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GREEN PAPER

Promoting the learning mobility of young people

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INTRODUCTION

The increasing importance of learning mobility

Learning mobility, i.e. transnational mobility for the purpose of acquiring new skills is one of the fundamental ways in which individuals, particularly young people, can strengthen their future employability as well as their personal development¹. Studies confirm that learning mobility adds to human capital, as students access new knowledge and develop new linguistic skills and intercultural competences. Furthermore, employers recognise and value these benefits². Europeans who are mobile as young learners are more likely to be mobile as workers later in life. Learning mobility has played an important role in making education and training systems and institutions more open, more European and international, more accessible and efficient³. It can also strengthen Europe's competitiveness by helping to build a knowledge-intensive society, thereby contributing to the achievement of the objectives set out in the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs.

In the context of the current international economic crisis, the Commission has stressed that investment in education and training, is crucial. It has also underlined that while there may be a temptation in such circumstances to divert resources away from such activities, it is precisely in times of economic difficulty that investment in knowledge and skills needs to be safeguarded⁴. Thence the mobility of learners should form part of a renewed drive to build Europe's skills and ability to innovate and compete at international level. It can also help to overcome the immobility paradox whereby even today, during a severe crisis, there are unfilled vacancies in some countries and sectors, due to skills shortages.

Learning mobility has other positive features. It can, for example, help combat the risks of isolationism, protectionism and xenophobia which arise in times of economic crisis. It can help foster a deepened sense of European identity and citizenship among young people. It also boosts the circulation of knowledge which is key to Europe's knowledge-based future.

¹ This Green Paper does not include mobility in the labour market but focuses on mobility for learning purposes.

² For example a study showed that 54% of former Erasmus students believe that the period abroad was helpful in obtaining a first job. See Friedhelm Maiworm and Ulrich Teichler: Study Abroad and Early Career: Experiences of Former Erasmus Students, 2004; annual surveys of the Erasmus Student Network; Final Evaluation of the Community Programmes Socrates II, Leonardo da Vinci II and eLearning; Analysis of the Effects of Leonardo da Vinci Mobility Measures on Young Trainees, Employees and the influence of socio-economic factors, 2007.

³ For the higher education sector this systemic benefit has been proved by a study on "The impact of Erasmus on European higher education: quality, openness and internationalisation", Dec. 2008, <http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/publ/impact08.pdf>
See also the Interim evaluation of Erasmus Mundus by CSES, June 2007, http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/doc/evalreport_en.pdf.

In the area of research, the Marie Curie Actions, by enhancing the mobility of researchers, contribute to a balanced circulation of scientific talents, not only across Europe, but all over the world.

⁴ A European Economic Recovery Plan - COM(2008) 800, 26.11.2008, p. 15.

Rather than being the exception, as is currently the case, learning mobility should become a natural feature of being European and an opportunity open to all young people in Europe. In this way it can make an important contribution to securing the future competitiveness and cohesion of the European Union.

Why a Green Paper?

Learning mobility and its potential to contribute to European strategies for learning and skills has been the subject of considerable recent reflection. The 20th anniversary of the Erasmus programme in 2007 triggered many debates on the benefits of mobility in higher education and the need to expand mobility to other areas. The Council concluded that mobility, in particular in higher education, was a key priority⁵. The European Commission's Lisbon Report in December 2007 called for Erasmus-type mobility to become a standard part of university education⁶.

In January 2008, the European Commission established a High Level Expert Forum with the mandate to explore how to expand mobility, not only within the university sector, but among young people more generally. The Forum presented its report in June 2008 which called for learning mobility to become the rule, not the exception among Europe's young people.⁷ In July 2008, the "Renewed social agenda: Opportunities, access and solidarity in 21st century Europe"⁸ affirmed that the Commission would continue to develop a "fifth freedom" by removing barriers to the free movement of knowledge and promoting the mobility of specific groups like young people. It signalled that a Green Paper was planned for 2009 on the latter issue.

The Council concluded in November 2008 that "every young person should have the opportunity to take part in some form of mobility, whether this be during their studies or training, in the form of a work placement, or in the context of voluntary activities." It invited the Member States and the European Commission in particular to further develop the concept of mobility for all young people, during their studies or training, in the form of a work placement, or in the context of voluntary activities⁹.

Finally, the Leuven Communiqué, adopted on 29 April 2009 by the Ministers in charge of higher education in the countries participating in the Bologna Process, stipulates that in 2020, at least 20% of those graduating in the European Higher Education Area should have had a study or training period abroad¹⁰.

The Commission Communication on employment of June 2009 listed the promotion of mobility as one of the key priorities to overcome the present recession and boost job creation.

⁵ Council Resolution of 23 November 2007 on modernising universities for Europe's competitiveness in a global knowledge economy.

⁶ Strategic report on the renewed Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs: launching the new cycle (2008-2010) - COM(2007) 803.

⁷ Report of the High Level Expert Forum on Mobility, June 2008,
http://ec.europa.eu/education/doc/2008/mobilityreport_en.pdf
COM(2008) 412.

⁹ Conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member states on youth mobility, 20 and 21 November 2008 (OJ C 320, 16.12.2008),
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/educ/104249.pdf

¹⁰ http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/conference/documents/Leuven_Louvain-la-Neuve_Communique_April_2009.pdf

In particular it underlined that mobility can be considered an opportunity for the young unemployed to improve their skills¹¹.

