



# **Vocational mobility in Europe: analysing provision, take-up and impact**

Final report

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## **Table of Contents**

Executive summary .....	1
Why this study?.....	1
A great diversity of programmes/schemes across Europe.....	2
Definitions and policy approaches to VET mobility at country level .....	3
Why and how establishing and implementing non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes? .....	3
Impacts of the programmes/schemes reviewed .....	4
Key strengths, success factors and obstacles.....	4
Recommendations for future developments at EU and national level.....	5
Note de synthèse.....	7
Pourquoi cette étude ? .....	7
Une grande diversité de programmes à travers l'Europe .....	8
Définitions et approches politiques de la mobilité dans l'EFV au niveau national .....	9
Motivations conduisant à établir et mettre en œuvre des programmes de mobilité hors Erasmus+ : pourquoi et comment ? .....	10
Impacts des programmes analysés .....	10
Points forts, facteurs de réussite et obstacles .....	11
Recommandations pour de futurs développements aux niveaux de l'UE et national	12
Zusammenfassung.....	14
Weshalb diese Studie?.....	14
Europaweit gibt es eine Vielfalt von Programmen/Maßnahmen.....	15
Definitionen und politische Ansätze für die berufliche Mobilität auf Länderebene ....	16
Warum und wie werden Programme/Maßnahmen außerhalb von Erasmus+ erarbeitet und umgesetzt? .....	17
Auswirkungen auf den überprüften Programmen/Maßnahmen .....	17
Stärken, Erfolgsfaktoren und Hindernisse.....	18
Empfehlungen für zukünftige Entwicklungen auf EU- und nationaler Ebene .....	19
1 Introduction .....	22
1.1 VET mobility in Europe .....	22
1.2 Structure of the present report .....	27
2 Approach and methodology .....	29
2.1 Objectives of the study.....	29
2.2 Scope of the study .....	29
2.3 Methodology .....	30
2.4 Reporting and analysis .....	38
3 Non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes and schemes .....	41
3.1 Main types of programmes/schemes and key features.....	41
3.2 Complementary insights on selected programmes/schemes .....	44
4 Impacts-related qualitative insights and statistics on non-Erasmus+ and Erasmus+ VET mobility .....	66
4.1 Impact-related anecdotal evidence from KIIs and case studies .....	66
4.2 Statistics and comparison with Erasmus+ .....	71
5 Conclusions and recommendations.....	94
5.1 What can the EU and Erasmus+ programme countries do? .....	94
5.2 Increasing the quality and effectiveness of VET mobility across Europe: what could the EU and Erasmus+ programme countries do? .....	100

Lack of knowledge-base and mutual learning measures on non-EU funded VET mobility initiatives.....	103
Lack of statistical data and monitoring mechanisms .....	104
Varying approaches to ensure transparency and recognition of VET mobility abroad .....	105
Complexity/opacity of EU funding opportunities .....	106
Drawing on lessons learnt from inspiring examples .....	107

## **Executive summary**

### **Why this study?**

The value of VET mobility to address issues of quality and global competitiveness of vocational education and training (VET) in Europe, its attractiveness to learners, as well as the employability of VET learners, has been acknowledged for more than two decades at both EU policy and programme levels.

At policy level, while Member States retain the primary responsibility for the organisation of VET, their work is supported and complemented through EU-level policies and frameworks which include the promotion of mobility of VET staff and learners (Treaty, Art. 166<sup>1</sup>). Mobility in education and the labour market is notably one of the key values of Europe, as the Rome Declaration of 25 March 2017 reaffirms.<sup>2</sup>

The current framework for policy action and policy debate on VET mobility in Europe is underpinned by various strategic EU policy documents among which the 2010 Bruges Communiqué that emphasised the need for national VET systems to attract learners from across Europe and the world in order to remain up-to-date and competitive or subsequent 2015 Riga Conclusions that set new medium-term deliverables for the period 2015-2020.

At programme level, mobility in VET was first supported at EU level through the Joint Programme (1964-1991) that aimed to foster the exchange of young workers. This was followed by the implementation of PETRA II<sup>3</sup> programme. In more recent years, the Lifelong Learning Programme (and Leonardo da Vinci VET sub-programme) and ongoing Erasmus+ have supported VET mobility through various actions and related funding opportunities.

In parallel to EU actions, a number of initiatives have been taken by countries, regions or organisations. However, those have not been the object of evidence-based research in most cases.

This study was therefore commissioned by DG EMPL to gain insights on non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes within the 33 Erasmus+ programme countries<sup>4</sup>. More specifically the study aims to offer an overview of their key features and perceived impacts at beneficiary level (i.e. learners, staff, organisations and beyond) as well as to identify key commonalities and differentiators with Erasmus+ VET mobility actions. The study has also been carried out at a time when the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the next generations of EU programmes (including Erasmus+) for 2021-2027 were being negotiated. In this context, the methodology followed has also been designed to offer recommendations on how the quality and effectiveness of VET mobility across Europe could be improved, in this remit, through possible areas for action at EU and country level.

The following considerations have underpinned the methodological approach followed for this study:

- **Dealing with a landscape of very diverse programmes/schemes:** whilst dedicated VET mobility programmes/schemes are relatively easy to identify, a key challenge for the study was that much mobility in a VET context is carried out in the framework of non-dedicated ones (i.e. whereby mobility is just one of

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<sup>1</sup> Treaty on the functioning of the European Union, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=FR>

<sup>2</sup> European Council (2017) The Rome Declaration. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/03/25/rome-declaration/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3Ac11012b>

<sup>4</sup> The 28 EU Member States (EU28), former Northern Macedonia (FY), Iceland (IS), Liechtenstein (LI), Norway (NO) and Turkey (TR).

many possible activities that can be supported through the programmes/schemes), much difficult to capture. The study therefore needed to operate with a clear – but comprehensive - definition of what a “relevant programme/scheme” is.

- **Establishing the scope of programmes/schemes outside Erasmus+ :** linked to the above was the difficulty of establishing accurate information on actual numbers or just an overview of the scope of activities. It was anticipated that statistics on mobility might not be systematically collated for programmes/schemes that would be identified.
- **Assessing the impact at different levels (individuals, organisations and systems):** the variety of programmes/schemes to be reviewed also meant to face the risk of capturing limited or partial information from one programme/scheme to another. The identification of key respondents was also challenging as no comprehensive database of all individual participants in non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes exists in any of the 33 countries covered. Added to the GDPR Regulation related requirements to implement, the above required to set a tailored approach (for details see section 2).

The study has produced the following **outputs**: a mapping of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes, 33 country factsheets<sup>5</sup>, 7 case studies, surveys complemented by literature review and review of selected Erasmus+ data. Related findings are briefly outlined below.

### **A great diversity of programmes/schemes across Europe**

Findings confirm the diversity as well as the uneven distribution of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes across the 33 countries.

Where existing, those are found in different contexts and take various forms – e.g. VET mobility dedicated or not<sup>6</sup>, operated through large-scale multinational, country-centred or regional programmes/schemes. They also draw on different sources of funding, be it public, private or a mixture of both.

Findings also reveal that in most countries Erasmus+ emerges as the main programme supporting VET mobility; in particular in three countries (BG, HU and TR), Erasmus+ appears to be the only programme supporting VET mobility.

For more details, see 3.1.

#### **Key features of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes identified**

- 139 programmes/schemes were initially mapped and 45<sup>7</sup> were further reviewed through the country factsheets.
- The majority of identified programmes/schemes are:
  - cross-sectoral, without a specific sectoral focus; enterprise-led schemes naturally target specific sectors of VET;
  - in the field of IVET: only few targeting CVET were identified. Combined with previous evidence-based research, CVET mobility (outside Erasmus+) is rare and does not play a significant role in the overall picture of learning mobility in VET.

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<sup>5</sup> Offering a summary of insights gained from the review of national legislation and/or recent VET-centred policy documents on whether and how VET mobility is referred to and defined.

<sup>6</sup> i.e. though holding a mobility element.

<sup>7</sup> The majority of the programmes/schemes retained in the country factsheets receive public funding, at least partially and are then implemented by ministries or other public authorities at either national or regional level (36 out of 45 schemes).



- Key findings on IVET programmes/schemes:
  - Programmes/schemes targeting young VET learners or graduates prevail.
  - Work placement and exposure to real working environments is the most common form of VET mobility.
  - Most IVET programmes/schemes are financed by national/regional authorities, but there also are publicly funded programmes/schemes which rely on EU financing other than Erasmus+ (e.g. ESF, INTERREG, EaSI).
- A phenomenon of 'invisibly-EU funded' mobility is suspected (i.e. initiatives featuring as private-led but which are in reality supported by EU funding sources (Erasmus+ or even other EU funds)).
- Some programmes/schemes offer different features than those of Erasmus+ VET mobility actions:
  - programmes/schemes offering VET mobility with a wider international footprint (e.g. Torno Subito, EDUFI placement scholarships) or longer-term mobilities of at least 12 months (e.g. PIU, High School Teachers Exchange Programme, Apprentissage Transfrontalier).
  - programmes/schemes with a (inter-) regional (e.g. interregional Eurodyssey programmes), that have been designed to respond to the needs of the labour market at regional and local levels.

### **Definitions and policy approaches to VET mobility at country level**

No explicit definition of VET mobility is found within national legislation and/or other policy documents of the vast majority of countries considered. In a few cases, national-level legislation set regulations on the main elements to comply with when organising VET mobility (e.g. in AT, DE, DK, FR, NL) but support to VET mobility actions usually takes the form of general statements throughout policy planning/implementation documents in most countries.

Whilst this reveals that a certain level of attention is being paid to the topic at country level, no clear insights were gained on whether discussion (e.g. supported through mutual learning initiatives/fora) is being effectively supported or sustained over time. This may suggest on the contrary that, where existing, such initiatives would have generally rather waxed and waned as yet. Further details can be found under 3.2.1.

### **Why and how establishing and implementing non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes?**

Key findings on the rationale for establishing the programmes/schemes and their key features in terms of governance and implementation arrangements are summarised below (see 3.2.2 and 3.2.3. for details).

#### **Rationale, governance and implementation arrangements in a nutshell:**

- Many programmes/schemes have a rationale outside of a VET-context – e.g. in connection with relationships to neighbouring countries or “intercultural understanding” in general.
- Where aligned with VET policies, the rationale may relate to addressing the lack of VET placement opportunities, or tackling youth unemployment rates at the national level. The extent to which those concerned have been successful in these areas could not be explored though, due to lack of tangible data available.
- Implementation-wise:

- higher level of public access, more effective administration and a higher quality standard is observed in countries where there is strong policy support to VET mobility (e.g. AT, DE, DK)
- lessons learned from programmes/schemes implemented at regional or local level show that those reviewed are usually fit for purpose to address specific local issues. Meanwhile, their implementation often requires more administrative resources whilst they are also less regularly monitored and evaluated than their bigger or well-established counterparts.
- A few interesting practice examples (e.g. PIU, Nordplus, Pro-Tandem, Torno Subito) that have the potential to be inspiring cases at EU level (through Erasmus+ notably) and/or national and below levels also emerge from the study.

### **Impacts of the programmes/schemes reviewed**

Despite the limitations encountered in collating robust data in this area (see details in section 2), available findings suggest that the main types of impact (as reported in particular at the individual and organisation levels) are very similar to those observed through Erasmus+ data.

At the **individual level**:

- Improved personal skills and motivation, as well as networking capacities of teachers and trainers.
- Increased employability<sup>8</sup>

At **organisational level**:

- Increased organisational development through the introduction of new teaching methods, sharing of good practice. Improved prestige of beneficiary VET schools or companies – making them more visible both to new students and partners at national and international levels.
- Enhanced VET-institutions' networking and adoption of good practices.
- In-company mobility placements help equipping the staff with necessary skills and potentially secure future employees.

At **system level**:

- Making use of and fostering the take-up of EU-level tools and instruments (e.g. ECVET) in the area of education and training. More intensive collaboration between education-related institutions at local, regional and national levels.
- Limited impact to address most urgent labour market needs.
- Participation in mobility programmes may contribute to workforce drain from less to more economically advanced countries or regions.

### **Key strengths, success factors and obstacles**

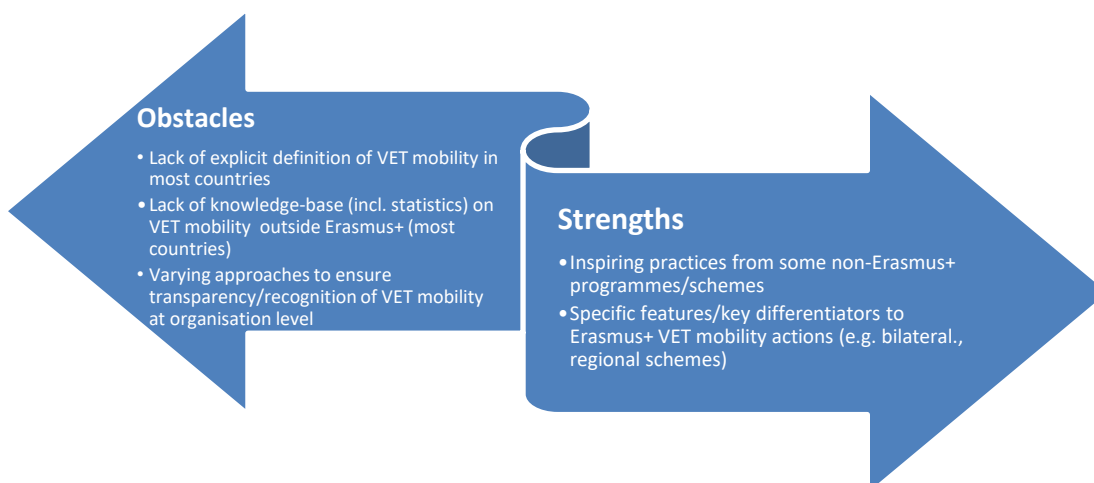
Findings show a number of similarities between non-Erasmus+ and Erasmus+ VET mobility actions in terms of the key strengths, success factors and obstacles encountered. In both cases, key strengths commonly relate to the positive impacts perceived at beneficiary level (individuals and organisation) whilst obstacles usually entail (not in specific order): financial constraints, administrative burden, language

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<sup>8</sup> Note: the employability of beneficiaries after mobility is an aspect not specifically monitored under Erasmus+. The present finding would require further investigation as the perceived impact was reported mostly by key informant interviews (i.e. anecdotal evidence not further substantiated by key facts/data in most cases). Besides, some insights were obtained through the surveys. However, related findings are to be interpreted cautiously as most respondents rather reported on their mobility experience in the remit of Erasmus+.

barriers, difficulties to find appropriate partners abroad jointly with employers' reluctance to engage in VET mobility.

Next to those, an additional set of strengths and obstacles, more specific to those non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes reviewed, was identified. These are briefly summarised below.



## **Recommendations for future developments at EU and national level**

Study findings overall suggest that:

- Considerable experience and knowledge exist in VET mobility area at the EU level, resulting from more than two decades of dedicated attention and related actions.
- The large amount of resources invested at the EU level has materialised in many positive achievements at both EU and national level.
- This has however not sufficed to help overcome challenges that are still faced at national level.

Favourable conditions to support more effective and quality of VET mobility (i.e. both Erasmus+ and non-Erasmus+ funded) should be thus promoted. To achieve this, working towards minimizing existing or potential overlaps and fostering complementarities between non-Erasmus+ and Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes should be considered at both EU and national levels.

Effectively addressing this could indeed positively influence the development of both main types of programmes/schemes – and be in turn beneficial to wider VET mobility developments across Europe (including in the remit of next Erasmus programme in the period 2021-2027).

Against this background, possible options for actions at EU and/or national level were identified by the study team.

These articulate around the following main areas:

- Enhancing knowledge-base and mutual learning measures on non-EU funded VET mobility initiatives (e.g. potential role for Eurodesk, Euroguidance, Cedefop mobility Scoreboard or the option of creating VET mobility observatories to be explored at national level);

- Reinforcing statistical data collection and monitoring mechanisms (e.g. explore potential support from Euroguidance or Eurodesk; support effective dialogue on the value of monitoring VET mobility schemes at national/regional level);
- Addressing the issue of varying approaches to ensure transparency and recognition of VET mobility abroad (e.g. further promote/develop EU tools to support the quality of mobility, and organise mutual learning events and support dissemination of good practices at national level);
- Addressing the complexity/opacity of EU funding opportunities (e.g. supporting effective communication and dissemination of information at national level; develop case studies to demonstrate complementarities and synergies between EU and non-EU funded VET mobility initiatives).

