



## Towards an European Area for Apprenticeship and Vocational Training

**Erasmus+ is also for apprentices.**

It is in the interest of young Europeans. It is the future of Europe.

Since the first "General Assembly on Mobility of Apprentices in Europe" in September 2021, the "Copenhagen Process" launched in 2002 has been gaining momentum. The diagnosis is unanimous: mobility through immersion for several months in a foreign country develops transversal skills (self-confidence, adaptability, agility, creativity, initiative, understanding of societal and geopolitical issues) as well as linguistic abilities and technical skills.

### **Apprenticeship mobility, the process is gaining momentum.**

Many vocational training actors are pragmatically committing to combining learning and mobility. The most noticeable development is observed in higher education levels practicing apprenticeship, especially as the issuance of certain diplomas is conditioned by the completion of a several-month internship abroad. However, secondary levels (EQF 3 and 4) struggle to extend their mobilities beyond a few weeks.

The European Commission timely responds to the declarations of Heads of State and Government, first in Osnabrück in November 2020, then at the Porto Social Summit in May 2021, and more recently, on November 15, 2023, the Commission published a Council Recommendation proposal "**Europe on the Move' – learning mobility opportunities for everyone**", with an Annex II "a policy framework for apprentice mobility". It recommends increasing to at least 15% the share of mobility experience for vocational learners by 2030 (originally 8% by 2025).

A call for projects published by the Direction General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture on November 30, 2023, European Policy Experimentation, with a specific priority to support structures and networks for apprentice mobility and a substantial budget, demonstrates a positive willingness from the European Commission.

### **A roadmap for the European Area for Apprenticeship and Vocational Training.**

The Commission, in its Recommendation proposal, develops three aspects:

1. Evolution of the regulatory framework: it recommends integrating it into learners' curricula as excellence drivers. Emphasis is placed on the mobility coordinator role and the need to organize networks of mobility coordinators and activators, involving trainers and employers. Recognition of mobility achievements must be facilitated and subject to specific modules in curricula, and taken into account in diploma recognition.



2. Priority given to inclusion: the use of digital tools for distance learning and language learning. This underscores the importance of the mobility coordinator role, a full-time function, in apprentice training centres.

3. Employer support is crucial. Various provisions, including fiscal measures, can be considered to compensate for potential expenses related to the absence of the apprentice or gratuities aimed at retaining the young person upon their return from mobility. Special assistance is needed for small businesses.

Moreover, the potentials of Erasmus+ and the European Alliance for Apprenticeship (EAfA) are to be made known to employers to familiarize them with mobility opportunities for their apprentices.

## **Removing the final barriers.**

The freedom of movement is a fundamental principle of European integration (Lisbon Treaty, Article 3.2). Apprentices now have access to training paths open to international mobility. Some pioneering training centres have taken initiatives to facilitate movement. They demonstrate that willingness and pragmatism can overcome remaining obstacles.

EAM.EU, as the animator of the "mobility community" of the European Alliance for Apprenticeship, submits to the participants of the "General Assembly on Mobility of Apprentices" organized in Brussels, this Thursday, April 4, 2024, the following motion:

***"The European Year of Skills should accelerate the advent of the European Space for Apprenticeship and Vocational Training. To this end, the Council is requested to adopt the recommendation "Europe on the Move' – learning mobility opportunities for everyone", (and its Annex II). The set of measures prescribed in this regard calls for mobilization, beyond political authorities, of all vocational training and apprenticeship partners around six complementary actions:***

- 1. A single European mobility apprentice status.***
- 2. Automatic mutual recognition of learning outcomes acquired during a period of apprenticeship abroad.***
- 3. A European vocational learner card.***
- 4. Promotion of apprenticeship mobility mentoring within companies.***
- 5. A European training path for "mobility coordinators."***
- 6. Sustainable financial support for the Erasmus+ program.***

***Yes, several months' mobility in a foreign country enhances training paths by increasing skills, preparing for future professions, fostering inclusion, promoting gender equality, and optimizing equal opportunities at the highest levels of excellence.***

***Yes, Erasmus+ is also for apprentices! It's in the interest of young Europeans; it's the future of Europe."***