In short, there has been much reflection in political and expert circles on the benefits of learning mobility and how it could be expanded. A clear consensus exists in support of the objective of expanding mobility opportunities and extending them more broadly to young people. What is now needed is to build on this consensus and define strategies to achieve these ambitions. The purpose of this Green Paper is to open up the debate to stakeholders and the wider public, seeking their views on how best to boost substantially the opportunities for young people to have a mobility experience.

What kind of mobility?

The scope of the Paper is broad; it aims to address the situation of all young people in all different learning contexts, i.e. at school; at bachelor, master and PhD levels within university studies, as well as in internships, apprenticeships, youth exchanges, volunteer work or vocational training, in or outside the European Union. It sees learning mobility as relevant in all disciplines and areas, such as culture, science, technology, arts, sports, and also young entrepreneurs. It aims to invite an exploration of how existing and new mechanisms and instruments can be better mobilised to promote the mobility of young people and how the different levels of public authorities - the EU, national, regional and local - together with other stakeholders – business, civil society, private individuals – can be mobilised.

In particular, this Green Paper:

- seeks to promote *organised learning mobility*. This means that mobility should be linked to specific learning outcomes and lead to the attainment of qualifications, credits and/or professional experience. This can also encompass voluntary work and non-formal learning - both can be very effective ways of reaching young people who would otherwise risk falling outside learning mobility programmes - provided the activities are appropriately validated. In addition to addressing mobility supported by European programmes, the Paper also covers other forms of learning mobility supported within the Member States as well as that undertaken on a private basis;
- deals firstly with mobility between the countries currently participating in EU programmes,, reflecting the wishes of the Council in its Conclusions of November 2008, while at the same time seeking to develop exchanges with the wider world. The focus is on transnational mobility on the basis that a move to another country is likely to be more challenging and enriching and is an appropriate focus for a EU consultation of this nature;
- promotes not only "*like-to-like*" mobility across borders but within sectors (schools, universities, enterprises etc.). It also deals with *cross-sector* movements from the world of education to the world of business and vice versa; from education to voluntary action; from vocational education to academia; from public research bodies to business;
- focuses on *physical mobility*, while *recognising* also the value of *virtual mobility* – the use of ICTs for twinning and exchange between young people in learning environments - both as a means to prepare, enrich and follow up on physical mobility moves and as an activity conveying at least some of the benefits of physical mobility in its own right. Virtual

¹¹ Commission Communication "A shared Commitment for Employment" - COM(2009)257

mobility, such as that supported via Comenius eTwinning or via social networking, can in particular be valuable in opening up school-age young people to new contacts and cultures;

- concentrates on the mobility of *young people*, which is not to say that learning mobility is not important for all age groups; in the spirit of Lifelong Learning no precise age limits are set but the main cohort envisaged would be 16-35 year olds.

Where do we stand?

The EU has a long track record of supporting learning mobility through various programmes and initiatives, and in particular through the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013, which cover a broad range of areas¹². The Structural Funds also support learning mobility. Mobility and exchanges of higher education staff and students between European and extra-European universities is supported under the Erasmus Mundus and Tempus programmes.

In addition, the European Commission has helped to develop a number of tools to facilitate mobility, such as the Europass, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS, for higher education), the Diploma Supplement, the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), Youthpass, EURAXESS, the "students visa Directive"¹³ and the "scientific visa" package¹⁴.

Taken together, the current mobility programmes, tools and initiatives reach out to the different strata of Europe's youth population. However, mobility still remains the exception rather than the rule and it is more accessible by some groups, e.g. students, than others, e.g. vocational trainees and apprentices for whom many practical obstacles remain. In 2006, around 310 000 young people were able to benefit from mobility within European programmes, which represents a mere 0.3% of the age cohort of 16-29 year olds in the EU. Clearly, much more could be done in this area.

Structure

The Green Paper is structured in three sections. Section 1 deals with issues regarding the preparation of a mobility period, i.e. information, motivation, linguistic preparation etc. Section 2 deals with the actual period spent abroad (including housing and mentoring issues) and examines the follow-up to a mobility period, such as validation and recognition of the experience. Section 3 presents proposals for a new partnership on youth mobility.

¹² They include the following: higher education (Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus, Marie Curie) for students, doctoral candidates and staff; higher education and research (Marie Curie, mobility within Networks of Excellence and Technology Platforms); from higher education to business (placements within Erasmus and Marie Curie); vocational education and apprentices (Leonardo); second level education (Comenius) adult learning and senior volunteering (Grundtvig); the cultural sphere (Culture Programme); youth exchanges and volunteering (Youth in Action); volunteering (European Voluntary Service within the Youth in Action Programme); the civil society (Europe for Citizens Programme) and the preparatory action "Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs".

¹³ Council Directive 2004/114/EC of 13 December 2004 on the conditions of admission of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service.

¹⁴ Including the Council Directive 2005/71/EC of 12 October 2005 on a specific procedure for admitting third-country nationals for the purposes of scientific research ('Scientific visa').

1. PREPARING FOR A PERIOD OF LEARNING MOBILITY

Careful preparation is the key to successful learning mobility and has to be at the heart of any project or programme. When young people are exploring mobility opportunities, they need access to information on options, on funding and guidance regarding their choice and on practical issues.

1.1. Information and Guidance

Internet and other electronic forms of information and communication allow young people to prepare a stay abroad, learn the language, acquaint themselves with the host country and its culture, their future host institution, developing direct contacts etc. There is a wealth of information and guidance available on mobility-related issues that can be grouped into three main areas:

- **funding opportunities:** the European Union programmes to support mobility, many under the umbrella of the Lifelong Learning Programme or through the Youth in Action Programme, have already been listed. The Commission's initiatives are complemented by numerous initiatives at the national and regional level, including programmes run by businesses, foundations etc.