The above is complemented with a few examples of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes that would be worth considering at EU/national level to inform the development of existing programmes, minimise overlaps and/or foster synergies. Further details can be found in section 5.

## **Note de synthèse**

### **Pourquoi cette étude ?**

Les bénéficiaires de la mobilité dans l'enseignement et la formation professionnels (EFP) en termes de qualité et de compétitivité du secteur en Europe, d'attractivité mais également d'employabilité pour les étudiants participants ('apprenants' ci-après) ont été reconnus depuis plus de deux décennies, au niveau de l'Union européenne (UE), tant par le biais de politiques que de programmes.

Au niveau politique, alors que les États membres sont souverains en matière d'organisation de l'EFP, leur travail est soutenu et informé par des politiques et cadres de travail, développés au niveau de l'UE, dont l'objet est de promouvoir la mobilité du personnel et des apprenants (Traité, Art. 166)<sup>9</sup>. La mobilité dans l'éducation et sur le marché du travail est une des valeurs clés de l'Europe, comme le réaffirme le Traité de Rome (25 mars 2017).<sup>10</sup>

Le cadre de travail actuel destiné à soutenir l'action et le débat politique sur la mobilité dans l'EFP en Europe repose sur divers documents politiques stratégiques de l'UE, incluant le communiqué de Bruges de 2010 (qui souligne la nécessité pour les systèmes nationaux d'EFP d'attirer des apprenants de toute l'Europe et du monde entier afin de rester attractifs et concurrentiels) ainsi que les Conclusions de Riga de 2015, qui fixent de nouveaux objectifs à moyen terme pour la période 2015-2020.

Au niveau des programmes, la mobilité dans l'EFP a en premier lieu été soutenue au niveau de l'UE par le Programme Commun (1964-1991) qui visait à encourager les échanges de jeunes travailleurs. Ces actions se sont poursuivies dans le cadre du programme PETRA II<sup>11</sup>. Plus récemment, le Programme pour l'éducation et la formation tout au long de la vie (et sous-programme Leonardo da Vinci) et l'actuel programme Erasmus+ ont soutenu la mobilité dans l'EFP à travers diverses actions et opportunités de financement.

Parallèlement aux actions de l'UE, diverses initiatives ont été menées aux niveaux nationaux, régionaux ou organisationnels. Néanmoins, ces dernières n'ont, dans la plupart des cas, pas fait l'objet de recherches factuelles.

C'est dans ce contexte que la DG EMPL a mandaté la présente étude, afin d'acquérir une meilleure compréhension des programmes et autres initiatives clés<sup>12</sup> existants, non financés par Erasmus+, dont la mission est de soutenir la mobilité dans l'EFP au sein des 33 pays participant au programme Erasmus+<sup>13</sup>. Plus spécifiquement, l'étude avait pour objectif d'offrir une vue d'ensemble des principales caractéristiques des programmes/initiatives clés identifiés et de leurs impacts (perçus au niveau des bénéficiaires, soit les apprenants, le personnel enseignant ou de formation, les organisations et au-delà). L'étude avait également pour objectif d'identifier les principaux points communs et différences entre les actions de mobilité offertes au sein des programmes identifiés et celles, de même nature, déployées dans le cadre d'Erasmus+. L'étude a par ailleurs été menée au moment où le cadre financier pluriannuel (CFP) et la prochaine génération de programmes européens (incluant le

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<sup>9</sup> Traité de Fonctionnement de l'Union européenne (TFUE), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/FR/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=FR>

<sup>10</sup> Conseil Européen (2017) Le Traité de Rome. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/03/25/rome-declaration/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3Ac11012b>

<sup>12</sup> La version anglaise de la note de synthèse fait la distinction entre 'programmes' et 'schemes'. Ces derniers prennent la forme d'initiatives établies et reconnues dans les pays, de taille ou de durée plus restreinte que celles des 'programmes'. La version française utilise le terme générique 'programmes' pour les deux ci-après.

<sup>13</sup> Les 28 Etats-Membres de l'UE (EU28), la Macédoine du Nord (FY), l'Islande (IS), le Liechtenstein (LI), la Norvège (NO) et la Turquie (TR).

successeur d'Erasmus+) pour 2021-2027 étaient en cours de négociation. Dans ce contexte, la méthodologie suivie pour l'étude a été développée afin de proposer des recommandations (sous forme d'options possibles aux niveaux UE et national) dans l'optique d'améliorer la qualité et l'efficacité de la mobilité dans l'EFPP en Europe.

Les considérations suivantes ont été prises en compte pour définir l'approche méthodologique suivie pour cette étude :

- **Nécessité de prendre en compte un paysage jalonné de divers types de programmes:** s'il est relativement facile d'identifier des programmes de mobilité « dédiés » (en d'autres termes, des programmes dont l'intitulé suggère explicitement que leur mission principale est de soutenir la mobilité dans l'EFPP), l'un des défis de l'étude résidait dans le fait qu'une part importante de la mobilité est offerte dans le cadre de programmes « non dédiés » (c'est-à-dire des programmes où la mobilité est seulement une des activités financées par ces derniers). Ceci rendant donc l'identification de programmes de mobilité dans l'EFPP plus difficile. Pour ce faire, l'étude devait s'appuyer sur une définition claire – et en même temps suffisamment détaillée – afin de retenir des programmes considérés comme "pertinents".
- **Délimiter le champ d'action des programmes non financés par Erasmus+ :** en lien avec le point précédent, obtenir des informations précises, chiffrées voire même un aperçu du champ d'action des différents programmes était une difficulté attendue. Le fait que des données statistiques ne soient pas systématiquement collectées pour les différents programmes identifiés était notamment anticipé.
- **Évaluer l'impact à différents niveaux (individus, organisations et systèmes) :** la variété des programmes à examiner impliquait également le risque de ne recueillir que des informations limitées ou partielles variables d'un programme à un autre. L'identification des informateurs clés a également été difficile dans la mesure où il n'existe pas de base de données globale reprenant des informations sur les participants individuels aux programmes de mobilité non financés par Erasmus+ offerts au sein des 33 pays couverts. Les exigences liées à la mise en œuvre du règlement sur le RGPD ajoutées aux considérations susmentionnées ont nécessité une approche sur mesure (pour plus de détails, voir la section 2).

L'étude a produit les **outils** suivants : une cartographie des programmes hors Erasmus+ soutenant la mobilité dans l'EFPP, 33 fiches d'information par pays<sup>14</sup>, 7 études de cas, des enquêtes dont les résultats ont été complétés par une analyse documentaire et l'analyse d'une sélection de données Erasmus+. Les résultats de l'analyse de ces différents outils sont brièvement présentés ci-dessous.

## **Une grande diversité de programmes à travers l'Europe**

Les résultats de l'étude confirment la diversité ainsi que la répartition inégale des programmes de mobilité hors Erasmus+ dans les 33 pays couverts.

Les programmes identifiés sont mis en œuvre dans des contextes différents et prennent diverses formes. Ils peuvent, par exemple, être dédiés ou non à la mobilité dans l'EFPP<sup>15</sup>, être organisés dans le cadre de programmes multinationaux à grande échelle, nationaux ou régionaux. Ils reposent également sur différentes sources de financement : publiques, privées ou mixtes.

Les résultats révèlent également que, dans la plupart des pays, Erasmus+ apparaît comme le principal programme soutenant la mobilité dans l'EFPP. Dans trois pays en

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<sup>14</sup> Ces dernières offrent un résumé des informations obtenues, sur base de la revue de législations nationales et/ou de documents politiques stratégiques dans le domaine de l'EFPP, indiquant si et comment la mobilité dans l'EFPP y est mentionnée et explicitement définie.

<sup>15</sup> C'est-à-dire comprenant un élément de mobilité.

particulier (BG, HU et TR), Erasmus+ semble être le seul programme à soutenir la mobilité dans l'EFP. Pour plus de détails, voir 3.1.

### **Caractéristiques clés des programmes de mobilité hors Erasmus+ identifiés**

- 139 programmes ont été initialement répertoriés et 45<sup>16</sup> ont fait l'objet d'un examen plus approfondi via les fiches d'information par pays.
- La majorité des programmes identifiés est :
  - transsectorielle, sans ciblage sectoriel spécifique. Les programmes menés par des entreprises ciblent quant à eux naturellement des secteurs spécifiques de l'EFP ;
  - identifiés dans l'enseignement professionnel et de la formation initiaux: seul un petit nombre de programmes ciblant l'enseignement professionnel et la formation continue a été identifié. Combinés aux résultats de recherches antérieures, les résultats de l'étude suggèrent que la mobilité (hors Erasmus+) dans l'enseignement professionnel et de la formation continue est rare et ne joue pas un rôle significatif dans le paysage général de la mobilité dans l'EFP.
- Principales conclusions sur les programmes de mobilité dans l'enseignement professionnel et de la formation initiaux :
  - Les programmes ciblant les jeunes apprenants ou diplômés de l'EFP prédominent.
  - Les stages en entreprises et l'exposition à des environnements de travail réels sont les formes les plus courantes de mobilité.
  - La plupart des programmes sont financés par des autorités nationales/régionales. Il existe également des programmes financés par des fonds publics UE autre qu'Erasmus+ (par exemple le FSE, INTERREG ou EaSI).
- L'existence d'un phénomène de mobilité "financé de façon invisible par l'UE" (en d'autres termes, des cas d'initiatives menées par le secteur privé mais qui seraient en réalité soutenues par des sources de financement UE (Erasmus+ ou autres fonds UE) est suspecté.
- Certains programmes présentent des caractéristiques différentes de celles des actions de mobilité Erasmus+ dans l'EFP :
  - Programmes offrant une mobilité dans l'EFP au niveau international (cas par exemple de Torno Subito ou des bourses de placement EDUFI) ou une mobilité de plus longue durée, d'au moins 12 mois (observé par exemple dans le cadre du programme PIU, du programme d'échange de professeurs du secondaire ou de l'Apprentissage Transfrontalier).
  - Programmes ayant un caractère (inter)régional (par exemple les programmes Eurodyssée interrégionaux) qui ont été conçus pour répondre aux besoins du marché du travail aux niveaux régional et local.

### **Définitions et approches politiques de la mobilité dans l'EFP au niveau national**

Aucune définition explicite de la mobilité dans l'EFP n'a été trouvée dans la revue de législations nationales et/ou d'autres documents politiques dans la grande majorité des pays considérés. Dans un petit nombre de cas, la législation nationale fixe des règles sur les principaux éléments à respecter dans le cadre de l'organisation de la

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<sup>16</sup> La majorité des programmes retenus dans les fiches d'information par pays reçoivent un financement public, au moins partiellement, et sont ensuite mis en œuvre par les ministères ou d'autres autorités publiques au niveau national ou régional (36 régimes sur 45).

mobilité dans l'EFP (par exemple, en Autriche, en Allemagne, au Danemark, en France et aux Pays-Bas). Le soutien aux actions de mobilité passe plutôt par le biais de déclarations générales dans les documents de planification/mise en œuvre des politiques dans la plupart des pays.

Même si cela suggère que le sujet bénéficie d'un certain niveau d'attention au niveau national, aucune information tangible n'a été obtenue quant aux moyens de stimuler la discussion (par exemple, via des initiatives ou forums d'apprentissage mutuel) ou de la faire perdurer dans le temps. Cela semble suggérer au contraire que, lorsqu'elles existent, de telles initiatives auraient plutôt tendance à être fluctuantes. Pour plus de détails, voir 3.2.1.

### **Motivations conduisant à établir et mettre en œuvre des programmes de mobilité hors Erasmus+ : pourquoi et comment ?**

Les conclusions relatives aux raisons qui ont conduit les pays à mettre en place des programmes de mobilité hors Erasmus+ et à définir les principales caractéristiques de ces derniers en matière de gouvernance et de modalités de mise en œuvre sont résumées ci-dessous (voir 3.2.2 et 3.2.3 pour plus de détails).

#### **Motivation, gouvernance et modalités de mise en œuvre, en bref :**

- La motivation d'établir des programmes de mobilité (hors Erasmus+) dans l'EFP se trouve, pour de nombreux programmes, en dehors de l'EFP - par exemple, pour favoriser les relations avec les pays voisins ou la "compréhension interculturelle" en général.
- Lorsque liées aux politiques d'EFP, les motivations se rapportent souvent aux besoins de trouver des solutions pour pallier au manque d'offre de stages ou sont en rapport avec la problématique du taux de chômage des jeunes à l'échelle nationale. L'absence de données tangibles disponibles n'a toutefois pas permis d'identifier dans quelle mesure les résultats escomptés ont été atteints.
- Au niveau de la mise en œuvre :
  - Un meilleur accès public, une administration plus efficace et des normes de qualité plus élevées sont observés dans les pays où la mobilité dans l'EFP bénéficie d'un fort soutien politique (par exemple, en AT, DE ou DK).
  - L'analyse des programmes mis en œuvre au niveau régional ou local met en avant que ces programmes sont généralement adaptés à des problèmes locaux spécifiques. Leur mise en œuvre exige souvent davantage de ressources administratives tandis qu'ils font également l'objet d'un suivi et d'une évaluation moins réguliers que leurs homologues plus importants ou bien établis.
  - Quelques exemples de pratiques intéressantes (par exemple PIU, Nordplus, Pro-Tandem, Torno Subito) susceptibles d'être des exemples inspirants au niveau de l'UE (notamment dans le cadre d'Erasmus+) et/ou aux niveaux nationaux (et régionaux ou locaux) ressortent également de cette étude.

### **Impacts des programmes analysés**

En dépit des difficultés rencontrées au niveau de la collecte de données robustes dans ce domaine (voir détails dans la section 2), les résultats disponibles suggèrent que les principaux types d'impact (signalés en particulier au niveau des individus et des organisations) sont très similaires à ceux observés dans le cadre d'Erasmus+.

#### **Au niveau individuel :**

- Amélioration des compétences personnelles et de la motivation, ainsi que des capacités de mise en réseau des enseignants et des formateurs.



- Employabilité accrue<sup>17</sup>.

Au **niveau organisationnel** :

- Bénéfices au niveau du développement des organisations bénéficiaires résultant de l'introduction de nouvelles méthodes d'enseignement/formation et du partage de bonnes pratiques. Prestige accru au niveau des écoles d'EFP ou des entreprises bénéficiaires : leur participation au(x) programme(s) les rendant plus visibles pour les nouveaux étudiants et les partenaires aux niveaux national et international.
- Renforcement de la mise en réseau des établissements d'EFP et de l'adoption de bonnes pratiques.
- Les stages en entreprise à l'étranger offrent l'opportunité au personnel participant d'acquérir des compétences et de recruter potentiellement de nouveaux employés.

Au **niveau systémique** :

- Utilisation et promotion renforcées des outils et instruments développés au niveau de l'UE (par exemple, ECVET) dans le domaine de l'EFP.
- Collaboration accrue entre les organismes d'éducation et de formation aux niveaux local, régional et national.
- Impact limité en matière de réponse aux besoins les plus urgents sur le marché du travail.
- La participation à des programmes de mobilité peut générer, dans une certaine mesure, un phénomène d'exode de main-d'œuvre de certains pays vers des pays ou régions économiquement plus prospères.

