**¹. For young people it provides an additional key to facilitate entry to the job market. For employers it enriches their human capital. For all EU Member States, international mobility is a key asset in building a strong economy that is resilient to global competition.

Thanks to the European program Erasmus+, university students have enjoyed the benefits of a period of immersion in a foreign country for almost 35 years. **Today, it is important to remember that Erasmus is also for apprentices** and has been since 1994. If doubts remain, this is due to persisting obstacles to apprentice mobility when this exceeds two or three weeks.

Just as the pandemic health measures are about to be eased, all apprenticeship stakeholders are called upon to promote long-term mobility (more than three months) for apprentices. At the Porto Summit on 7 and 8 May 2021, our political leaders, heads of state and government, made a promising commitment:

*" 11. We will prioritize measures to support young people, who have been severely affected by the COVID-19 crisis, which has profoundly disrupted their participation in the labor market and their education and training plans. Young people are an indispensable source of dynamism, talent and creativity for Europe. **We must ensure that they become the vector of the inclusive green and digital recovery so that they contribute to building the Europe of tomorrow, including by making full use of the opportunities offered by Erasmus+ to foster mobility across Europe for all students and apprentices.**"²*

The obstacles to be removed have been identified and evaluated:

Legal obstacles, because for a young person, an apprenticeship is a work contract with a training objective which leads the employer to establish an agreement with a training organization. National legal requirements remain diverse, and this complicates the choice of status for the young person in the host country during his mobility.

- **Financial barriers**, because it is necessary to ensure the financial autonomy and social protection of a young person during his mobility.
- **Academic barriers**, because despite existing initiatives and tools that help facilitate the recognition of mobility learning outcomes in the diploma or professional qualification, barriers and inertia persist.

- **Linguistic barriers**, as many training centers have not yet introduced courses in a foreign language (in the main in English) for apprentices coming from another country.
- **Psychological barriers** experienced by young people, who are reluctant to leave their comfort zone, families, who are slow to empower their children, and companies, who fear losing their apprentices.

The propositions and prerequisites

In any case, European mobility can achieve its objectives only if it is deployed in all Member States of the Union while respecting the reciprocity principle: ideally a company that encourages a young person to take part in mobility, makes a commitment, in return, to host a young foreigner during the temporary absence of its apprentice.

The studies and experiments conducted to date, highlight the measures that need to be taken to unblock the system and remove barriers. Fostering a dynamic for long-term mobility depends on the will of both public authorities and stakeholders. At an operational level, vocational education and training institutions and companies have a key role to play. **Five key prerequisites will ensure the success of this proactive engagement.**

1 – “Mobility coach” in vocational education and training institutions

The international opening of VET organizations cannot be achieved without having a "mobility coach". This mission is already carried out within many VET providers that prioritize an international dimension in their educational project. The mobility coach makes young people and their apprenticeship tutors aware of the benefits of mobility and contacts foreign VET institutions to establish partnerships. The values, objectives, teaching methods and procedures of assessing the learning outcomes of the mobility are defined in an agreement. This agreement should also anticipate the reception of young people from other countries and agree with companies on the integration of young people into their teams during the absence of their own apprentices. To trigger the creation of this position and overcome the reservations of training organizations that are new to mobility, it is important to provide specific financial assistance. During the start-up phase, in addition to national resources, funding may be supplemented by the EU budget (Structural Funds: ERDF and ESF+; Recovery and Resilience Facility.)

2- “Developer” of long-term mobility for apprentices at the regional/institutional level

At the regional level, the activation of the system can be facilitated by the installation of a "developer of the long mobility of apprentices". This person would be in touch with the VET

organizations, companies, and local authorities, and would work closely with the Erasmus+ France Agency, his mission would be to encourage projects and inform, support, and advise stakeholders. In close contact with the regional authorities, it would confirm the region in its essential role in vocational training and apprenticeship policies. The sources of funding for this mission are identical to those proposed for the "mobility coach" in the VET institutions.

3 – Systematic recognition of mobility learning outcomes

The recognition of mobility outcomes must be included in national rules and procedures. Consequently, a system of transfer, accumulation and capitalization of learning outcomes should be provided for. The ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) model provides an example of the appropriate procedure. It is important to consider the competences³, the time and content of training followed in mobility as an integral part of the young person's course in the conditions for obtaining his or her diploma.

4 – Companies' involvement

The training company is at the heart of the system for designing European mobility paths for apprentices. It determines and anticipates skills needs. Its involvement is one of the essential levers for the development of European mobility on a large scale. The success of this investment in the long term presupposes the appointment of a mobility tutor in the company, to interact with the VET institutions' mobility coach. The company mobility tutor is also responsible for the reception conditions of young people coming from abroad. This "apprentice exchange" guarantees reciprocity.

5 – Unified status of the apprentice in mobility: unified European Apprentice Statute

The creation of a unified status for the young person during his period of European mobility would facilitate the resolution of the current legal and financial problems. Depending on the country, the apprenticeship contract takes different forms (employee, paid or unpaid internship, with or without social protection). A harmonization of the legal rules defining the mobility apprentice contract would erase the reticence expressed by families, young people, and companies. However, these difficulties are overcome when the parties concerned show a firm will to succeed. The current situation calls for the harmonization and simplification of national legislation as soon as possible. The Commission is competent to submit a proposal for a recommendation to the Council along these lines. It would supplement and reinforce resolutions already adopted by the European Parliament for this purpose.

Let's act!

The European Higher Education Area is unanimously recognized as a success story to which all students of the Erasmus generations can witness with a touch of pride. **The time has come to generalize mobility for young people from all horizons.** Bureaucratic and anachronistic barriers must be removed to ensure the establishment of a European VET area. These barriers can be dismantled with sufficient pressure from the sector's stakeholders VET institutions and employers when also encouraged by national and European political authorities. For all parties the interests of learners alone must be prioritized.

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Euro App Mobility and directors



Join the movement!

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Notes

¹ [EUR-Lex - 32018H0502\(01\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#) : « For the purposes of this Recommendation and without prejudice to national terminology, apprenticeships are understood as formal vocational education and training schemes that a) combine learning in education or training institutions with substantial work-based learning in companies and other workplaces, b) lead to nationally recognised qualifications, c) are based on an agreement defining the rights and obligations of the apprentice, the employer and, where appropriate, the vocational education and training institution, and d) with the apprentice being paid or otherwise compensated for the workbased component »

² [The Porto declaration - Consilium \(europa.eu\)](#)

³ [EUR-Lex - 32020H1202\(01\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#) : Therefore, this Council Recommendation should include the key principles of ECVET (e.g. units of learning outcomes) related to flexibility. The ECVET tools (e.g. learning agreement and memorandum of understanding) supporting mobility of vocational learners, are to be further developed in the framework of other EU instruments such as those supported under the Erasmus+ programme. For vocational qualifications at post-secondary and tertiary level, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System already in use may be applied.