- **learning opportunities for young people (education and training programmes):** the Commission has set up various information portals, such as PLOTEUS, the Portal on Learning Opportunities throughout the European Space¹⁵, the Youth portal¹⁶, Study in Europe¹⁷, Euraxess – Researchers in motion¹⁸, the Marie Curie website for all Marie Curie Actions¹⁹, YourEurope²⁰, Euroguidance²¹, EURES²² and Eurodesk²³, Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs²⁴ and support for training and mobility for SME's²⁵.

- **practical guidance** on housing, funding, living costs, legal aspects e.g. visa regulations, work permits, insurance, etc.

These information sources address not only individuals but also institutions and associations that organise youth mobility as part of a training course, study programme, volunteer project, etc.

While current information initiatives are helpful, it is clear that knowledge of existing tools and programmes is still incomplete and an understanding of opportunities and support for youth mobility as a whole is missing. Information needs to be better updated and made more easily accessible; this has been emphasised time and again, most recently by the Council in November 2008. Young people are often unaware of the opportunities which exist. This is true for higher education students and researchers, but even more so for young people in schools, vocational education and training, voluntary activities, apprentices, etc.

¹⁵ <http://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/home.jsp?language=en>

¹⁶ http://europa.eu/youth/index.cfm?l_id=en

¹⁷ <http://www.study-in-europe.org/>

¹⁸ <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess>

¹⁹ <http://ec.europa.eu/mariecurieactions/>

²⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope/index_en.html

²¹ <http://www.euroguidance.net/>

²² <http://ec.europa.eu/eures>

²³ <http://www.eurodesk.org>

²⁴ <http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu>

²⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/craft/craft-skills_training/skills_training_main_en.htm

Good practice: Study in Germany

The website [study-in-germany.de](http://www.study-in-germany.de) provides a one stop shop in eight languages that informs on study possibilities and scholarships in Germany and provides relevant information on general living conditions such as housing, food and sports.

www.study-in-germany.de

Euronaver

Euronaver.net is a European network to enhance transnational mobility in vocational education and training (VET). It offers access to a European platform of expertise and the exchange of good practice in mobility. It focuses on the specific needs of apprenticeship and Initial Vocational Education and Training within skilled crafts and small and medium sized enterprises. It is mainly directed towards business organisations, VET providers, intermediaries and enterprises.

www.euronaver.net

How can the availability of information and guidance related to mobility be improved?

Please provide examples of good practice, including appropriate tools and ways to make such information available.

1.2. Promotion and motivation

There is consensus among many decision makers that learning mobility is good for young people. However, the benefits of learning mobility may not be sufficiently understood among young people themselves.

A number of factors may contribute to keeping many young people from even considering a stay abroad: time pressure to finish their studies or training, jobs, lack of funding, lack of language skills and intercultural knowledge, as well as a general reluctance to leave "home". Young people will be more open to mobility if the benefits of learning mobility are better explained to them. Teachers, trainers, youth workers and managers in particular have a key role to play in encouraging and promoting mobility and in setting positive examples by recognising the added value of learning mobility in their activities. Another issue is how to increase the motivation of those who host participants in mobility programmes, including young entrepreneurs and apprentices.

Young people need also to be confident of a positive outcome of their period of mobility. A crucial issue is the recognition they can expect for their stay abroad. Will credits be formally recognised, through ECTS, ECVET or similar credit systems? Will the newly acquired skills be adequately recorded, e.g. in the Diploma Supplement, the Europass or the Youthpass? Evaluations show that, despite longstanding arrangements, too often students who have undertaken learning mobility periods have difficulty in getting the recognition they had expected. This is damaging for those directly concerned and will clearly dampen enthusiasm for learning mobility more broadly. The issues surrounding recognition are discussed in section 2.2 below.

European networks of regions, companies, institutions, European professional and students' associations and other relevant networks could be invited to become active in promoting youth mobility and to reinforce the role of local and regional authorities in promoting and supporting mobility. Young people should be informed about the benefits they could draw from a mobility experience, in terms of personal development, employability, intercultural competences and language skills. Motivation efforts need to be tailored to very different

benefits and challenges related to the various groups, from school pupils to young entrepreneurs.

What can be done to better promote and motivate young people to be mobile? How should this be done to ensure maximum effect? Please provide concrete examples of good practice in this area.

What do you see as the main barriers to the motivation of young people to become mobile?

1.3. Languages and culture

Some of the key competences to be acquired through learning mobility are foreign languages and intercultural skills. Living, studying and working in a foreign country provides an opportunity for total immersion in another language and culture. Foreign language skills and intercultural competences widen an individual's professional options, upgrade the skills of the European workforce and are essential elements of genuine European identity. A key instrument is the Barcelona objective, established by the European Council in 2002 that at least two foreign languages should be taught from a very early age. The progress towards this objective, as well as the connections between language skills and learning mobility, has been examined in the strategic Communication on multilingualism from 2008²⁶.

The wider learning of languages has facilitated mobility that would otherwise be impossible; however, this progress is uneven and for some groups of young people language is still a major barrier, e.g. in vocational education and training. Moreover, Europe's linguistic diversity is a key part of its richness and it is important to ensure that countries with less spoken languages are also promoted as mobility destinations.