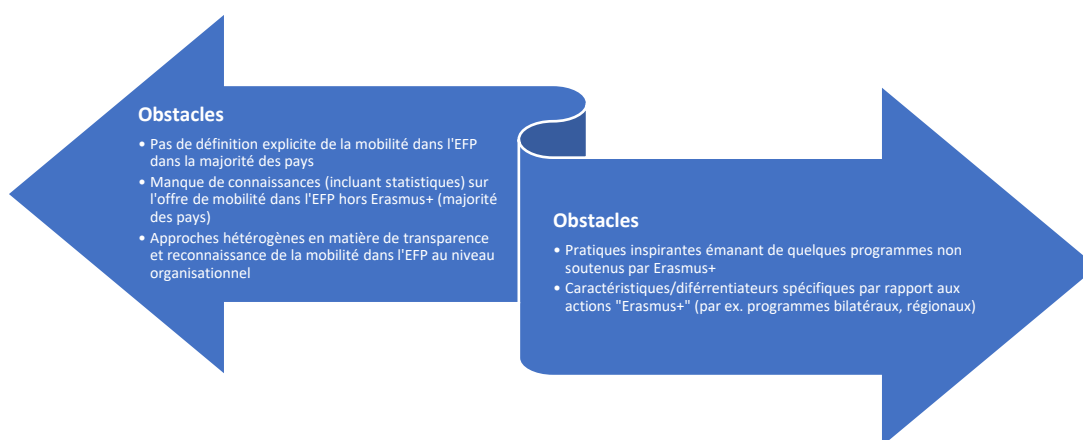
### **Points forts, facteurs de réussite et obstacles**

Les résultats mettent en évidence de nombreuses similitudes entre les actions de mobilité « Erasmus+ » et « non Erasmus+ » en termes de points forts, facteurs de réussite et obstacles communément rencontrés. Dans les deux cas, les impacts positifs perçus au niveau des bénéficiaires (individus et organisations) figurent parmi les principaux points forts tandis que les obstacles sont généralement de l'ordre de (sans ordre précis) : contraintes financières ou administratives, barrières linguistiques, difficultés à trouver des partenaires adéquats à l'étranger et réticence au niveau des employeurs à s'impliquer dans des activités de mobilité dans l'EFP.

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<sup>17</sup> Note: l'employabilité des bénéficiaires après la mobilité est une dimension qui n'est pas spécifiquement mesurée dans le cadre d'Erasmus+. Le résultat présenté ci-dessus découle principalement d'informations obtenues dans le cadre d'entretiens avec des informateurs clés (en d'autres termes, des données qualitatives anecdotiques non étayées par des faits ou données chiffrées dans la plupart des cas). Cela mériterait donc de faire l'objet de recherches plus approfondies. En outre, les enquêtes ont permis d'obtenir certaines informations. Toutefois, les résultats obtenus doivent être interprétés avec prudence, car la plupart des personnes interrogées ont plutôt fait état de leur expérience de mobilité dans le cadre d'Erasmus+.

En parallèle, d'autres points forts et obstacles, plus spécifiques aux programmes de mobilité hors Erasmus+ examinés, ont été identifiés. Ceux-ci sont brièvement résumés ci-dessous.



## **Recommandations pour de futurs développements aux niveaux de l'UE et national**

Les résultats de l'étude suggèrent globalement ce qui suit :

- Un niveau considérable d'expérience et de connaissances a été acquis au niveau de l'UE dans le domaine de la mobilité dans l'EFP, résultant de plus de deux décennies d'attention et d'actions spécifiques dans ce domaine.
- Les ressources importantes investies au niveau de l'UE ont généré de nombreuses réalisations positives tant au niveau de l'UE qu'au niveau national.
- Cela n'a cependant pas été suffisant pour aider à surmonter les défis, dans le domaine, qui se posent encore au niveau national.

En conséquence, des conditions favorables pour soutenir une mobilité plus efficace et de meilleure qualité dans l'EFP (soutenue dans le cadre d'Erasmus+ ou non) devraient être mises en place. Pour ce faire, des actions visant à réduire les chevauchements existants ou potentiels et à favoriser les complémentarités entre les programmes de mobilité Erasmus+ et non Erasmus+ devraient être entreprises tant au niveau de l'UE qu'au niveau national.

Une prise en compte effective de ces considérations pourrait en effet avoir une influence positive sur les développements futurs des deux principaux types de programmes (Erasmus+ and non-Erasmus+). Cela aurait également une influence positive au niveau de développements plus globaux en matière de mobilité dans l'EFP en Europe (incluant dans le cadre du prochain programme Erasmus qui sera mis en œuvre durant la période 2021-2027).

Dans ce contexte, l'équipe chargée de l'étude a identifié des options possibles d'actions aux niveaux de l'UE et/ou national.

Celles-ci s'articulent autour des principaux axes suivants :

- Renforcer la base de connaissances et les actions de dissémination et d'apprentissage mutuel sur les initiatives de mobilité dans l'EFP non financées par l'UE (Eurodesk, Euroguidance ou le Cedefop (via le 'Mobility Scoreboard') pourraient par exemple avoir un rôle potentiel ; l'option de créer des observatoires sur la mobilité dans l'EFP pourrait être explorée au niveau national) ;
- Renforcer les mécanismes de collecte et de suivi de données statistiques (par exemple en explorant le soutien potentiel d'Euroguidance ou d'Eurodesk ; en

soutenant un dialogue effectif sur la valeur du suivi des programmes de mobilité dans l'EFPP aux niveaux national et régional) ;

- Dans un contexte d'approches hétérogènes, prendre des actions pour améliorer la transparence et la reconnaissance de la mobilité dans l'EFPP (par exemple, en continuant à promouvoir/développer les instruments UE dans le domaine ; en organisant des sessions/événements d'apprentissage mutuel et en soutenant la diffusion des bonnes pratiques au niveau national) ;
- Prendre des actions pour mieux informer et rendre les possibilités de financement de l'UE moins complexes ou opaques (par exemple, en encourageant une communication et une diffusion efficaces des informations au niveau national ; en réalisant des études de cas pour enrichir les connaissances sur les complémentarités et synergies entre initiatives de mobilité dans l'EFPP financées ou non par l'UE).

Des exemples de programmes de mobilité dans l'EFPP non financés par Erasmus+ qui pourraient être considérés au niveau européen/national pour guider le développement des programmes existants, minimiser les chevauchements et/ou favoriser les synergies complètent les domaines d'actions ci-dessus. Pour plus de détails, voir section 5.

## **Zusammenfassung**

### **Weshalb diese Studie?**

Mobilität ist ein wichtiger Faktor für die Attraktivität, die Qualität und die globale Wettbewerbsfähigkeit der beruflichen Ausbildung in Europa und fördert die Beschäftigungsfähigkeit von Lernenden. Dies wird seit mehr als zwei Jahrzehnten sowohl in der EU-Politik als auch auf Programmebene anerkannt.

Auf der politischen Ebene behalten die Mitgliedstaaten zwar weiterhin die Verantwortung für die Organisation der Berufsausbildung, ihre Arbeit wird jedoch durch politische Maßnahmen und Rahmenvereinbarungen auf EU-Ebene unterstützt und ergänzt, die die Förderung der Mobilität von Berufsausbildungspersonal und Lernenden umfassen (Vertrag, Artikel 166<sup>18</sup>). Mobilität in der Bildung und auf dem Arbeitsmarkt ist einer der Schlüsselwerte Europas, wie es die Erklärung von Rom vom 25. März 2017 bekräftigt.<sup>19</sup>

Der derzeitige Rahmen für politische Maßnahmen und politische Debatten über Mobilität in der beruflichen Bildung in Europa wird durch verschiedene strategische Dokumente der EU-Politik gestützt. Eines davon ist das 2010-Brügge-Kommuniqué, in dem betont wurde, dass nationale Berufsausbildungssysteme, um aktuell und wettbewerbsfähig bleiben zu können, Lernende aus ganz Europa und der Welt anziehen müssen. Darüber hinaus legen die Riga-Schlussfolgerungen von 2015, die mittelfristig erwarteten Ergebnisse für den Zeitraum 2015-2020 fest.

Mobilität in der beruflichen Ausbildung wurde auf EU-Ebene erstmals durch das Gemeinsame Programm (1964-1991) unterstützt, das den Austausch junger Arbeitnehmer fördern sollte. Es folgte die Umsetzung des PETRA-II<sup>20</sup>-Programms. In den letzten Jahren haben das Programm für lebenslanges Lernen (und das Leonardo da Vinci-Aktionsprogramm für Berufsbildung) und das laufende Erasmus+ Programm die Mobilität der Berufsausbildung durch verschiedene Maßnahmen und den damit zusammenhängenden Finanzierungsmöglichkeiten unterstützt.

Parallel zu den EU-Maßnahmen haben auch Länder, Regionen oder Organisationen eine Reihe von Initiativen ergriffen. Diese waren jedoch bislang kaum Gegenstand evidenzbasierter Forschung.

Die GD EMPL hat die vorliegende Studie in Auftrag gegeben, um Erkenntnisse zu Mobilitätsprogrammen/-Maßnahmen außerhalb von Erasmus+ in den 33 Ländern, die an Erasmus+ teilnehmen zu erhalten<sup>21</sup>. Die Studie zielt darauf ab, einen Überblick über die wichtigsten Merkmale dieser Maßnahmen zu bieten, die Auswirkungen auf die Begünstigten (d.h. Lernende, Mitarbeiter, Organisationen usw.) festzustellen und die wichtigsten Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterscheidungsmerkmale zu den Mobilitätsmaßnahmen der Erasmus+-Programme zu identifizieren. Dies geschieht zu einem Zeitpunkt, zu dem der mehrjährige Finanzrahmen (MFR) und die nächsten Generationen von EU-Programmen (einschließlich Erasmus+) für 2021-2027 verhandelt wurden. Die angewandte Methodik wurde daher so konzipiert, dass Empfehlungen gegeben werden können, wie die Qualität und Wirksamkeit der Mobilität in der beruflichen Ausbildung in Europa durch mögliche Handlungsfelder auf EU- und Länderebene noch verbessert werden können.

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<sup>18</sup>Vertrag über die Arbeitsweise der Europäischen Union, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/DE/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=FR>

<sup>19</sup>Europäischer Rat (2017) Die Erklärung von Rom. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/03/25/rome-declaration/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/DE/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3Ac11012b>

<sup>21</sup>Die 28 EU-Mitgliedstaaten (EU28), die ehemalige jugoslawische Republik Mazedonien (FYROM), Island (IS), Liechtenstein (LI), Norwegen (NO) und die Türkei (TR).

Der methodische Ansatz dieser Studie wird von den folgenden Überlegungen untermauert:

- **Umgang mit äußerst unterschiedlichen Programmen/Maßnahmen:** Obwohl die Programme/Maßnahmen, die der Berufsmobilität gewidmet sind, relativ leicht zu identifizieren sind, bestand eine der wichtigsten Herausforderungen dieser Studie darin, dass viele der Bemühungen um Mobilität in der Berufsausbildung im Rahmen von nicht dedizierten Programmen/Maßnahmen (d.h. Mobilität ist nur eine von vielen möglichen Aktionen, die unterstützt werden) stattfinden. Das hat wiederum zur Folge, dass sie schwer erfassbar sind. In der Studie sollte daher eindeutig und umfassend definiert werden, was mit einem „relevanten Programm“ oder einer „relevanten Maßnahme“ gemeint ist.
- **Festlegung des Umfangs von Programmen/Maßnahmen außerhalb von Erasmus+:** In diesem Zusammenhang bestand die Schwierigkeit darin, genaue Informationen über die tatsächlichen Zahlen oder auch nur einen Überblick über den Umfang der Aktivitäten zu erhalten. Es wurde erwartet, dass eine systematische Erfassung der Statistiken zur Mobilität für die identifizierten Programme/Maßnahmen unter Umständen nicht möglich sein würde.
- **Bewertung der Auswirkungen auf verschiedenen Ebenen (Einzelpersonen, Organisationen und Systeme):** Durch die Vielfalt der zu überprüfenden Programme/Maßnahmen bestand außerdem das Risiko, spärliche oder unvollständige Informationen zu erfassen. Die Ermittlung relevanter Befragter stellte ebenfalls eine Herausforderung dar, da in keinem der 33 betroffenen Länder eine umfassende Datenbank aller Einzelpersonen, die an Mobilitätsprogrammen für die Berufsausbildung außerhalb von Erasmus+ beteiligt sind, vorhanden ist. Zusätzlich zu den umzusetzenden Anforderungen der Europäischen Datenschutz-Grundverordnung, war es erforderlich, einen maßgeschneiderten Ansatz festzulegen (nähere Einzelheiten siehe Abschnitt 2).
- Die Studie hat folgende **Ergebnisse erzielt:** eine Übersicht über Mobilitätsprogramme/-maßnahmen für die berufliche Ausbildung außerhalb von Erasmus+, 33 Ländermerkblätter<sup>22</sup>, 7 Fallstudien, Umfragen, die durch eine Literaturstudie und die Überprüfung ausgewählter Erasmus+ Daten ergänzt wurden. Die diesbezüglichen Ergebnisse werden im Folgenden kurz dargelegt.

### **Europaweit gibt es eine Vielfalt von Programmen/Maßnahmen**

Die Ergebnisse der Studie bestätigen die Vielfalt sowie die ungleiche Verteilung der Mobilitätsprogramme/-maßnahmen für Berufsausbildung außerhalb von Erasmus+ in den 33 betroffenen Ländern.

Wo vorhanden, sind diese in unterschiedlichen Kontexten zu finden und haben unterschiedliche Ausprägungen – z. B. dedizierte und nicht-dedizierte Mobilität in der Berufsausbildung<sup>23</sup>, die durch große multinationale, länderspezifische oder regionale Programmen/Maßnahmen durchgesetzt werden. Davon abgesehen, nutzen sie verschiedene Finanzierungsquellen, sei es öffentliche, private oder eine Mischung aus beiden.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen auch, dass Erasmus+ in den meisten Ländern das Hauptprogramm zur Unterstützung der Mobilität in der Berufsausbildung darstellt. In drei Ländern (Bulgarien, Ungarn und der Türkei) scheint Erasmus+ das einzige Programm zu sein, das die Mobilität der Berufsausbildung unterstützt.

Für weitere Einzelheiten siehe Abschnitt 3.1.

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<sup>22</sup>Diese bieten eine Zusammenfassung der Erkenntnisse aus der Überprüfung der nationalen Gesetzgebung und/oder der jüngsten politischen Dokumente, die sich auf die Berufsausbildung beziehen, ob und wie die Mobilität in der Berufsausbildung bezeichnet und definiert wird.

<sup>23</sup>d.h. diejenigen Programme, die sich wenigstens teilweise auf die Mobilität beziehen.

### **Wichtigste Merkmale der Programme/Maßnahmen für Mobilität in der Berufsausbildung außerhalb von Erasmus+**

- Zunächst wurden 139 Programme/Maßnahmen abgebildet, wovon 45<sup>24</sup> durch Ländermerkblätter detailliert überprüft wurden.
- Der Großteil der ermittelten Programme/Maßnahmen ist:
  - branchenübergreifend ohne spezifische sektorale Ausrichtung; von Unternehmen geführte Programme zielen selbstverständlich auf bestimmte Bereiche der Berufsausbildung ab;
  - im Bereich der beruflichen Erstausbildung wurden nur wenige berufliche Weiterbildungsmaßnahmen ermittelt. In Anbetracht der bisherigen evidenzbasierten Forschungsergebnisse spielen berufliche Weiterbildungsmaßnahmen (außerhalb von Erasmus+) keine wesentliche Rolle für die Lernmobilität in der beruflichen Ausbildung.
- Wichtigste Erkenntnisse zu beruflichen Erstausbildungsprogrammen/-maßnahmen:
  - Programme/Maßnahmen für junge Berufsschüler oder Absolventen haben Vorrang.
  - Praktiken und die Erfahrung in einer realen Arbeitsumgebung sind die häufigste Form der Mobilität in der Berufsausbildung.
  - Die meisten Programme/Maßnahmen für berufliche Erstausbildung werden von nationalen oder regionalen Behörden finanziert. Es gibt jedoch auch öffentlich finanzierte Programme/Maßnahmen, die von EU-Mitteln außerhalb von Erasmus+ gestützt werden (z. B. ESF, INTERREG, EaSI).
- Es wird ein Phänomen der auf unsichtbare Weise EU-geförderten Mobilität vermutet (d.h. Initiativen, die privat geführt werden, in Wirklichkeit jedoch von EU-Finanzierungsmitteln unterstützt werden (Erasmus+ oder andere EU-Mittel)).
- Einige Programme/Maßnahmen bieten andere Funktionen als die Erasmus+-Mobilitätsaktionen für die Berufsausbildung:
  - Programme/Maßnahmen, die Mobilität in der beruflichen Ausbildung mit einem breiteren internationalen Profil ermöglichen (z. B. Torno Subito, EDUFI-Stipendien für Praktika) oder längerfristige Auslandsaufenthalte von mindestens 12 Monaten (z. B. PIU, Austauschprogramm für Hochschullehrer, Apprentissage Transfrontalier) bieten.
  - Programme/Maßnahmen mit (inter-) regionaler Ausrichtung (z. B. interregionale Eurodysee-Programme), die den Bedürfnissen des Arbeitsmarktes auf regionaler und lokaler Ebene entsprechen.

### **Definitionen und politische Ansätze für die berufliche Mobilität auf Länderebene**

Die nationale Gesetzgebung und/oder andere politische Dokumente der überwiegenden Mehrheit der untersuchten Länder enthalten keine explizite Definition der Mobilität in der Berufsausbildung. In einigen Fällen wurden auf nationaler Ebene Rechtsvorschriften festgelegt, die die wichtigsten Elemente bei der Organisation der Mobilität in der Berufsausbildung berücksichtigen (z. B. in Österreich, Deutschland, Dänemark, Frankreich, den Niederlanden). In der Regel erfolgt die Unterstützung von

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<sup>24</sup>Die Mehrheit der Programmen/Maßnahmen, die in den Ländermerkblättern genannt werden, erhalten zumindest teilweise öffentliche Mittel und werden dann von Ministerien oder anderen staatlichen Stellen auf nationaler oder regionaler Ebene umgesetzt (36 von 45 Programmen).

Mobilitätsmaßnahmen in der Berufsausbildung jedoch in den meisten Ländern in Form allgemeiner politischer Aussagen in Planungs- und Implementierungsdokumenten.

Während dies zeigt, dass dem Thema auf Länderebene ein gewisses Maß an Aufmerksamkeit gewidmet wird, konnten keine klaren Erkenntnisse darüber gewonnen werden, ob die Diskussion (z. B. durch gegenseitige Lerninitiativen/Foren) effektiv oder langfristig unterstützt wird. Dies kann im Gegenteil darauf hindeuten, dass solche Initiativen, sofern vorhanden, im Allgemeinen eher zu- und wieder abnehmen. Weitere Details finden Sie unter Abschnitt 3.2.1.

### **Warum und wie werden Programme/Maßnahmen außerhalb von Erasmus+ erarbeitet und umgesetzt?**

Die wichtigsten Ergebnisse zu den Gründen für die Festlegung der Programme/Maßnahmen und ihrer Schlüsselmerkmale in Bezug auf Leitung und Durchführungsvereinbarungen sind nachstehend zusammengefasst (für Einzelheiten siehe 3.2.2 und 3.2.3.).

#### **Grundgedanken, Leitung und Durchführungsmodalitäten auf den Punkt gebracht:**

- Viele Programme/Maßnahmen finden ihre Begründung außerhalb des Berufsausbildungskontextes, zum Beispiel in der Beziehung zu Nachbarländern oder im allgemeinen „interkulturellen Verständnis“.
- Wenn dies mit der Berufsausbildungspolitik in Einklang steht, können sich die Beweggründe darauf beziehen, fehlende Berufsausbildungschancen oder die Jugendarbeitslosenquote auf nationaler Ebene zu bekämpfen. Inwieweit die Maßnahmen in diesen Bereichen erfolgreich waren, konnte jedoch aufgrund fehlender greifbarer Daten nicht untersucht werden.
- Umsetzungstechnisch:
  - In den Ländern, in denen Mobilität in der beruflichen Ausbildung starke politische Unterstützung findet (z. B. Österreich, Deutschland, Dänemark), wird ein höheres Maß an öffentlichem Zugang, eine effektivere Verwaltung und ein höherer Qualitätsstandard beobachtet.
  - Die gewonnenen Erkenntnisse aus Programmen/Maßnahmen auf regionaler oder lokaler Ebene zeigen, dass diese in der Regel geeignet sind, um sich mit bestimmten lokalen Problemen zu befassen. Andererseits erfordert ihre Implementierung häufig mehr administrative Ressourcen, gleichzeitig werden sie auch weniger regelmäßig überwacht und bewertet als ihre größeren oder besser etablierten Pendanten.
  - Weiterhin ergaben sich aus der Studie einige interessante Praxisbeispiele (z. B. PIU, Nordplus, Pro-Tandem, Torno Subito), die das Potenzial haben, auf EU-Ebene (insbesondere durch Erasmus+), nationalen und untergeordneten Ebenen zu inspirieren.

### **Auswirkungen auf den überprüften Programmen/Maßnahmen**

Trotz der Einschränkungen bei der Zusammenstellung robuster Daten in diesem Bereich (siehe Details in Abschnitt 2) deuten die vorliegenden Ergebnisse darauf hin, dass die wichtigsten Auswirkungen (insbesondere für Einzelpersonen und Organisationen) denjenigen ähnlich sind, die mit Erasmus+-Daten festgestellt wurden.

Auf Ebene der **Einzelpersonen**:

- Verbesserte persönliche Fähigkeiten und Motivation der Teilnehmer, inkl. verbesserte Netzwerkfähigkeit von Lehrern und Ausbildern.

- Erhöhte Beschäftigungsfähigkeit von Lernenden<sup>25</sup>.

Auf **Organisationsebene**:

- Verstärkte Organisationsentwicklung durch Einführung neuer Lehrmethoden und dem Austausch mit Partnern über bewährter Verfahren. Steigerung des Prestiges begünstigter Berufsschulen oder Unternehmen, was zu einer Erhöhung ihrer Sichtbarkeit auf nationaler und internationaler Ebene bei neuen Studenten und Partnern führt.
- Verbesserte Vernetzung der Berufsausbildungseinrichtungen und Übernahme bewährter Verfahren.
- Grenzüberschreitende Berufspraktika helfen, die Mitarbeiter mit den erforderlichen Fähigkeiten auszustatten und potenzielle zukünftige Mitarbeiter zu sichern.

Auf **Systemebene**:

- Nutzung und Förderung der Nutzung von Instrumenten auf EU-Ebene, zum Beispiel des Europäischen Leistungspunktesystems für die Berufsausbildung (ECVET) im Bereich der allgemeinen und beruflichen Ausbildung. Intensivere Zusammenarbeit zwischen Bildungseinrichtungen auf lokaler, regionaler und nationaler Ebene.
- Begrenzter Einfluss, um den dringendsten Bedürfnissen des Arbeitsmarktes gerecht zu werden.
- Die Teilnahme an Mobilitätsprogrammen kann zur Abwanderung der Arbeitskräfte aus weniger wirtschaftlich fortgeschrittenen Ländern oder Regionen in fortgeschrittenere Länder oder Regionen führen.

### **Stärken, Erfolgsfaktoren und Hindernisse**

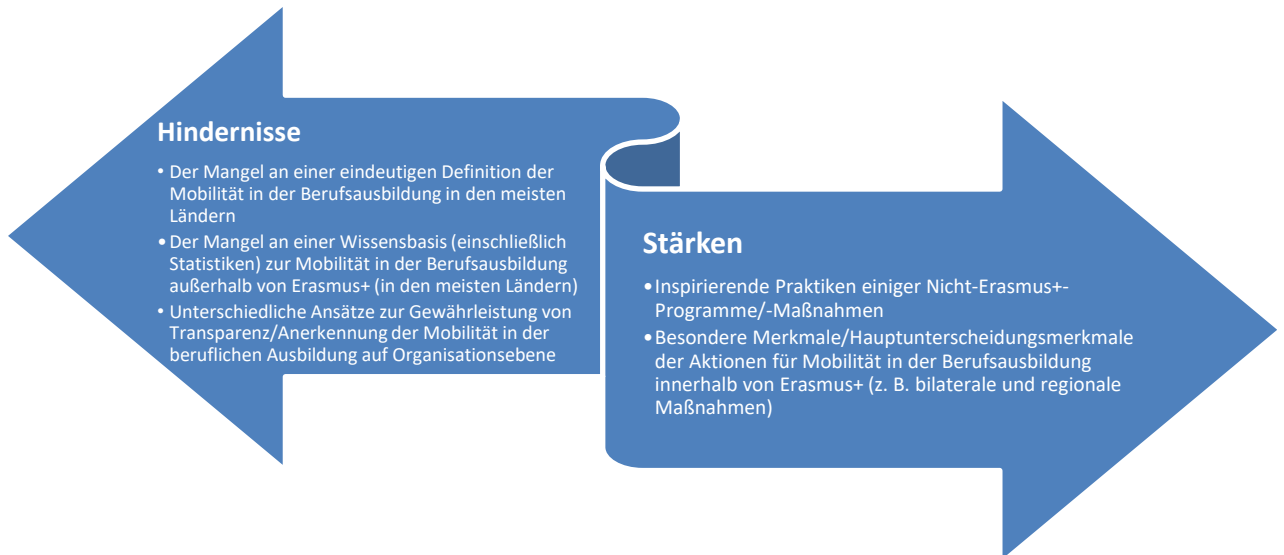
Im Hinblick auf die wichtigsten Stärken, Erfolgsfaktoren und Hindernisse zeigen die Ergebnisse gewisse Ähnlichkeiten zwischen den Mobilitätsmaßnahmen für Nicht-Erasmus+- und Erasmus+-Programme. In beiden Fällen sind die Hauptstärken generell mit den positiven Auswirkungen auf der Ebene der Begünstigten (Einzelpersonen und Organisationen) verbunden. Ihnen gegenüber stehen die Hindernisse, die zum Beispiel (in keiner bestimmten Reihenfolge) finanzielle Engpässe, Verwaltungsaufwände, Sprachbarrieren, Schwierigkeiten bei der Suche nach geeigneten Partnern im Ausland und die Zurückhaltung der Arbeitgeber bei der Mobilität in der Berufsausbildung umfassen.

Daneben wurden weitere programmspezifische Stärken und Hindernisse in den Programmen für die Berufsausbildungsmobilität außerhalb von Erasmus+ ermittelt. Diese werden nachstehend kurz zusammengefasst.

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<sup>25</sup> Hinweis: Die Beschäftigungsfähigkeit von Begünstigten nach einem Auslandsaufenthalt ist ein Aspekt, der nicht ausdrücklich von Erasmus+ kontrolliert wird. Der vorliegende Befund erfordert weitere Untersuchungen, da die erkannten Auswirkungen hauptsächlich in Interviews mit wichtigen Informanten (d.h. Einzelergebnisse, die in den meisten Fällen nicht durch beträchtliche Daten untermauert sind) gemeldet wurden. Davon abgesehen wurden einige Erkenntnisse durch die Umfragen gewonnen. Entsprechende Ergebnisse sind jedoch vorsichtig zu interpretieren, da die meisten Befragten eher über ihre Mobilitätserfahrungen im Aufgabenbereich von Erasmus+ berichteten.





## **Empfehlungen für zukünftige Entwicklungen auf EU- und nationaler Ebene**

Die Studienergebnisse legen insgesamt nahe, dass:

- Auf EU-Ebene im Bereich der Berufsausbildungsmobilität beträchtliche Erfahrungen und eine Wissensbasis vorhanden sind, die sich aus mehr als zwei Jahrzehnten Engagement und damit verbundenen Maßnahmen ergeben.
- Die Vielzahl an auf EU-Ebene investierten Ressourcen sich sowohl auf dieser als auch auf nationaler Ebene positiv ausgewirkt haben.
- Dies jedoch nicht ausreicht, um die auf nationaler Ebene noch bestehenden Herausforderungen zu überwinden.

Daher sollten günstige Bedingungen für die Unterstützung einer effektiveren und effizienteren Mobilität in der beruflichen Ausbildung (Erasmus+ und Nicht-Erasmus+ finanzierte Programme) gefördert werden. Um dies zu erreichen, sollte sowohl auf EU- als auch auf nationaler Ebene in Erwägung gezogen werden, bestehende oder potenzielle Überschneidungen zu minimieren und Komplementaritäten zwischen Mobilitätsprogrammen/-Maßnahmen innerhalb und außerhalb von Erasmus+ zu fördern.

Eine wirksame Bekämpfung dieses Problems könnte in der Tat einen positiven Einfluss auf die Entwicklung der beiden wichtigsten Arten von Programmen/Maßnahmen haben und daher für die weitere Entwicklung der beruflichen Ausbildung in Europa (einschließlich des Aufgabenbereichs des nächsten Erasmus-Programms im Zeitraum 2021-2027) von Nutzen sein.

Vor diesem Hintergrund wurden mögliche Aktionen auf EU- und/oder nationaler Ebene von der Studiengruppe ermittelt.

Diese Strategien beinhalten folgende Hauptbereiche:

- Die Verbesserung der Wissensbasis und des wechselseitigen Lernens in Bezug auf Initiativen zur Förderung der Mobilität in der Berufsausbildung, die nicht von der EU finanziert werden (z. B. potenzielle Rolle für Eurodesk, Euroguidance, Cedefop Mobility Scoreboard oder Möglichkeit der Einrichtung von Beobachtungsstellen für die Berufsausbildung, die auf nationaler Ebene untersucht werden sollten);
- Die Stärkung der statistischen Daten und Überwachungsmechanismen (z. B. Erkundung der potenziellen Unterstützung durch Euroguidance oder Eurodesk; Unterstützung eines effektiven Dialogs über den Wert der Überwachung von Berufsausbildungsmaßnahmen auf nationaler bzw. regionaler Ebene)

- Unterschiedliche Ansätze zur Gewährleistung von Transparenz und Anerkennung der Mobilität im Bereich der beruflichen Ausbildung im Ausland (z. B. weitere Förderung/Entwicklung von EU-Instrumenten zur Förderung der Qualität der Mobilität, Organisation von Veranstaltungen zum gegenseitigen Lernen und Unterstützung der Verbreitung bewährter Verfahren auf nationaler Ebene);
- Die Komplexität/Undurchschaubarkeit der EU-Finanzierungsmöglichkeiten beseitigen (z. B. durch die Unterstützung einer wirksamen Kommunikation und Verbreitung von Informationen auf nationaler Ebene; der Entwicklung von Fallstudien, um die Komplementaritäten und Synergien zwischen EU- und nicht EU-finanzierten Initiativen zur Förderung der Berufsausbildung nachweisen zu können).

Letzteres wird durch einige Beispiele von Mobilitätsprogrammen/-Maßnahmen für Berufsausbildung außerhalb von Erasmus+ ergänzt, die auf EU- bzw. nationaler Ebene in Betracht zu ziehen wären, um die Entwicklung bestehender Programme zu informieren, Überschneidungen zu minimieren und/oder Synergien zu fördern. Weitere Details finden Sie in Abschnitt 5.

## Country codes

<b>EU/EU-28</b> European Union	
<b>AT</b>	Austria
<b>BE</b>	Belgium
<b>BE fr</b>	Belgium – French Community
<b>BE nl</b>	Belgium – Flemish Community
<b>BG</b>	Bulgaria
<b>CY</b>	Cyprus
<b>CZ</b>	Czech Republic
<b>DE</b>	Germany
<b>DK</b>	Denmark
<b>EE</b>	Estonia
<b>EL</b>	Greece
<b>ES</b>	Spain
<b>FI</b>	Finland
<b>FR</b>	France
<b>IE</b>	Ireland
<b>IT</b>	Italy
<b>LV</b>	Latvia
<b>LT</b>	Lithuania
<b>LU</b>	Luxembourg
<b>HR</b>	Croatia
<b>HU</b>	Hungary
<b>MT</b>	Malta
<b>NL</b>	The Netherlands
<b>PL</b>	Poland
<b>PT</b>	Portugal
<b>RO</b>	Romania
<b>SE</b>	Sweden
<b>SI</b>	Slovenia
<b>SK</b>	Slovakia
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>EFTA</b> European Free Trade	
<b>IS</b>	Iceland
<b>LI</b>	Liechtenstein
<b>NO</b>	Norway
<b>Candidate countries</b>	
<b>FY</b>	Northern Macedonia
<b>TR</b>	Turkey

## 1 Introduction

This section discusses the role of vocational education and training (VET) mobility within the EU policy framework, looking at key strategic EU policy documents and the main programmes through which VET mobility is supported. It then briefly touches upon some of the key features of non-Erasmus+ funded VET mobility at both policy and programme/schemes level.