Good practice: Glossomuseums

Glossomuseums contributes to the promotion of language learning and linguistic diversity in Europe. It is an interactive partnership of 12 organizations from Greece, Germany, Denmark, Spain, France, Italy and Portugal. The project's main objectives are to familiarize schoolchildren with the cultural characteristics of some of the official EU languages – especially the less-widely used and taught ones – while motivating them to learn a second language. The program also encourages lifelong language learning and the discovery of the collective European cultural heritage.

www.ecose.org

How can the linguistic and cultural obstacles to mobility be best addressed?

Please provide examples of good practice.

1.4. Legal issues

One important aspect during the preparatory phase concerns the legal status of mobile young people in their host country. The enlargement of the EU has greatly increased the geographical scope for youth mobility. However, many obstacles remain in the areas of administration and legislation. While the legal status of someone studying or undertaking a work placement abroad should normally be fairly clear, this is not always the case for young people who are mobile but who do not fall neatly into either of the above-mentioned

²⁶ Multilingualism – An asset for Europe and a shared commitment - COM(2008) 566.

categories (e.g. young professionals, such as artists, designers, entrepreneurs, who engage in learning mobility).

Legal regulations in some countries can inhibit mobility, especially at secondary school level and also in the area of vocational education and training. It could be helpful to set up a secure framework for the mobility of minors. A European Trainee Statute could help to overcome the specific difficulties linked to work placements abroad that arise from the very different regulations applying to this kind of activity, e.g. regarding such aspects as salaries or employment contracts. Within the university sector a specific problem persists for doctoral students/young researchers whose status may vary between student/scholarship holder and employee. Lack of clarity about their status has implications for their social security claims and can discourage them from becoming mobile²⁷.

What are the main legal obstacles to mobility that you have encountered? Please give concrete examples.

Can you provide examples of good practice in overcoming legal obstacles to mobility?

1.5. Portability of Grants and Loans

A stay abroad also requires financial preparation. Apart from scholarships, social benefits and loans from the home country can be an important source. However, these and other direct and indirect subsidies are often not portable, in certain cases in contravention of Community law, thereby discouraging young people from going abroad. For example, in the area of higher education, very few countries allow for full portability of grants and loans, and four Member States do not authorise any portability at all²⁸.

The European Court of Justice, in its 1990 ruling stated that the children of migrant workers, if they decide to study in a Member State different from their host country, are entitled to the same benefits they would enjoy in their host country²⁹. In a 2007 decision³⁰ the Court has extended this case-law beyond the families of migrant workers by stating that, if a Member State offers its nationals support for education and training purposes and if they want to undertake this education or training in another Member State, the home Member State cannot require that the programme followed abroad be the continuation of that taken in the state of origin. The Commission will continue to take action against Member States which contravene Community law in this area.

Info: Joined cases C-11/06 Rhiannon Morgan v Bezirksregierung Köln and C-12/06

Iris Bucher v Landrat des Kreises Düren, judgement of 23 October 2007

The European Court of Justice stated that although the Member States are competent to determine the content of teaching and the organisation of their respective education systems, that competence must be exercised in compliance with Community law and, in particular, in compliance with freedom of movement for citizens of the Union, as conferred by article 18 EC. In that light, where a Member State provides for a system of education or training grants which enables students to receive such grants if they pursue studies in another Member State,

²⁷ See also Commission Communication "Better Careers and more Mobility: a European Partnership for Researchers" - COM(2008) 317.

²⁸ See Eurydice Report Higher Education 2009: Developments in the Bologna Process.

²⁹ Case C-308/89, di Leo, European Court Reports 1990, p. I-4185.

³⁰ Joined Cases C-11/06 Morgan and C-12/06 Bucher, European Court Reports 2007, p. I-9161.

it must ensure that the detailed rules for the award of those grants do not create an unjustified restriction on freedom of movement.

While Member States are generally aware of the *acquis* in this area and violations tend to be the exception rather than the rule, the Commission believes it would be helpful to publish guidance for public authorities and stakeholders in the Member States, drawing out the key implications of the case law established by the Court thus far. This guidance could cover issues such as access to educational institutions, recognition of diplomas, the portability of grants and other rights of students in the host country or in the country of origin.

What kind of obstacles have you encountered regarding the portability of grants and loans and access to benefits? Please give concrete examples?

1.6. Mobility to and from the European Union

Promoting the mobility of young Europeans as well as attracting young people to Europe from third countries is an important element of future European competitiveness. Visa issues have been a significant obstacle to the smooth mobility of Erasmus Mundus students to the EU in the first phase of the programme³¹. Under Directive 2004/114/EC (the "students Directive")³², EU Member States shall facilitate the admission procedure for students, including by issuing the necessary visa in a timely manner. Provision is also made to allow third-country national students to study in various EU Member States. The Directive has been transposed into national law by almost all EU countries and third-country students may invoke its provisions when they experience serious delays in the delivery of their visas or residence permits.

Specific obstacles – mostly visa problems - also exist for other groups with regard to extra-EU mobility, for example participants in EU volunteer programmes, pupil exchanges or unremunerated training. EU Member States could therefore make use of the option to apply the students Directive 2004/114 to these groups as well. The Commission will evaluate and report on the application of this Directive in Member States in the course of 2010.

Council Directive 2005/71/EC³³ foresees a specific residence permit for foreign researchers, independent of their contractual status (employee, self-employed, grant holder). A simple contract ("hosting agreement") with an accredited public or private European research organisation specifying the researcher's scientific skills, financial means and health insurance is the basis for a rapid delivery of the residence permit. This scheme has numerous advantages, such as the waiver of work permits, an easier family reunion, faster admission procedures, and smoother intra-UE mobility³⁴.