### 1.1 VET mobility in Europe

#### 1.1.1 EU support to VET mobility

In addition to political endorsement, the EU institutions support VET mobility through various actions at programme level. Following the PETRA II programme, the Leonardo da Vinci programme was established with the objective to foster the transnational mobility of students and trainers<sup>26</sup>. Within the **Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) 2007-2013**, the **Leonardo da Vinci** sub-programme targeted specifically the field of initial and continuing VET. With the view to facilitate adaptation to labour market, it addressed both the teaching and learning needs present in the sector. The Leonardo da Vinci sub-programme implemented a range of actions that were expected to deliver impact at individual, organisation and system levels.

**Erasmus+ 2014-2020** which builds on the legacy of the LLP has ensured continuity to the Leonardo da Vinci sub-programme whilst also deploying new types of actions. Erasmus+ is currently the key funding programme for VET mobility opportunities across Europe. Through key actions in learning mobility (KA1), cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practices (KA2) and support for policy reform (KA3), Erasmus+ aims to “help European countries to modernise and improve their education and training systems”<sup>27</sup>. 17% of the total Erasmus+ budget is dedicated to VET learners and staff<sup>28</sup>.

VET mobility is also financed under other EU funding mechanisms, such as the **European Social Fund (ESF)**. ESF Operational Programmes (OPs) 2014-2020 have been an important financial lever for VET, with a specific thematic objective which assigns budget to actions supporting the sector: “nearly 15 billion EUR were dedicated, inter alia, to enhancing equal access to lifelong learning and promoting flexible pathways, as well as improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems”<sup>29</sup>. The present report has mapped a few illustrative examples of VET mobility programmes/schemes implemented thanks to funding from ESF National or Regional OPs (see Annex 1 and section 3.1). Furthermore, through ESF funding the Youth Guarantee programme, even if particularly focused on unemployment, may fund VET mobility activities as well.

VET mobility opportunities may be furthermore financed at national and/or regional level through the European **Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**, and more specifically through the programme for European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), better known as Interreg. In the same vein, the EURES axis of the **EU Programme for**

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<sup>26</sup> European Commission (1998). Press release. Over 17,600 young people on placements in other European countries under the Leonardo da Vinci programme. Available at: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-98-548\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-98-548_en.htm)

<sup>27</sup> European Court of Auditors (2018). *Mobility under Erasmus+: Millions of participants and multi-faceted European Added Value, however performance measurement needs to be further improved*. Available at: [https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR18\\_22/SR\\_ERASMUS\\_EN.pdf](https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR18_22/SR_ERASMUS_EN.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> European Commission (2018). EU policy in the field of vocational education and training (VET). Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/eu-policy-in-the-field-of-vocational-education-and-training-vet\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/eu-policy-in-the-field-of-vocational-education-and-training-vet_en)

**Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)** can fund VET mobility opportunities, for example through the Your first EURES job programme.

Amongst latest developments at EU programme level, particular attention has been paid to fostering VET mobility targeted actions across both current **Erasmus+** programme and its successor (Erasmus) for the 2021-2027 period. The next programming period will draw on a doubled budget and the aim of tripling the number of overall participants. Key developments include:

- an increased attention to mobility for upskilling and reskilling for people in continuous VET education;
- opening opportunities to international mobility, beyond Europe, through a combination of physical, blended and virtual mobility.

Moreover, the new generation of Erasmus+ intends to strengthen the participation of grass root organisations, including small and medium enterprises, by promoting small-scale partnerships<sup>30</sup>. These would provide lower grant amounts, would comprise of shorter duration and simpler requirements, lessening the bureaucratic workload<sup>31</sup>.

The establishment of platforms of "centres of vocational excellence" is amongst European Commission's priority objectives in the VET field at European level. Meant to fall under Key Action 2 'Partnerships for Excellence', these will provide a structured framework for trans-national collaborative platforms with a common interest in thematic social challenges, and with a sectoral approach. The main objective of this initiative is to connect existing VET providers, their networks, chambers and companies, as well as any other relevant stakeholders in actively participating in regional and local level "knowledge triangles" activities. This connection will – inter alia – contribute to developing joint VET curricula, the development and reinforcement of internationalisation strategies for mobility of VET learners, teachers and trainers, and the exchange of innovative teaching and training methods<sup>32</sup>.

Furthermore, beyond the emphasis placed on mobility in VET in general, increased focus has recently been and will be further placed on long-term mobility opportunities in VET within the Mobility Action of the Erasmus+ programme. Under current Erasmus+, this has materialised through the implementation of **ErasmusPro** in 2018, as an activity highlighting long-duration mobility for VET students and recent graduates in work-placements abroad (3 to 12 months)<sup>33</sup>. The rationale behind supporting long-duration VET mobility is that long-term placements abroad have a higher added value for learners in terms of developing job-specific skills and better foreign language skills, immersion in a different culture and work environment, thus boosting learners' employability. In the framework of ErasmusPro activities, short Advance Planning Visits (APV) of staff from either the sending or hosting institution may also be funded in order to facilitate cooperation, better prepare the mobilities, thus ensure higher quality of projects. Until the launch of ErasmusPro, APV was available only in the field of youth.

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<sup>30</sup> European Commission (2018), Santos, J. Presentation on *TVET passport: activating networks for international mobility*. WorldSkills Conference 2018, Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Available at: <https://worldskillsconference.com/2018/sessions/id/42/>

<sup>31</sup> European Commission (2018), Teutsch, M. Presentation on *Erasmus. The EU programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport 2021-2027*. ACVT Meeting, 5 June 2018.

<sup>32</sup> European Commission (2018). Santos, J. Presentation on *European Vocational Education and training. VET policy update*. ECVET Network Meeting 2018, Thessaloniki, Greece, 11 October 2018. Available at: <http://www.ecvet-secretariat.eu/de/system/files/documents/3890/ecvet-network-meeting-vet-policy-developments-joao-santos.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> European Commission (2017) Supporting long-duration VET/ apprenticeship mobility. Presentation. <http://www.ecvet-secretariat.eu/en/system/files/documents/3707/presentation-erasmuspro.pdf>

Moreover, the **Erasmus+ VET Mobility Charter** is celebrating its fourth anniversary in 2019. The Charter intends to encourage experienced VET providers in the field of transnational mobility to further develop their internationalisation strategies, and to facilitate the contact and networking of VET organisations that have previously participated in mobility opportunities.

### **1.1.2 EU policy framework**

The contribution of vocational education and training (VET) in supporting job creation, inclusive growth and poverty reduction has been widely evidenced by research and increasingly acknowledged at policy level over the past decades. Its importance is notably underpinned by its potential to equip people with essential skills and competences to face the key challenges of today's society, posed for instance by globalisation or recovery from the recent global crisis. At European Union (EU) level, VET is understood as a "policy lever which can help address challenges in an increasingly globalised and technology-driven economy"<sup>34</sup>. In this remit, VET systems need to take into account learning acquired in different ways, as well as to allow learners to move across countries, educational systems and economic sectors<sup>35</sup>. Mobility is in fact a fundamental means to strengthen the quality of VET across countries whilst being an important means to enhance intercultural competences and to enhance learners' development as active citizens as research steadily evidenced over past years<sup>36</sup>. VET mobility contributes to the completion of the single market by fostering free movement of learners and workers and through better and increased levels of skills it supports competitiveness of the EU as a whole.

As a response, the value of VET mobility has been acknowledged over decades at EU policy level, materialised through targeted actions offered since 1992 through the **PETRA II** programme. The action programme was established with the aim to raise the status of VET, and to stimulate knowledge and experience exchange between Member States, as well as transnational cooperation between VET providers<sup>37</sup>.

Consistently with this acknowledgement, support for and recognition of VET mobility has been translated in a number of policy strategic documents. While Member States retain the primary responsibility for the organisation of VET, their work is supported and complemented through a European policy set of policies and frameworks, which includes the promotion of mobility of VET learners as well as teachers and trainers, as highlighted by the **Treaty of Lisbon itself (Art. 166)**<sup>38</sup>. Mobility in education and the labour market is one of the key values, and priorities for action of Europe, reaffirmed recently in the **Rome Declaration** of 25 March 2017: "a Union where young people receive the best education and training and can study and find jobs across the continent".<sup>39</sup>

The **2010 Bruges Communiqué** and the **2015 Riga Conclusions** constitute examples of European collaboration in VET, between the EU, candidate countries,

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<sup>34</sup> Cedefop (2018). *Making VET fit for the future*. Available at: [http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4158\\_en.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4158_en.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> Cedefop (2018). *Making VET fit for the future*. Available at: [http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4158\\_en.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4158_en.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> European Union (2010). *Youth on the Move. An initiative to unleash the potential of young people to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the European Union*. Available at: [http://europa.eu/youthonthemove/docs/communication/youth-on-the-move\\_EN.pdf](http://europa.eu/youthonthemove/docs/communication/youth-on-the-move_EN.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> Council of the European Union (1992). PETRA II. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3Ac11012b>

<sup>38</sup> Council of the European Union (2007). *Treaty of Lisbon*. Available at: [http://publications.europa.eu/resource/cellar/688a7a98-3110-4ffe-a6b3-8972d8445325.0007.01/DOC\\_19](http://publications.europa.eu/resource/cellar/688a7a98-3110-4ffe-a6b3-8972d8445325.0007.01/DOC_19)

<sup>39</sup> Council of the European Union (2017) The Rome Declaration. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/03/25/rome-declaration/>

European Economic Area countries, EU social partners, the European Commission and VET providers. Through these documents, priorities were established for the period 2015-2020, which are particularly relevant to the issues of VET mobility, the internationalisation and the modernisation of VET.

### **Key strategic EU policy documents**

The **2010 'Bruges Communiqué'** emphasised the need for national VET systems to attract learners from across Europe and the world in order to remain up-to-date and competitive. The document states that 'Although a European area of education and training is emerging, we have still not achieved our original objective of removing obstacles to mobility and we see that the mobility of learners in VET remains low. Better and targeted information provision and guidance are needed to attract more foreign learners to our VET systems. Substantially increasing transnational mobility of VET learners and teachers, and recognising the knowledge, skills and competences they have acquired abroad, will be an important challenge for the future.'<sup>40</sup>

The **Riga Conclusions (2015)** presented a new set of medium-term deliverables for the period 2015-2020 in the context of the Bruges Communiqué, and included, in Annex 2, EU-level activities to support the implementation of the deliverables. These actions include support for transnational mobility of VET learners and staff (Erasmus+, ESIF, EURES, Your first EURES job).<sup>41</sup>

These policy priorities include further development of quality assurance mechanisms in VET, in line with the 2009 **European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQAVET)** recommendation<sup>42</sup>, enhancing access to VET and qualifications through more flexible systems and the promotion of work-based learning with a special attention to apprenticeships. The growing attention paid to the **European Credit system for VET (ECVET)**<sup>43</sup> also demonstrates a particular interest in promoting and providing VET mobility programmes/schemes across Europe.

#### **1.1.3 Support to VET mobility at national level**

Next to Erasmus+ funding, other possibilities to take part in VET mobility across Europe exist. The present study, which main purpose was to map and analyse non-Erasmus+ VET mobility, found that this is supported and promoted in different ways across the 33 countries covered<sup>44</sup>. For example, VET mobility is encouraged explicitly by the legislation of five countries, Austria, Denmark, Germany, France and the Netherlands. Related clauses include conditions and specific features of mobility opportunities for VET learners and staff. Overall, in 29 countries out of the 33 under the scope of the study, some understanding of VET mobility is found in education and

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<sup>40</sup> *The Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for the period 2011-2020.*

[https://www.eqavet.eu/Equavet2017/media/Documents/brugescom\\_en.pdf](https://www.eqavet.eu/Equavet2017/media/Documents/brugescom_en.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> *Riga Conclusions 2015 on a New Set of Medium-Term deliverables in the Field of VET for 2015-2020.* [http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/RigaConclusions\\_2015.pdf](http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/RigaConclusions_2015.pdf)

<sup>42</sup> European Parliament and the Council of the European Union (2009). *Recommendation of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training.* Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:155:0001:0010:EN:PDF>

<sup>43</sup> European Parliament and Council of the European Union (2009). *Recommendation on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).* Available at: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32009H0708\(02\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32009H0708(02)&from=EN)

<sup>44</sup> The 28 EU Member States (EU28), Northern Macedonia (FY), Iceland (IS), Liechtenstein (LI), Norway (NO) and Turkey (TR)

training or employment policies, for example in the context of Erasmus+ and/or EU VET instruments (e.g. ECVET).

The study identified more than 100 VET mobility programmes/schemes implemented at national or regional level, or led by enterprises. This showed an evident heterogeneity of programmes/schemes, which vary in terms of their key features, funding arrangements, as well as main objectives. Overall, the majority of the identified non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes target IVET learners and apprentices. The vast majority of these programmes/schemes are supported by public funding, either through non-Erasmus+ EU funds, or by national and regional governments. This shows a certain commitment and interest to VET mobility at country level.

These programmes/schemes include quite established examples such as the bilateral ProTandem exchanges between France and Germany and the multilateral Nordplus, implemented in Nordic countries. Whilst these specifically focus on supporting VET mobility, a number of programmes/schemes include VET mobility as one of their objectives, within a wider scope, but not as the key priority. This is the case, for example, of the Italian Torno Subito and the Polish-Lithuanian Youth Exchange Fund.

The research found that the governance and implementation of VET mobility programmes/schemes outside Erasmus+ may vary greatly from one country to another. In particular, the following country situations were identified:

- Countries where both Erasmus+ and non-Erasmus+ VET mobility is steered by strong policy support, among which Austria, Denmark, Germany, France and the Netherlands
- Countries where non-Erasmus+ mobility is fully or mostly implemented at decentralised/local level, such as in Italy and in Spain
- Countries where non-Erasmus+ mobility draws on mixed implementation features, drawing on programmes/schemes at national level, as well as established through school-to-school partnerships, like in the case of Finland
- Countries where Erasmus+ is the main or only source of funding for VET mobility. Some illustrative examples are Bulgaria, Estonia, Northern Macedonia, Hungary, Iceland, and Turkey.

Section 3 of the present report provides a more in depth understanding of the landscape of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes across the 33 countries at the core of this study. In particular, key findings in terms of policy approaches and governance structures are explored, programmes/schemes' key features, main objectives, funding arrangements as well as their strengths and obstacles are presented.

#### **1.1.4 Monitoring VET mobility developments**

In addition to the above, EU Member States agreed to the development of a **European benchmark for IVET<sup>45</sup> mobility** in 2011. Its main objective is to monitor progress in the area and inform policy making. With the specific aim to increase the participation of IVET students in learning mobility, the benchmark establishes that "by 2020, an EU average of at least 6% of 18-34 year-olds with an IVET qualification should have had an initial VET-related study or training period (including work

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<sup>45</sup> As noted by the European Commission, "IVET is usually carried out at before entering working life – typically at upper secondary level. It takes place either in a school-based environment (with the majority of learning taking place in a class-room) or in a work-based setting, organised as close as possible to real-life experience (either in schools, training centres or companies, with apprenticeships schemes as the most typical example). This depends very much on the education and training system in each country, but also on the structure of its economy". Definition available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/eu-policy-in-the-field-of-vocational-education-and-training-vet\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/eu-policy-in-the-field-of-vocational-education-and-training-vet_en)



placements) abroad lasting a minimum of two weeks [ten working days], or less if documented by Europass".<sup>46</sup> However, measurement of this indicator has proven to be complex as yet mostly due to gaps in data collection and heterogeneous definitions used at country level<sup>47</sup>. Because of this, a feasibility study<sup>48</sup> has been launched to assess if there are administrative data sources that could provide information on IVET mobility.

The **IVET mobility scoreboard developed by Cedefop** in 2015 is a tool to monitor developments in IVET mobility policies and the implementation of the 2011 Council recommendation "Youth on the move"<sup>49</sup>.

This database provides up-to-date country information on IVET learner mobility in Europe, through thematic maps, indicators to measure the implementation of the recommendation, overview tables, scorecards showing country performance in key action areas and detailed country data and policy suggestions<sup>50</sup>. These include information on mobility programmes/schemes implemented at national level in the EU28, Iceland and Norway. The mobility scoreboard is concerned with policy developments (qualitative information) and does not provide statistics.