Good practice:

Fast visa track for AIESEC trainees in Denmark

The Denmark chapter of the international students' association AIESEC agreed with the Danish Ministry of External Affairs on a fast track procedure regarding the visa regulations

³¹ Interim evaluation of Erasmus Mundus by CSES, June 2007

http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/doc/evalreport_en.pdf

³² Council Directive 2004/114/EC of 13 December 2004 on the conditions of admission of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service.

³³ Council Directive 2005/71/EC of 12 October 2005 on a specific procedure for admitting third-country nationals for the purposes of scientific research (OJ L 289, 3.11.2005, p. 15).

³⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index_en.cfm?l1=17&l2=0&l3=1&CFID=88944&CFTOKEN=69293189

for AIESEC members from non-EU countries coming to Denmark for a training period. As a result the processing time of visa applications for AIESEC members is reduced from 2-3 months to 3-4 weeks.

<http://www.aiesec.org>

What more should be done to promote mobility to and from the European Union? How should this be done?

Please provide examples of good practice.

1.7. Preparation of the mobility period and quality assurance issues

It is clear that mobility will work best for young people and they will be more easily persuaded of its value, where there is good preparation and overall management of the experience. Organisers of learning mobility need to set up appropriate mechanisms for selecting participants. Selection should be fair and transparent. Sending and receiving institutions need to cooperate in matching participants and receiving institutions. Preparing participants properly, including in terms of linguistic skills and cultural knowledge, should be part of this phase. A mobility period abroad should fit in as much as possible with the personal learning pathways, skills and motivation of the individual participant, and should develop or supplement them. The European Quality Charter for Mobility can provide guidance on this point as it provides a list of general principles to be taken into account (see Info box below). Other charters have been developed for particular sectors e.g. vocational training (Leonardo da Vinci Mobility Quality Commitment), research (European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct³⁵) higher education (Erasmus Student Charter³⁶), voluntary work (European Voluntary Service Charter³⁷) and enterprise (Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Commitment³⁸). Generally speaking, there should be a clear commitment to quality from both the sending and the host institution/organisation.

It is also advisable to draw up a learning or training agreement, taking account of the level of knowledge and skills and the linguistic preparation of the participant, and to have it agreed by the sending and hosting organisations and the participant. The agreement should outline the objectives and expected learning outcomes, as well as how these can be achieved and implemented and recognised.

Info: European Quality Charter for Mobility

The 2006 Recommendation of the European Parliament and Council on transnational mobility within the Community for education and training purposes provides a concise description of the issues surrounding this type of mobility. The European Quality Charter for Mobility, which is part of the recommendation, offers a "check list" of the most important issues to be taken into account in organising learning mobility and can be adapted to different settings, from schools to apprenticeships etc. In particular it describes the need for a "learning plan", to be agreed to by all parties (sending institution, host institution, mobile person).
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_394/l_39420061230en00050009.pdf

³⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index_en.cfm?11=0&12=3

³⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/education/archive/million/charter_en.html

³⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/youth/pdf/doc716_en.pdf

³⁸ See annex of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Users' Guide at <http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/upload/H840-290%20Erasmus%20Guide.pdf>

Good practice: Ap n' go

Ap 'n go is a platform where students and apprentices can request a placement abroad, and where companies interested in hosting young people on placements can describe their requirements. The website facilitates a matching between the two. In addition the website provides practical advice and information for students/apprentices and companies, online tools in various languages and allows to share experiences and good practices from apprentices and companies.

www.ap-and-go.eu

What measures can be taken to ensure that the mobility period is of high quality?

Please provide examples of good practice.

1.8. Reaching out to Disadvantaged Groups

There is a need to reach out to groups who tend to be excluded from mobility opportunities. The arguments in favour of learning mobility – coping with globalisation, increasing competitiveness and strengthening social cohesion – apply even more so to disadvantaged groups as these are the most vulnerable. Any measures to increase mobility ought to aim in particular at including those already struggling with specific difficulties, e.g. economically or socially disadvantaged groups, people with special needs, and underprivileged migrant populations. The Lifelong Learning, Youth in Action and Erasmus Mundus Programmes provide specific support to people with special needs. This practice could be widened to other programmes and mobility actions as the beneficial aspect of developing one's personality through learning mobility is particularly important for these groups.

Good practice: Spread the sign

Sign language is an absolutely necessary tool for communication between deaf or hard of hearing people. However, against the common belief, sign language is not a universal language and it has been difficult for deaf students to go abroad and study. "Spread the sign", a web-based sign language dictionary, for the first time gives a visual support to persons concerned on how to express specific terms in other sign languages. It has been developed to support persons in vocational training going abroad for placement. Sign languages from 11 countries are presently available.

www.spreadthesign.com

Which are the most important difficulties encountered by disadvantaged groups with regard to learning mobility?

Please provide examples of good practice of how such difficulties can be overcome.

2. THE STAY ABROAD AND FOLLOW-UP

Sending more young people abroad is only one side of the coin. There also ought to be arrangements in place to receive them properly. The lack of affordable housing, especially in big cities, and of reception facilities (counselling offices, canteens, health services, etc.) continues to be a problem, and may increase if the envisaged boost to mobility figures were to come about.

2.1. Mentoring and Integration

The host organisation (educational establishment, youth organisation, company, etc.) should provide schemes such as mentoring to advise participants and help with their effective integration into the host environment, and act as a contact point for obtaining ongoing assistance.

Can you give some concrete examples of good practice in this area?