## **1.2 Structure of the present report**

The remainder of this report comprises four main sections:

- **Section 2** offers an understanding of the approach and methodology for the implementation of the study.
- **Section 3** provides an updated analysis of key trends emerging from the refined mapping template (3.1), and of findings emerging from:
  - country factsheets focusing
  - key informant interviews (KIIs)
  - case studies
- **Section 4** focuses on the impact of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes, as outlined by findings emerging from key informant interviews, a targeted literature review, beneficiary staff and learners surveys and the case studies.
- **Section 5** sets out key conclusions and recommendations on areas where actions could be envisaged at EU and country level to foster the quality and effectiveness of VET mobility across Europe in the years ahead.

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<sup>46</sup> Council of the European Union (2011). Council conclusions on a benchmark for learning mobility. Available at: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011XG1220\(06\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011XG1220(06)&from=EN). Since 2005, Europass portfolio of documents has supported the sharing of information on skills and qualifications across borders. More information on Europass is available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1266&langId=en>.

<sup>47</sup> European Court of Auditors (2018). *Mobility under Erasmus+: Millions of participants and multi-faceted European Added Value, however performance measurement needs to be further improved*. Available at: [https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR18\\_22/SR\\_ERASMUS\\_EN.pdf](https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR18_22/SR_ERASMUS_EN.pdf) and Eurostat (2015). *Pilot data collection 2014 on IVET learning mobility and general youth learning mobility*. Available at: <https://circabc.europa.eu/sd/a/a3aac1a4-3ef3-4c16-b7a7-c18dc1f7191d/ETS%20WG%2015%20Doc%2005%20Item%2061.pdf>

<sup>48</sup> i.e. due for publication in 2019.

<sup>49</sup> Council of the European Union (2011). Recommendation of 28 June 2011. "Youth on the move" – promoting the learning mobility of young people. Available at: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011H0707\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011H0707(01)&from=EN)

<sup>50</sup> Cedefop (2017). *Mobility scoreboard*. Available at: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/mobility-scoreboard>

The analysis is complemented by the following Annexes (provided as separate documents):

- Annex 1: revised Excel mapping template
- Annex 2: Tables offering complementary insights on selected programmes/schemes (related to section 3.2).
- Annex 3: Case study write-ups
- Annex 4: Survey questionnaires
- Annex 5: Analysis of non-impact related survey results
- Annex 6: Short country factsheets<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> i.e. offering a brief summary of insights gained from the review of national legislation and/or recent VET-centred policy documents on whether and how VET mobility is referred to and defined.

## **2 Approach and methodology**

This section presents the approach and methodology followed for the study against:

- the objectives of the study
- the scope of the study
- the methodology

### **2.1 Objectives of the study**

In the form of an exploratory assignment, this study was aimed to uncover the gap of knowledge regarding non-Erasmus+ funded VET mobility initiatives across 33 Erasmus+ programme countries (EU28, Northern Macedonia, IS, LI, NO and TR) and to gain insights on the impact of on targeted main types of initiatives at learners, staff and organisation levels. The methodology followed has been designed to address three main overarching objectives:

1. to strengthen knowledge-base on existing VET mobility initiatives in the form of non-Erasmus+ funded schemes or programmes in 33 Erasmus+ programme countries.
2. to collate and analyse quantitative and qualitative evidence on the impact of mobility actions – either established at EU level or not - at the individual (learners, staff), organisation level.
3. to analyse key findings and trends from the above and draw conclusions and recommendations to inform further action in the area at EU and country level.

### **2.2 Scope of the study**

The study covers the 33 Erasmus+ programme countries EU28 countries (EU28, Northern Macedonia, IS, LI, NO and TR).

For the purpose of the initial mapping task (Task 1, see details under section 3.1) the study team has looked for and mapped VET mobility programmes and schemes meeting the following characteristics:

- funded outside Erasmus+ at national, regional, sectoral or EU (other than Erasmus +) level by public/private bodies;
- covering initial VET (IVET) and continuing VET (CVET);
- offering at least one of the following types of mobility:
  - mobility as part of IVET;
  - mobility after completion of IVET;
  - mobility of VET staff for teaching/training assignments.
- offering at one or both main formats of mobility:
  - school-based mobility (individual or group-based mobility for young learners in initial vocational training, enrolled at any level and VET teachers/trainers)
  - work-based mobility (e.g. in form of work placement for VET graduates, apprenticeships or other transversal forms (sector-, job- or technology-centred) or adults in employment or not including VET teachers/trainers for the purpose of their professional development)
- established (rather than one-off) VET mobility programmes or schemes that can be financially supported by public or private funds at national, regional or local level or by EU funds except Erasmus+ (e.g. ESF, INTERREG);
- having clear governance arrangements: underpinned by managing and funding authorities or organisations or partnerships which can be by public, private-led or mixed;

- involving physical persons in cross-border activities that have dedicated financial and/or organisational support addressing their target groups/beneficiaries which should include at least one of the following:
  - young learners in initial vocational training, enrolled at any level;
  - recent graduates from VET or other education pathways, at any qualification level;
  - adult workforce, either in employment or not;
  - VET teachers and trainers.
- aimed to support beneficiaries' skills development through a period abroad (in Europe or beyond) and, for this purpose, be defined in terms of vocational learning objectives that are jointly defined and agreed by sending and hosting institutions.

Considering the broad and heterogeneous landscape of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility schemes/programmes and in order to weave a sufficiently fine-meshed net that could capture relevant programmes/schemes, and also to establish reasonably transparent boundaries for the assignment the above definition has been further operationalised for retaining and exploring programmes/schemes meeting the following criteria in addition to the those above:

- learning mobility is the core or alternatively a main activity of the programme/scheme;
- need to ensure a balanced variety of non-dedicated programmes/schemes;
- the programme/scheme supports mobility in IVET and/or CVET: emphasis has been put on IVET programmes/schemes as these constitute the vast majority of identified programmes/schemes as the results of the mapping task evidenced;
- the programme/scheme must take place in an institutional or organisational setting<sup>52</sup>;
- the programme/scheme must serve a learning purpose (i.e. must have clearly formulated pedagogical objectives) the objectives of which should be acknowledged and agreed by sending and hosting institutions;
- the programme/scheme must contain some form of structured, pedagogical content;
- learning mobility experiences may be of varying durations, starting from a minimum duration of two weeks.

The following types of programmes/schemes have not been covered or merely indirectly and sporadically:

- Higher VET mobility programmes/schemes have not been covered;
- Spontaneous mobility has not been explored for the purpose of this study;
- Networks or organisations that do not run VET mobility programmes/schemes, but promote or support VET mobility, have not been covered neither in the country factsheets nor the case studies;
- VET mobility projects funded under INTERREG Priority area 3 (labour market, employment and training) were identified in the form of multiannual structures that support translational VET mobility. These one-off projects have not been the object of a systematic mapping but are briefly discussed in section 3.1.

## **2.3 Methodology**

The methodology followed for the study was underpinned by six mutually reinforcing tasks as Figure 1 below illustrates.

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<sup>52</sup> i.e. this can be an educational establishment, a public body or authority, an organisation or an enterprise

Figure 1. Overview of study tasks



For the purpose of this study, the tasks are ordered as follows:

- Task 1: Inception
- Task 2: Country review
- Task 3: Key informant interviews (KIIs)
- Task 4: Case studies
- Task 5: Surveys
- Task 6: Analysis and reporting

Each task is presented thereafter.

### 2.3.1 Task 1: Inception and Initial Mapping

The first task of this study has been to undertake preliminary desk research to map available information on schemes under the scope of this study as presented in 2.2. The results of the initial mapping showed a heterogeneous landscape with schemes/programmes of different nature, scope, scale and funding or with varying implementation patterns.

### 2.3.2 Task 2: Country review

Based on the results of Task 1, the study team's country researchers have further mapped non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes. Information on the 139 identified programmes/schemes is provided in section 3.1 and in Annex 1.

The core team has then applied the criteria for the operationalised definition set out above (see section 2.2) to retain the most representative VET mobility programmes or schemes and explore them further in country factsheets. In total, 33 country factsheets have been assembled. To ensure consistency in approach and facilitate the work of individual country researchers ad hoc 'VET mobility in Europe (VME)' online portal has been developed by the study team. The internal tool has served as a repository whereby each country researcher stored key findings of his or her research to feed into the country factsheets<sup>53</sup>. At a later stage, selected external reviewers (i.e. generally consisting of representatives of national VET bodies and independent VET experts) were also invited to review and comment on the factsheet for their country.

The country factsheets bring together information on the national framework conditions for VET mobility. Additional details on selected non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes or schemes (i.e. where such programmes/schemes exist) have been gathered through the VME and served to inform the comparative analysis set out in section 3.

Lack of publicly available information, particularly for enterprise-led programmes/schemes, has been amongst the most commonly reported challenges by country researchers.

<sup>53</sup> Conceived as an internal tool to support the work of the study team over the lifetime of the assignment, the VME brings together a longer version of the country factsheets than the published one as well as additional information which have been reviewed and analysis to feed into the present report.

### 2.3.3 Task 3: Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

To validate and complement information gathered through the country review, the study team conducted key informant interviews (KIIs) at EU and national level. These 59 interviews, including eight KIIs at EU, 43 at national level, and eight additional on-the-spot interviews during the ECVET Annual Forum in Sofia on 12-13 June 2018. Overall, the KIIs covered the following main areas:

- Existing non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes in key informant's country;
- Rationale for implementing VET mobility schemes/programmes outside Erasmus+;
- Impact of VET mobility scheme(s)/programme(s);
- Key strengths and obstacles of non-Erasmus+ schemes/programmes;
- Recommendations on what EU could do in the area.

Table 1 below offers an overview of the type of organisations approached.

As this shows, the main types of EU-level organisations approached were organisations representing:

- VET providers;
- teachers/trainers;
- employers;
- regional/local chambers and SMEs.

In line with the agreed methodology with DG EMPL, national key informants from 18 countries (i.e. AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, NL, PL, PT, RO SE and the UK) were interviewed.

Key informants have been identified through a snowball approach: as an entry point, country researchers have identified and contacted relevant policy makers (i.e. knowledgeable and experienced with VET mobility opportunities or developments in the country). These policy makers have been invited to take part in an interview and to assist with identifying and approaching other key stakeholders in the country.

Overall, insights gathered through Task 3 were obtained from the following types of key informants: representatives of public authorities responsible for VET at national or regional level, coordinators of specific identified programmes/schemes, both from the public and private sector and other stakeholders, such as independent experts.

Complementary with the above, the study team conducted additional on-the-spot interviews by the event of above-mentioned ECVET Annual Forum. Insights from key informants from five additional countries (i.e. EE, HR, Northern Macedonia, SK and TR) were collated by then<sup>54</sup>.

Tables 1 and 2 offers an overview of the organisations/bodies consulted (via one key informant) through the three main types of KIIs presented above.

*Table 1. Overview of organisations/bodies consulted through EU- and national-level KIIs<sup>55</sup>*

<b>EU Level</b>
EUpVET
EfVET
EVBB

<sup>54</sup> For more information on the key informant interviews, see Progress note as provided in separate document

<sup>55</sup> i.e. via one key informant on average

	EVTA
	UEAPME
	ETUCE
	Eurochambres
<b>National level</b>	
AT	Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs IFA (International Young Workers Exchange)
BE	Office for VET in Wallonia (Office wallon de la formation professionnelle et de l'emploi, Forem) Public Employment Service, Flanders
BG	National Agency for Education and Training (NAVET) Project Management Unit DOMINO
CZ	National Institute for Education, Education Counselling Centre and Centre for Continuing Education of Teachers (NUV) Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
DE	BiBB (Research institute for VET) Airbus Chamber of Crafts
DK	Ministry of Education Association of Danish VET schools Confederation of Danish Industry
ES	Ikaslan, Association of VET providers involved with the Global Training programme in the Basque Country
FI	Youth Exchange Alliance exchange programme Sataedu (VET provider and chairman of Association), Amke (association of VET providers) VET National Agency for Education
FR	Ministry of Education CCCA-BTP, network supporting apprenticeship in construction industry Compagnons du Devoir programme
IE	Further education and Training support services, Education and Training Board Ireland Leargas
IT	Torno Subito managing organisation Fondazione Centro Produttività Veneto, Member of Eurochambres
LT	Lithuanian/Polish Youth Exchange Fund managing organisation Nordplus beneficiary organisation Vilnius Car Mechanics and Business School, in charge of Nordplus implementation

NL	Graafschap College, local VET provider
	Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (SBB)
PL	Office of Vocational Training and Adult Education, Foundation for the Development of the Education System
	Centre for Education Development (depending on the Ministry of National Education)
	Trade Union "Budowlani" – Construction Industry
PT	National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education
	Institute for employment and VET (IEFP)
	Institute for Technology and Quality
RO	General Department for International and European Affairs, Ministry of National Education, Romania
	Labour Market analyses, Employment Programs and Training Department, National Agency for Employment
SE	Ministry of Education
	Atlas programme managing organisation
	Swedish association of Folkhögskolan (VET providers)
UK	JIB Apprenticeship Exchange Programme managing organisation
	SQA for the Scottish Qualifications Authority

*Table 2. Overview of organisations/bodies consulted through on the 'on the spot' interviews (ECVET Annual Forum, June 2018)*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Key informant's role and organisation</b>
EE	Ministry of Education and research
HR	Agency for VET and Adult Education
HR	Agency for mobility and EU programmes
Northern Macedonia	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
Northern Macedonia	National Agency for European educational programmes and mobility
RO	National Centre for VET Development
SK	Eduvan Ltd
TR	Turkish National Agency

By nature, KIIs are a means to gather qualitative insights from interviewees in the form of individual perceptions on given topics or anecdotal evidence. Considering the lack of monitoring systems (and hence of statistical data or comprehensive evidence) in place for most of the non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes reviewed, insights collated through KIIs could not be backed up by tangible data in most cases. This similarly applies to insights gained through Task 4 (Case studies).

In the report, qualitative insights from KIIs were presented from the more commonly reported to the least commonly reported. This is evident particularly in 3.2.10 on the



strengths and obstacles of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes. This approach has been chosen considering the vast heterogeneity of the landscape of programmes/schemes, the different types of key informants across countries, and the fact that some key informants have provided more details than others (e.g. some key informants have indicated only one type of strength or obstacles, while others have provided multiple considerations).

#### **2.3.4 Task 4: Case Studies**

Through Task 4, the study team gathered additional qualitative insights through in-depth case studies. The unit of analysis of the case studies was a programme, sub-programme or an initiative taking place at country/regional level.

Their main purpose was to complement findings from the country review (Task 2) and the surveys (Task 5). More specifically, the case studies were aimed to:

- provide key informants' insights on perceived impacts of selected VET mobility schemes at the individual (beneficiary learners and/or staff), organisations (i.e. beneficiary organisations) and system level (i.e. insights from funding and managing authorities);
- offer insights on additional elements such as on:
  - critical success factors or obstacles for those results and impacts to materialise;
  - unintended effects encountered by beneficiaries;
  - added value, synergies, overlaps or specific features of the scheme in comparison with Erasmus+ VET mobility related action/activities;
  - added value and limitations of existing monitoring or evaluation mechanisms/structures in place if any.
- suggestions/considerations for future development of the programme/scheme itself and/or for VET mobility in general at country level.

The task was carried out by individual case study researchers based on a common guidance note, topic guide and case study write-up template. Case studies were informed by desk research and semi-structured interviews. In total, 24 interviews were conducted with the following types of key informants:

- Project leaders
- Representatives from beneficiary institutions/bodies.

Depending on the initiative, these stakeholders comprised staff members from the following bodies/organisations:

- Ministries in charge of VET or other relevant persons responsible for international cooperation activities;
- National agencies or other public bodies responsible for international activities in the field of VET (e.g. funding agencies, etc.);
- VET providers;
- Enterprises.

The initiatives explored through Task 4 were initially identified through Tasks 1 and 2 (see 2.3.1 and 2.3.3) and selected based on a number of criteria including the scale of the initiative, the sustainability/ history of the initiative, target groups, type of funding, type of and duration of the mobility actions.

*Table 3. Overview of the case studies*

<b>Programme/scheme</b>	<b>Country-ies</b>	<b>Type of VET</b>	<b>Implementation</b>
Nordplus Junior	DK, FI, LT, LV, NO, EE, IS, SE	IVET	Public-led

Nordplus Adult	DK, FI, LT, LV, NO, EE, IS, SE	CVET	Public-led
ProTandem exchanges	FR, DE	IVET/ CVET	Public-led
Eurodyssey	Regions across 12 countries: BE, HR, RO, FR, IT, ES, PT, CH, RS, BA, CY, GE	IVET	Public-led
Torno Subito	IT	IVET (and Higher VET)	Public-led
PIU – Praktik I Udalndet (Practical Placement Abroad)	DK	IVET	Public-led
Gjør Det! (Do It!)	DE, NO	IVET	Public-led
JIB Apprenticeship Programme	UK	CVET	Enterprise-led

The case studies are annexed to the present report (see Annex 3). Note: Nordplus Junior and Nordplus Adult are addressed together through one case study.

The following data collection and analysis limitation is to be noted. Interviewees were identified through desk research and through the snowball approach mentioned earlier. It is important to highlight that this might have brought some bias, as managing organisations might have directed researchers to people who have had a rather positive experience. Case study researchers were made aware of this potential bias by the core team, and they were encouraged to prompt interviewees with specific questions to challenge their opinions.

### **2.3.5 Task 5: Surveys**

The main objective of Task 5 was to gather quantitative evidence on the impact of VET mobility through two online surveys (via survey tool SurveyGizmo) targeted at learners and staff in VET who participated in mobility under Erasmus+, learners and staff who have participated in non-Erasmus+ funded mobility schemes, and non-mobile learners and staff in VET.

For this purpose, two dedicated survey questionnaires were developed by the study team, shared with and approved by DG EMPL. These were subsequently tested by the study team and further adjusted to fully comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which had just entered into force in the meantime.

The surveys were disseminated in the following languages (staff and learner: EN, FR, ES, IT, DE; additional languages for learner survey: EL, PT, HU, CZ, RO, PL) and launched between 22 June and 23 October 2018. The study team disseminated the surveys to a list of organisational level contacts involved in the identified non-Erasmus+ VET mobility schemes, as well as to a number of previously unsuccessful applicants to Erasmus+ VET mobility. After encountering low response rates for both surveys, the study team disseminated the surveys to additional contacts from leading European enterprises, which were believed to be likely to operate transnational VET programmes. In a last attempt to gather complementary insights and in accordance with DG EMPL, the team furthermore launched a streamlined version of the survey questionnaires between late October and late November 2018.

The employed survey questionnaires covered a range of impact dimensions listed in the Terms of references for the study.

At the individual level (mobile learners and staff), the survey questionnaire had been designed to enable the study team to gather insights on the impact of VET mobility on:

- Personal social development (e.g. European citizenship, self-confidence in education, cultural awareness and expression);
- Key skills (i.e. analytical skills, problem social skills, digital competences);
- Job-specific skills (e.g. ability to operate specialised mechanical equipment);
- Engagement in further learning;
- Employment, employability, and career (e.g. improvement of job prospects, openness to work in another country).

In order to measure the impact of VET mobility on the organisations involved, staff in VET were furthermore asked to report on changes at the level of the organisation where they are employed (e.g. the VET provider, the company) that resulted from participation in VET mobility. Such impacts included:

- the link between participation in VET mobility and a coherent internationalisation strategy;
- the link between participation in VET mobility and wider cooperation partnerships;
- benefits for organisations due to their involvement in mobility; and
- information on the direct financial participation of organisations.

For details on the survey questionnaires (in English), see Annexes 4 and 5.

Based on extensive experience from earlier survey campaigns, the study team anticipated a survey response rate of 20%. As the total number of VET mobility participants for the different stakeholder groups is unknown, the team calculated the target sample with an indicative total population (N) of 20,000<sup>56</sup> individuals. The confidence interval was set at 95%, as common in most scientific studies in this domain. A margin of error (confidence level) of 5% was applied to calculate the necessary sample size. Applying these conditions, a sample size (n) of 377 was required. Under the assumption of a response rate of 20%, this required 1,885 invitations to be sent out to participants (relying on snowball sampling).

The abovementioned assumptions are summarised below.

- Population (N) = 20,000
- Margin of error (e) = 5%
- Confidence interval = 95%
- Sample size (n) = 377
- Response rate = 20%
- Invites necessary = 1,885

These calculations applied for both stakeholder groups, namely:

- non-Erasmus+ VET mobility participants
- non-participants to VET mobility

For each target group of participants the study team thus aimed for a minimum sample size of 377 respondents.

With regards to the sampling, the approach taken has been as follows:

- Simultaneous to the development of the draft questionnaires, the mapping exercise has yielded 149 non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes, 122 of which featured publicly available contact details.

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<sup>56</sup> A larger population than 20,000 would not substantially alter the required sample size.

- To ensure a solid foundation for the snowball sampling approach, the study team gathered an additional 258 contacts from leading European enterprises, operating on an international scale, thus likely to offer some form of internal, transnational VET scheme.
- The study also included 927 contacts of VET practitioners, who participated in a previous survey for the Erasmus+ interim evaluation, and indicated that they could be contacted for another study in the future. The resulting list of 1,307 potentially relevant stakeholders was intended to enable the study team to anticipate oddly low response rate for the snowball sampling approach.
- To increase the sample size further, the team also contacted interviewees who had been consulted for the case studies or KIIs, to share contacts of relevant organisations or individual stakeholders directly.

Despite the measures set out above and a further reminder campaign via phone calls (carried out in between August and September 2018) the number of collected responses (in particular for the learner survey) has remained below the target as Table 4 below reflects.

Table 4. Survey campaign

Stakeholder survey	Target responses	Completed responses	Completion rate
Staff	377	141	61%
Learner	377	49	36%

Source: ICF

To alleviate this gap, the following mitigation measures were taken. The study team:

- undertook targeted literature review to identify and review findings from other four existing quantitative studies on VET mobility schemes in Europe (see details in section 5) to complement other strands of this study's analysis (i.e. KIIs and survey results). The studies were selected among other evaluation studies of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility based on the respective quality and availability of statistical data;
- disseminated a 'mini-survey' on 23 October with a substantially reduced set of questions to increase accessibility and response rate. The questionnaire was designed to minimise its duration and complexity while still capturing aspects not covered in the Erasmus+ participant reports (e.g. employability effects of mobility);
- conducted an additional analysis of Erasmus+ programme data from the VET mobility participant reports of both learners and staff. Results of this exercise fed into the general survey analysis which can be found in section 4, but have to be interpreted with caution. Note: despite the extensive mitigation measures undertaken, the survey findings presented are not representative in a statistical sense. Where possible, findings have been reaffirmed or extended through the additional analysis of Erasmus+ programme data, but in cases where this is not explicitly highlighted, findings have to be interpreted with caution and within the context of the other data collection tools employed for this study.

## 2.4 Reporting and analysis

The method of approach for the tasks described above has been designed in a way to allow them to mutually feed into each other and to be triangulated for the purpose of the final analysis and to identify key conclusions and recommendations reflecting the objectives of the study.

### **2.4.1.1 Comparative analysis of country factsheets**

To further structure and analyse the 44 identified non-Erasmus+ VET mobility schemes collated in the country factsheets, the study team has clustered information emerging from this exercise along the following focus areas:

#### **Structure of comparative analysis**

- Policy approaches at national level
- Basic key features of retained programmes/schemes
  - Geographical coverage and size
  - Target group
  - Type and duration of mobility
- Main objectives
- Governance and funding
- Financial aspects
- Information and guidance support to individuals
- Quality assurance and recognition procedures

Key findings were subsequently triangulated with findings from other tasks to inform the conclusions and recommendations to the study (section 5).

### **2.4.1.2 Analysis of key informant interviews (KIIs)**

Interviewees' perceptions were analysed along the following themes:

- Implementation of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes;
- Rationale for the establishment of VET mobility programmes/schemes outside Erasmus+;
- Impact of the programmes/schemes discussed at the individual, organisational and system levels;
- Key strengths and obstacles of the implementation of the discussed programmes/schemes;
- Recommendations on how to move forward and better support non-Erasmus+ VET mobility at EU level.

The study team has analysed the answers to these questions to extract common themes and issues relevant to the study objectives. The results of this exercise are reflected in sections 3.2 and 4, and also served to feed into the conclusions and recommendations (section 5).

### **2.4.1.3 Case study analysis**

The case studies enabled the study team to collate targeted insights on the impacts perceived by interviewees at the individual, organisation and system level. The case studies also offered insights in the form of anecdotal evidence on the following:

- critical success factors or obstacles for perceived impacts to materialise;
- unintended effects faced or reported by beneficiaries;
- suggestions/considerations for future development of the programme/scheme itself and for VET mobility in general at country level;
- added value, synergies, overlaps or specific features of the programme/scheme in comparison with Erasmus+ VET mobility related action/activities;

Key findings were, similarly to the other tasks, triangulated with the latter and helped inform the conclusions and recommendations set out section 5.

#### **2.4.1.4 Survey and complementary data analysis**

Insights obtained from the surveys helped gather descriptive statistics regarding self-perceived impacts of Erasmus+ VET mobility, providing insights into areas which are currently only partially covered by the Erasmus+ participant reports. Such areas included:

- Impact of VET mobility on employability;
- Benefits for organisations due to their involvement in mobility;
- Adverse effects of mobility (e.g. on personal career, brain-drain for sending country/sending country);
- Impact of VET mobility on selected skills and competences;
- Linkages between participation in VET mobility and a coherent internationalisation strategy;
- The relation between participation in VET mobility and wider cooperation partnerships.

However, as mentioned above, insights gained from the survey data collection, need to be interpreted with caution and put in perspective of other evidence, as the survey sample cannot be assumed to be representative for the entirety of mobile VET learners or staff under Erasmus+. The information derived from this data collection device should instead be considered as complementary anecdotal evidence. Furthermore, due to the insufficient sample size, country-level differences could not be presented and are not accounted for in the analysis. This is important as the incidence and features of VET mobility vary substantially between Erasmus+ programme countries, which may translate into differences regarding the impacts of mobility as well.

The resulting analysis of these quantifiable impacts of Erasmus+ and non-Erasmus+ VET mobility offered additional insights into the landscape of VET mobility across Europe which helped inform the conclusions and recommendations of the study regarding non-Erasmus+ VET mobility against the features and outcomes of Erasmus+ VET mobility.

### **3 Non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes and schemes**

#### **3.1 Main types of programmes/schemes and key features**

The mapping exercise carried out for the study enabled to identify 139 non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes. Of these 139 programmes/schemes, 102 in particular are in the scope of this project, following the definition provided in section 2.

These 102 non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes present the following features<sup>57</sup>:

- 71 IVET and 9 CVET programmes/schemes, 21 covering both and 1 for which the information was not available.
- 62 work-based, 18 school-based and 19 programmes/schemes covering both. For three programmes/schemes, the learning approach was not specified.
- Programmes/schemes of varying duration comprising:
  - 14 of up to one month;
  - 34 between one and twelve months;
  - 5 of more than twelve months.

For 49 programmes/schemes, the duration of the mobility was either not specified or not possible to cluster since the variation was too broad (many have a minimum and a maximum duration). For further details, see Annex 1.

- 57 publicly funded programmes/schemes; 22 privately funded; 18 both publicly- and privately- funded; four funded by other means (e.g. by the Danish Employers' Reimbursement Fund, by charity organisations). No specific information on funding arrangements is publicly available for one scheme (from Northern Macedonia).
- In some cases, the funding organisation is different from the implementing organisation. The mapping (Annex 1) showed that 62 programmes/schemes are implemented by public authorities; 14 by enterprises and 24 managed by other entities (mixed consortium, charity organisations, foundations, etc.). Information on governance/ implementation arrangements could not be found for two programmes/schemes.

The information gathered did not allow the study team to quantify the distribution across different target groups. In fact, some programmes/schemes target VET learners and/or staff only as part of a wider target group. For example, the Torno Subito programme, as well as many others, target students broadly, which then includes VET students specifically as well.

For complementary details on the individual programmes/schemes mapped, see Annex 1.

The key messages emerging from the mapping exercise (Task 1) are as follows:

- VET mobility takes place in a number of different contexts throughout Europe and takes various forms – ranging from large-scale multinational programmes/schemes to those with national, regional or sectoral mobility ambitions; extending to dedicated and non-dedicated mobility programmes/schemes and drawing on public and private funding or a mixture of both;
- IVET mobility programmes/schemes prevail: despite efforts undertaken by country researchers, only a few CVET programmes/schemes could be identified. Considering the lack of specific information country researchers faced in the area, the study team initially made the hypothesis that such programmes/schemes might be primarily funded and implemented and enterprises. However, in the course of the study, no tangible evidence could

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<sup>57</sup> These are collated in the Sheet named "Polished mapping" of Annex 1.

effectively be retrieved to confirm this hypothesis. Based on this, it can be concluded that CVET mobility outside Erasmus+ is rare and does not play a significant role in the overall picture of VET mobility;

- Most of the identified programmes/schemes have either a national/regional scope or draw on bilateral cooperation agreements;
- Most of the identified programmes/schemes are funded by national/regional authorities; next to these, there are publicly funded programmes/schemes which rely on EU financing other than Erasmus+ (e.g. ESF, ERDF, EaSI);
- VET mobility programmes/schemes can be dedicated or non-dedicated (e.g. addressing young people in VET as part of a much broader target audience or targeting VET mobility as just one of many possible activities) with the latter often more difficult to identify;
- Most of the identified programmes/schemes support initial learners and apprentices, with only a few targeting teaching and training staff in the VET sector; equally, only a small number of programmes/schemes specifically target the adult workforce, whether in employment or not;
- Work placement and exposure to real working environments appears to be the most commonly implemented activity among mobile VET learners.
- Mobility among VET teachers and trainers mainly takes the form of exchanges supporting continuing professional development (CPD);
- No clear pattern has been identified concerning the duration of VET mobility, which varies from just a couple of days to up to three or more years; some schemes also allow mobility periods of different durations (e.g. TLN mobility programme);
- The majority of identified schemes are cross-sectoral, without a specific sectoral focus; enterprise-led schemes, on the other hand, target specific sectors of vocational education and training.

Out of the 33 countries, programmes/schemes were most easily captured through desk research in the following: AT, DE, FR, UK and Nordic countries. However, it is important to specify that, seeing as the heterogeneity of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes is so vast, the identified programmes/schemes do not necessarily provide the full picture in every country.

The great heterogeneity of VET mobility programmes/schemes across Europe, distributed unevenly across countries was further confirmed over the lifetime of the study. Country researchers found that for some countries (i.e. Bulgaria, Hungary, and Turkey), Erasmus+ appears to be the main (or only) programme supporting the transnational mobility of VET learners and/or staff.

Some programmes/schemes have particular features that stand out from the others. The table below offers an overview of some initiatives of interest, such as networks, EU-wide schemes, EU-wide funding programmes, projects and 'one-off' initiatives, and schemes that receive partial Erasmus+ funding.

*Table 5. Overview of initiatives of interest*

<b>Type of initiative</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Network	- EARLALL - NETINVET - EfVET
EU-wide schemes	- Youth Guarantee - Pestalozzi Programme - Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs - Your First Eures Job



Type of initiative	Examples
EU-wide funding programmes	- ESF Operational Programme - ERDF INTERREG
Projects and 'one-off' initiatives	- CZ: Bridge to Employment - DE, DK: Starforce initiative - DE, ES, FR, UK: Mobility 4 Airbus Apprentices - MK: Exchange Programme - NL, DE: "The Learning EUREGIO"

Source: ICF

These initiatives are included in the mapping template (see Annex 1), but not been retained in the country factsheets as not falling directly under the scope of the study. Their respective features are nevertheless worth being briefly mentioned:

EARLALL, NETINVET and EfVET are three networks that do not run mobility schemes but that promote VET mobility and VET internationalisation at transnational level. Key informant interviews (KIIs) with representatives from EfVET and NETINVET revealed that most members of these networks are involved with Erasmus+ projects, rather than non-Erasmus+.