2.2. Recognition and Validation

It is vital to record, recognise and validate periods of learning mobility in an appropriate way. The Bologna Process (for higher education), the Copenhagen Process (for vocational education and training) and the European Research Area have helped to improve the transparency and facilitate the recognition of qualifications and credits for educational purposes, which remain a national competence. European instruments now available include:

- the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System ECTS (for higher education)
- the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET, adopted in 2009)
- the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)
- a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences, Europass (Decision 2241/2004/EC). It includes the Europass Mobility, a record of mobility experiences, the Diploma Supplement for higher education (developed jointly by UNESCO-CEPES, the Council of Europe and the European Commission), as well as the Certificate Supplement for vocational training
- the Youthpass certificate for youth exchanges and volunteering
- The European Quality Charter for Mobility.

For higher education there is also the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention) which was developed by the Council of Europe and UNESCO in 1997.

The responsibility for the proper implementation of most of these instruments lies with national authorities. Progress in recognition could be sped up if the existing instruments were used to reach recognition agreements at regional and sectoral levels. The ongoing orientation of teaching and training towards learning outcomes³⁹ and the emergence of qualifications frameworks will make it easier for schools, universities, businesses, youth organisations etc. to formulate agreements for the recognition of mobility periods. Policies to secure recognition are most developed in higher education, but even here problems persist.

However, proper follow-up to mobility can go beyond formal recognition. Not only should the acquired formal knowledge be properly recorded, e.g. in the Europass Mobility, the Youth

³⁹ Learning outcome: a statement of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process.

Pass or the Diploma Supplement, but in the spirit of Lifelong Learning, also non-formal and informal learning should be validated⁴⁰.

Info: European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System ECTS

ECTS is a tool that enables students to collect credits for learning achieved through higher education. ECTS is a learner-centred system which aims to increase transparency of learning outcomes and learning processes. It aims to facilitate planning, delivery, evaluation, recognition and validation of qualifications and units of learning as well as student mobility. ECTS is widely used in formal higher education and can be applied to other lifelong learning activities. Originally developed within the Erasmus Programme, it has become one of the central tools of the European Higher Education Area (Bologna Process).

http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc48_en.htm

In your experience, is the validation and recognition of both formal and non-formal learning still a significant obstacle to mobility?

Please give concrete examples and your views on what can be done to improve the situation.

3. A NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR MOBILITY

3.1. MOBILISING ACTORS AND RESOURCES

Extending opportunities for youth mobility significantly beyond existing programmes cannot be done by any one player. Overcoming the continuing obstacles to mobility requires a concerted approach by all sectors, from language teaching to volunteer services. A new partnership is needed, with public authorities teaming up with partners from the worlds of civil society and business. Professional associations, NGOs and youth organisations could be encouraged to become active in promoting youth mobility. Mobility can be mainstreamed into all relevant policy areas, from education, training and culture to research, enterprise and innovation⁴¹. Civil society organisations could be encouraged to twin, following the example of town twinning, and to set up dialogue frameworks. This could be stimulated through existing European programmes. European regions have the potential to assume an important role in this new partnership for mobility. Many are already key players in supporting mobility, providing inter alia funding, reception facilities, and counselling on legal problems.

⁴⁰ At European level, the following definitions are used: Formal learning is typically provided by education or training institutions, with structured learning objectives, learning time and learning support. It is intentional on the part of the learner and leads to certification. Non-formal learning is not provided by an education or training institution and typically does not lead to certification. However, it is intentional on the part of the learner and has structured objectives, times and support. Informal learning results from daily activities related to work, family life or leisure. It is not structured and usually does not lead to certification. In most cases, it is unintentional on the part of the learner.

⁴¹ In the area of research a partnership is being implemented, based on the Council Conclusions on better careers and more mobility: a European partnership for researchers of 26 September 2008, <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/08/st13/st13671.en08.pdf>

Good practice: Interregional Cooperation

The regions of Tuscany, Catalonia, and Västra Götaland have signed bilateral agreements to promote mobility among themselves in the different sectors, i.e. in schools, in apprenticeships, at post-secondary level, for young graduates or for entrepreneurs. These regions have defined a Quality Charter for interregional mobility, to provide greater transparency to quality issues in the planning of mobility flows.

<http://www.mob-reg.eu>

Schools and universities can jointly develop actions which help prepare pupils to be mobile when they become students, e.g. summer universities for upper secondary school pupils in specific subject fields. Building on the Comenius-Regio initiative⁴² and the mobility components within the Youth in Action programme, interaction with other actors from the non formal education sector could be increased.

Info: Comenius Regio Partnerships

These partnerships offer funding to support regional cooperation in school education and the exchange of experiences and good practice between regions and municipalities in Europe. Together with schools and other relevant partners from their region or municipality, regional authorities with a role in school education are invited to set up partnerships with other regions and to collaborate on any topic of common interest. To support mobility between the two partner regions and to develop sustainable mobility schemes for pupils can be one of the activities within Comenius Regio Partnerships. The first Comenius Regio Partnerships will start in autumn 2009.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/comenius/doc1002_en.htm

One important aspect of youth mobility is funding. Whilst the availability of finance is not the only – and often not the most significant - barrier to expanding mobility, it is clear that in order to offer mobility opportunities to all groups of young people the funding base has to be broadened considerably, beyond the existing and potential scope of the European mobility programmes. Some regions are already using the European Social Fund to support mobility, most notably in the vocational sector. Under the Marie Curie Actions, a new funding mechanism (COFUND) has been developed to support existing or newly created regional, national or international programmes to boost transnational mobility for training and career development. The Structural Funds may offer other possibilities to support mobility in the future. The European Investment Bank currently supports a number of initiatives at national and regional level for the provision of student lending in the higher education area. Potential exists to use the Bank's resources to expand the funding available for mobility. All these different sources of funding help the EU to play a key role in stimulating learning mobility. However, to meet the ambition of expanding this opportunity to a much wider group, European funding may need to be restructured and the existing instruments reoriented to give these activities more visibility and effectiveness. Nevertheless, European funding will not be sufficient and a much broader financial base will have to be found. European, national and regional authorities need to cooperate with education institutions, civil society bodies and local authorities engaged in mobility to combine their capacities to fund mobility.

⁴² Comenius Regio Partnerships: new opportunities for regional cooperation in school education, 3.11.2008, <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/1621&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

How can all actors and resources at national, regional and local levels be better mobilised in the interest of youth mobility?

Can you provide examples of successful territorial partnerships?

Can you provide good examples and innovative ideas on the funding of youth mobility?

3.2. More active involvement from the business world

There is a potential for further strengthening the motivation and engagement of business in youth mobility. Internships, research programmes and collaborative projects, which allow young people to work with or within a company, alone or in interdisciplinary groups, should be encouraged in all disciplines and sectors. Businesses need to be convinced of the value of learning mobility so that they will undertake the extra effort needed to offer more placements to young people. Businesses can also contribute to the funding of youth mobility, in cooperation with European, national and regional authorities⁴³.

The mobility of young entrepreneurs contributes to enhancing the internationalisation and competitiveness of European enterprises. The European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT) will, once fully operational, provide examples of increased mobility of students, academics and researchers in its various fields of activities⁴⁴.

Info: Marie Curie Actions

Marie Curie Actions offer a wide range of opportunities for geographical and intersectorial mobility of researchers. For example, Initial Training Networks (ITN) offer early-stage researchers the opportunity to improve their research skills, join established research teams organised in international networks and enhance their career prospects. The networks recruit and employ researchers, and provide specialised training modules and exposure to the private sector. Another example are the Marie Curie Industry-Academia Partnerships and Pathways (IAPP) which can include universities and companies of all shapes and sizes focussing on joint research projects. IAPP aims to boost skills exchange between the commercial and non-commercial sectors through the secondments of staff.

<http://ec.europa.eu/mariecurieactions/>

Good practice: Go for Europe

This joint initiative of chambers of commerce and craft as well as the metal and electrical industries of Baden-Württemberg/Germany aims to support internships of apprentices abroad and to internationalise the training of apprentices to prepare them better for the European labour market.

<http://www.goforeurope.de/home.html>

How can businesses be motivated to become more strongly involved in youth mobility? Please provide examples of good practice.

⁴³ See also Commission Communication "A new partnership for the modernisation of universities: the EU Forum for University Business Dialogue" - COM(2009) 158.

⁴⁴ <http://eit.europa.eu/>

3.3. Virtual Networking and eTwinning

Virtual mobility, i.e. the use of the internet and other electronic forms of information and communication, is often a catalyst for embarking on a period of physical mobility. Although not a substitute for physical mobility, it does enable young people to prepare a stay abroad and can create conditions for future physical mobility by facilitating friendships, contacts and social networking etc. It also provides a means to keep in contact with the host country once the mobility period is over. It can also provide an international dimension to those learners who, for different reasons, are not able or willing to go abroad. In that context, ICT can be used for “electronic twinning” and for virtual platforms, for teachers, other "multipliers", interested individuals, interactive communities, open source initiatives etc. Virtual mobility may also be an appropriate and practical form of mobility for young pupils, where travelling abroad may not be an option. Electronic twinning can enhance the quality of mobility initiatives (e.g. through better preparation) and make them more sustainable.

Info: Comenius eTwinning

Within the Comenius programme, eTwinning is being developed to mainstream the use of Information and Communication technologies to promote collaborative learning, the European dimension, the sharing of resources and practice and the pedagogical use of ICT in schools Europe-wide. In eTwinning, primary and secondary schools establish an Internet twinning link with a partner school elsewhere in Europe. The main output of eTwinning are the joint pedagogical projects developed by the participating schools using the tools and the Internet spaces made available for them through the European eTwinning portal. The most original feature of eTwinning is that, rather than financing individual projects, it offers support, services, ideas, tools and recognition for facilitating school collaboration. More than 50,000 schools are involved in eTwinning throughout Europe.

<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/index.htm>

Good practice: Virtual Campus for Digital Students

This European network of providers of open and distance learning is building a virtual campus for "digital students" aimed at providing open educational sources and tools and to ensure the compatibility of the different eLearning environments used in the partner universities.

www.vicadis.net

How can we best make use of ICTs to provide valuable virtual mobility opportunities to enrich the physical mobility?

Can the eTwinning approach be used in other learning sectors e.g. voluntary service, vocational sector?

3.4. Engaging the "multipliers"

As briefly mentioned in section 1.2, an enthusiastic teacher, trainer or youth worker who has been mobile him or herself, can be an important motivator for young people to undertake a mobility period abroad. Such individuals have the credibility to explain the benefits of and act as an ambassador for youth mobility.

However, being mobile themselves and helping young people to go abroad requires, in most cases, a considerable personal investment on the part of the teachers, trainers and youth workers. Mobility periods of teachers and trainers in school, university and vocational education should be encouraged and recognised as an integral part of their career development, as well as mobility of youth workers in youth organisations.

Likewise, the time and effort of teachers, trainers and youth workers to invest in helping young people to prepare their stay abroad needs to be recognised accordingly in their task descriptions and work plan. All too often mobility opportunities are the result of the personal commitment of a teacher, trainer or youth worker who invests his or her free time and private resources to create these opportunities. This group needs incentives and recognition for the valuable work they do.

This could include the development of mobility opportunities for educators and trainers in all target areas, e.g. reciprocal teacher exchange schemes. Particular attention could be given to the training of trainers in areas of strategic importance and skills shortages identified by the "New Skills for New Jobs Initiative"⁴⁵.

Language teachers are a particularly important group of multipliers. However, while it would seem elementary that language teachers should have spent some time in the country whose language they teach, this is by no means the rule everywhere in Europe. Equally, language teachers ought to have the opportunity to teach their mother tongue abroad.

Another pool of people that could be made use of in this context are those who have themselves been mobile, i.e. higher education alumni and various networks of pupils, students and former volunteers.

Good practice:

Marie Curie Fellows Association

The MCFA is the association of young scientists who were awarded a mobility research training grant by the European Community. It provides information and a discussion forum to young European researchers.

<http://mcfa.eu>

Erasmus Student Network

The Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is a non-for-profit international student organisation. Its mission is to foster student mobility in Higher Education under the principle of "Students Helping Students". The network provides services and information to 150.000 students.

www.esn.org

Erasmus Mundus Alumni Association

The mission of the Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni Association (EMA) is to provide a forum for networking, communication and collaboration and to promote Erasmus Mundus as a European programme of excellence in international education. The EM Alumni have

⁴⁵ New Skills for New Jobs: Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs - SEC(2008) 3058, http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/com868_en.pdf

proven to be the most effective ambassadors to promote EM programme in their countries of origin due to their first-hand knowledge of students' needs, problems and language.

www.em-a.eu

Should mobility opportunities for "multipliers" (teachers, trainers, youth workers, etc.) be given additional support and prominence in European programmes?

What do you see as the main obstacles to a stronger engagement of teachers and trainers in promoting mobility?

3.5. Mobility Targets

Ministers in the Education Council of November 2008 indicated their broad support for a new mobilisation to increase mobility; efforts should now focus on turning this broad support into precise objectives. Concrete targets to be achieved in a specific area can be a powerful tool to encourage Member States, regional authorities, institutions and organisations to focus their strategy. Targets currently exist within the education and training area as part of the Lisbon Strategy, but so far they do not include mobility. The existing targets have proved to be a useful tool within the Open Method of Coordination, particularly to motivate stakeholders to reach new goals. Specific mobility targets are presently being discussed in the context of the renewed Education and Training Strategy. A significant breakthrough was achieved in April 2009 when a mobility target in higher education was adopted in the context of the Bologna Process. This stipulates that by 2020, at least 20% of those graduating in the European Higher Education Area should have a study or a training period abroad (see footnote 10). On the foot of this, in May 2009, the European Council invited the Commission to study the possibility of extending such a benchmark to include vocational education and training and teacher mobility⁴⁶.

In addition to European and national benchmarks, it might also be useful for regions, universities, schools, businesses and associations to set strategic benchmarks of their own, in line with their own education and skills strategies. This develops a sense of ownership and motivation to reach the benchmarks.

Good practice: national and organisational mobility targets in higher education

A newly developed "Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions in Finland 2009-2015" sets mobility goals for 2015: thus the outgoing student and trainee mobility in universities is to reach 6% (2007:3.8%) and in polytechnics 8% (2007: 6.1%).

The Austrian Government has set the objective that 50% of graduates should have a mobility experience relevant to their studies by 2020.

Targets exist not only at governmental level: The German Academic Exchange Service DAAD also calls for at least 50% of graduates to have a mobility experience "in the medium term".

Do you consider targets a useful tool in defining a mobility strategy and if so, at what level (European, national, institutional, sectoral, etc.)?

Please provide examples of good practice.

⁴⁶ Council Conclusions in a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training, <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st09/st09845.en09.pdf>

CONCLUSIONS

This Green Paper is being put forward with a view to raising a wide number of issues linked to the learning mobility of young Europeans in all disciplines and contexts.

The European Commission is now calling upon all stakeholders, from governments to individuals, to support its efforts to make youth mobility the rule rather than the exception. While recognising that this is a challenging objective in the current economic context, learning mobility is a key element in the overall strategy to equip Europe with the skills needed for the future.

This Green Paper highlights a number of areas where further efforts are required. Many of these efforts imply action at national, regional and institutional level, as well as the active involvement of civil society, business and other stakeholders.

Suggestions of possible courses of action which could be explored at different levels are put forward. These are intended to stimulate feedback and are not meant to be exhaustive. All interested parties are welcome to contribute to this debate and put forward their options for the future. The Commission will carefully evaluate the feedback to the consultation and prepare a proposal for the practical follow-up.

HOW TO TAKE PART IN THE CONSULTATION

Responses to this Green Paper will be collected at two levels.

First, the Commission invites stakeholders to provide responses to the open questions raised in the text, as well as further reflections and examples of good practice.

All data concerning individuals will remain anonymous. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please indicate the name and nature of the entity you represent. [Professional organisations are invited to register in the Commission's Register for Interest Representatives.](http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regrin) (<http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regrin>).

You can send your contributions via e-mail to

EAC-GREEN-PAPER-MOBILITY@ec.europa.eu.

or via mail to:

EAC GREEN PAPER MOBILITY

DG EAC/B3

MADO 11/14

European Commission

B-1049 Brussels

Second, there is an on-line multiple-choice questionnaire, tailored to the wider public, at:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/consult/index_en.html

The public consultation period for consultations at both levels ends on **15 December 2009**.