The EU-wide schemes are developed at EU level, and are then implemented at national/regional level. These are not VET dedicated schemes, but cover VET learners and/or staff within their scope.

EU-wide funding programmes such as the ESF Operational Programmes (OPs) and the ERDF INTERREG programme may have specific VET mobility schemes under their scope. Country researchers have strived to identify such programmes, as evident in the mapping template (see Annex 1, Sheet named General Mapping). However, in some cases (e.g. the Starforce initiative), these are projects and one-off initiatives rather than programmes/schemes per se. Moreover, since these depend on specific priorities at national or regional level, information about these revealed to be particularly scattered.

These EU-wide programmes also include examples that are not supported directly by EU funds, but are still widespread across Europe. This is the case of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme. VET mobility is not one of its priorities, but specific VET mobility initiatives might be supported under its umbrella of opportunities.

Furthermore, the mapping also includes some national programmes, funded under the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) under which mobility opportunities can be funded, but which are not VET mobility programmes per se. This is the case, for example, of the Alternanza Scuola Lavoro and the Per la Scuola - Competenze e ambienti per l'apprendimento programmes in Italy, and the Programa Integral de Cualificacion y Empleo (PICE), Plan de Movilidad, funded under the Youth Guarantee.

Country researchers have also identified a number of schemes which receive Erasmus+ funding, at least partially<sup>58</sup>. A few examples were retained in the mapping template.

<sup>58</sup> As discussed in section 5, a phenomenon of 'invisibly-EU funded' mobility is suspected, for instance through initiatives that at the first glance feature as private-led but which are in reality supported by EU funding.

## **3.2 Complementary insights on selected programmes/schemes**

This section offers insights based on the following data collection exercises:

- 33 country factsheets
- Additional information gathered for 44 non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes<sup>59</sup>
- Key informant interviews (KIIs)
- 7 case studies

This section overall offers qualitative insights along the following dimensions:

- Policy approaches at national level;
- Governance and implementation of the mobility programmes/schemes;
- Rationale for the establishment of the programmes/schemes;
- Basic key features;
- Main objectives;
- Financial arrangements;
- Information and guidance support to individuals;
- Key strengths and obstacles.

Findings retrieved from KIIs draw on anecdotal evidence, as explained in section 2. Hence, they should be interpreted cautiously. Insights gathered from the latter and the case studies most often concurred with one another. When this was not the case, it has been explicitly indicated.

This section also discusses data availability (e.g. statistics, studies, and evaluation reports) and more specifically the extent to which evidence-base on non-Erasmus+ VET mobility could be easily identified and gathered through the online desk research across the targeted countries.

### **3.2.1 Policy approaches at national level**

#### **3.2.1.1 Prevalence of VET mobility on policy agendas: a hot topic everywhere?**

The data collected in 33 countries reveals that although **no explicit definitions of VET mobility** were found in national legislation and/or other policy documents of most countries, the conditions for VET mobility were set by legislation in five countries: Austria, Denmark, Germany, France and the Netherlands. These conditions are rather comprehensive, usually foreseeing the provisions applying to the **duration, content, and recognition and validation** of the mobility experiences.

- The **Austrian VET Law**<sup>60</sup> sets that VET mobility is possible, if a State contract confirms that the particular VET placement is compatible with the curricular of the respective occupation, or an **assessment** confirms such compatibility with respective programmes. Individuals are allowed of maximum six months of mobility period annually.
- The **German Vocational Training Act**<sup>61</sup>, similarly to the Austrian legislation, allows VET mobilities if they are considered complementary to home VET programmes. It also sets the maximum duration of such placements which should not exceed a quarter of the total duration of a programme. In addition, sending and receiving institutions (VET institutions or employers) must reach an agreement on a training plan at an early stage, which is in turn to be approved by the responsible Chamber of crafts or commerce.

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<sup>59</sup> i.e. gathered through the VME (internal tool to support the work of the study team) and used to inform the present report.

<sup>60</sup> Berufsausbildungsgesetz, 26<sup>th</sup> of March, 1969.

<sup>61</sup> Berufsbildungsgesetz, 14<sup>th</sup> of August, 1969.

- The clauses within the **Danish VET Law**<sup>62</sup> stipulate that **placements** abroad can be recognised as part of Danish VET programme. In addition, **the Danish Ministerial Order on VET** states that it is compulsory for all the IVET learners to be at least offered to spend a part of the school-based elements of the programme at a VET-institution abroad. These legal provisions indicate that the concept of VET mobility is already well-established in the Danish legislation even though no explicit definition has been stated in the law.
- The **Dutch** law<sup>63</sup> foresees mobility periods to be at least two weeks and to adhere to quality norms which would also apply to national placements (the precise law name to be confirmed).
- In **France**, new legal provisions came into force in March and September 2018 aiming to support mobility for apprentices and trainees in apprenticeship training schemes. Further to the adoption of law n° 2018-771 of 5 September 2018<sup>64</sup> organising periods of mobility abroad as part of alternance training schemes should now be easier and more legally secured for both training organisations and employers.

Although in 29 countries there are neither official definitions, nor the conditions for VET mobility set by legislation, the study team still found that in many of these countries there is at least some understanding of VET mobility. In **11 countries** such understanding mostly relies on how it is defined in the context of **Erasmus+** or a broader **European framework** related to EU VET instruments<sup>65</sup> (as found in Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Sweden, UK).

In eight countries, **VET mobility** is referred to as an **objective** in national policy documents whilst this is accompanied by a definition of how VET mobility is to be understood in the country. Such reference to VET mobility is for instance made in the VET national strategies or programmes of: Croatia, Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Northern Macedonia, Slovakia and Turkey. Besides, although VET mobility is not declared as an objective *per se* in Slovakia, the National Programme for Development of Education and Training makes a reference to VET mobility when discussing tax incentives offered for enterprises that supports VET with mobility.

In addition, the review of the country factsheets reveals that in almost half of the countries VET mobility is comprehended as **mobility in both initial and continuing VET** (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, United Kingdom, Northern Macedonia and Turkey).

In nine countries VET mobility is rather understood in the sole remit **of IVET** (Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Croatia and Norway).

In Finland, within the new 2018 legislation for VET all learning environments, both at home and abroad, have been accounted for and full recognition of learning outcomes (according to ECVET principles), provided that proper documentation of the learning outcomes has taken place.

VET **learner mobility** is commonly referred to in all countries whilst reference to VET staff mobility is also made in more than half of them. **Staff mobility** is referred to in the policy or programming documents of Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, the United Kingdom, Croatia, Norway, Northern Macedonia and Turkey.

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<sup>62</sup> Erhvervsuddannelsesloven, 19<sup>th</sup> of May, 2010.

<sup>63</sup> Wet op de ondernemingsraden, 28<sup>th</sup> of January, 1971.

<sup>64</sup> Loi n° 2018-771 du 5 septembre 2018 pour la liberté de choisir son avenir professionnel available at : <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000037367660&categorieLien=id#JORFSCITA000037367665>

<sup>65</sup> E.g. ECVET, EQAVET, EQF/NQF, EUROPASS, ELGPN, VNFIL.

Table 6. Aspects reflected in the understanding of VET mobility in legislation reviewed

<b>Mobility only as part of the <u>IVET</u></b>	Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Croatia, Norway ( <b>9 countries</b> )
<b>Mobility as part of both the <u>IVET</u> and <u>CVET</u></b>	Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, United Kingdom, Northern Macedonia, Turkey ( <b>15 countries</b> )
<b>Mobility of VET <u>staff</u></b>	Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, the United Kingdom, Croatia, Norway, Northern Macedonia, Turkey ( <b>18 countries</b> )
<b><u>Other forms of mobility for VET learners or staff</u></b>	<b>Finland:</b> Understanding of VET mobility also included the HVET area. <b>Poland:</b> Long-term mobility in CVET observed is almost exclusively apply to training periods organised by multinational companies.

Ten countries were found to have adopted **specific strategy or policy to support VET mobility**, namely Denmark, Finland, France, Netherlands, Ireland, Romania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Croatia and Turkey. However, the extent to which VET mobility is addressed in such documents differs considerably.

Although in **Denmark** there is no overarching policy for mobility in VET, an important strategic shift was initiated into national legislation before 2006. This put VET schools under an obligation to have an internationalisation strategy and to offer learners a stay abroad.<sup>66</sup>

**France** includes VET mobility as a target of learners' mobility under the ET 2020 strategy, noting the role of school partnerships both inside and outside Erasmus+.<sup>67</sup> The French government set a target of 15,000 apprentices in mobility from 2022. This figure mixes the objectives of mobility's regardless of their duration, short or long: some of them within the frame of "Erasmus Pro" (from three months to 12 months), the other not when shorter.

The **Netherlands** also have the government's commitment under the ET 2020 strategy in particular regarding the EU VET mobility target.<sup>68</sup> In addition, Dutch organisation for internationalisation of education Nuffic, together with two organisations representing VET sector (JOB and SBB), recently addressed the government to make VET sector incorporated into the government's vision of internationalisation of education which was initially foreseen only for higher education.

**Finland** committed to the ET 2020 strategy by foreseeing internationalisation of the core lifelong learning skills as the key principle to better prepare learners to work in international environments both at home and abroad.<sup>69</sup> Overall, VET mobility has

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=19700>

<sup>67</sup> [http://www.education.gouv.fr/pid25535/bulletin\\_officiel.html?cid\\_bo=57077](http://www.education.gouv.fr/pid25535/bulletin_officiel.html?cid_bo=57077)

<sup>68</sup> 10% of VET students should participate in mobility programmes.  
<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/onderwijs-en-internationalisering/documenten/kamerstukken/2018/06/04/kamerbrief-over-internationalisering-mbo-en-ho>

<sup>69</sup> [http://www.oph.fi/download/155952\\_strength\\_from\\_international\\_cooperation.pdf](http://www.oph.fi/download/155952_strength_from_international_cooperation.pdf)

generally been a popular topic for discussion over the past years which was related to the development of EU VET instruments in the country.

VET mobility is also a key priority area set out in the Republic of **Ireland's** Further Education and Training Strategy for 2014-2019, under the strategic objective "Promote and provide high quality Further Education and Training (FET).

In **Romania**, VET mobility is referred to as one of the measures to improve the quality of IVET and CVET in the VET national Strategy 2016-2020 and the Lifelong Learning (LLL) National Strategy 2016-2020. Likewise, in **Bulgaria** VET mobility is mentioned amongst the priorities to improve quality of VET in the framework of the HRD Operational Programme 2014-2020. **Estonian** Vocational Education Programme 2017-2020 aims at the development and improvement of the VET system, among other measures, through the international cooperation and study mobility of teachers and students.

In the same vein, the **Croatian** VET System Development Programme 2016-2020 put specific emphasis on the development and improvement of possibilities for greater mobility of students and teachers whilst the **Turkish** VET Strategy and Action Plan of Turkey, adopted in 2014, foresees support to VET mobility under a rather broad objective aimed at the creation of flexible and permeable VET system.

In addition to capturing information on whether and how ongoing national VET-related legislation or strategies refer to VET mobility, the review of the country factsheets suggested that VET mobility has furthermore made the object of **policy debates** at the national level, in particular in the Netherlands, Finland and Germany.

### **3.2.1.2 Data availability on non-Erasmus+ mobility**

In terms of availability of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility **monitoring data**, the information collated reveals that several countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden) gather, monitor and publicly release such data:

- In **Denmark**, data on the national schemes (PIU, DK-USA), as well as Nordic schemes (Nordplus Junior and Nordplus Adult) is available on the website of the Ministry of Higher Education and Science.
- A comprehensive monitoring data is also available in **Finland**, provided by the Finnish National Agency for Education EDUFI.
- In **Norway** this data is available on the website of the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU).
- In **Germany** data is publicly released by the Federal Institute of Vocational Education (BiBB) whilst in the **Netherlands** Nuffic publishes VET mobility statistics both in Dutch and English, among Erasmus+ schemes also involving non-Erasmus+ mobilities of two weeks and more outside of Europe.
- In **Sweden** some general statistics about participation rates of IVET learners was are made available by the Statistical Bureau. However, limited search functions are offered (e.g. no filtering by type of scheme or participant profile, etc.).

With regards to available **studies and evaluations**, this was found in a small number of countries. Denmark, Germany and Sweden have such resources available on their **national mobility schemes**.

In other countries (e.g. France, Croatia, Italy, Ireland, Iceland and Romania) some examples of VET mobility studies or evaluations were identified but those rather focused on VET mobility schemes in the remit of former Leonardo da Vinci or current Erasmus+ programme.

### **3.2.2 Governance and implementation of the mobility programmes/schemes**

The vast majority of key informants (at both EU and national level) confirmed that the governance and implementation of VET mobility programmes/schemes outside Erasmus+ may greatly vary from one country to another. Illustrative examples of such diversity reported by key informants are supplied below. Most commonly reported implementation features included:

- **Countries where both Erasmus+ and non-Erasmus+ VET mobility is steered by strong policy support:**  
In some countries, VET mobility is strongly encouraged and VET mobility programmes within and outside Erasmus+ are therefore more easily implemented within the system. This was in particular reported by key informants in the **Netherlands, Denmark or Austria**. In **Denmark**, for example, transnational VET learner mobility is an integral part of the activities of most VET schools. The main Ministerial order on IVET<sup>70</sup> requires all VET schools to offer a stay abroad to these learners who are interested in this, ensuring recognition procedures in place for the students that indeed decide to undertake these opportunities. In **Austria**, policy makers have recognised the importance of internationalisation, which has been translated in the ambition to further internationalise the Austrian VET system.
- **Countries where non-Erasmus+ mobility is fully or mostly implemented at decentralised /local level:**  
Interviewees from some countries (e.g. Italy, Spain, Slovakia and the Netherlands) claimed it is difficult to identify VET mobility programmes/schemes because their implementation is not centralised, but rather managed at regional or local level, or directly by VET providers and schools. In **Slovakia** for example mobility is typically organised and carried out by regions and municipalities, both of which have transnational partnerships with their counterparts in neighbouring countries and regions, such as Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary and Poland. The destination is often dependent on the respective language skills in the sending region, and to specific ties. A key informant explained that South-Slovak regions have larger Hungarian-speaking communities, and it is easier for these Slovak students to undertake a mobility opportunity to Hungary. The interviewee added that the lack of data at national level does not allow for a comprehensive understanding on how these schemes are implemented.

The decentralised structure for the implementation of VET mobility programmes/schemes was also reported by Dutch key informants. In the **Netherlands**, VET mobility is encouraged at national level and schools receive a lumpsum that they can use to implement mobility projects, through school-to-school partnerships or through cooperation with enterprises.

In **Spain (Basque Country)**, VET mobility programmes/schemes, both Erasmus+ and non-Erasmus+, are managed by Ikaflan, the association of public VET schools. Ikaflan identifies the hosting companies with the help of partners such as Tknica (Basque centre focused on innovation in VET), which has a large network of contacts all over the world. They also have contacts from Erasmus+ projects, and use the network of former beneficiaries who have stayed abroad after their mobility.

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<sup>70</sup> Hovedbekendtgørelsen for erhvervsuddannelserne

In **Italy**, VET mobility programmes/schemes are in some cases implemented at regional level, for example under the funding of the European Social Fund (ESF) Regional Operational Programmes (ROP).

- **Countries where non-Erasmus+ mobility draws on mixed implementation features:**

In some countries, programmes/schemes might be implemented in different ways, both through more “established” opportunities at national level, school-to-school partnerships, and cooperation initiatives between schools and municipalities. This was reported from key informants in **Bulgaria** and **Finland**. It is important to highlight that the mapping exercise and the country review showed that this is the case for other countries as well, e.g. Denmark, France, Germany, Italy.

- **Countries where Erasmus+ is the main or only source of funding for VET mobility:**

In some cases, there is little to no funding for non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes at national level. This was highlighted as an issue by key informants in the **Czech Republic**, **Northern Macedonia**<sup>71</sup> and **Turkey**, for example. In these realities, Erasmus+ is the main source of funding for VET mobility. This confirmed the findings of the country review, through which similar conclusions were found as well for **Bulgaria** and **Hungary**. In **Northern Macedonia** specifically, two non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes were identified in the country review, but a strong lack of information was highlighted by the country researcher.

Furthermore, it is possible to highlight that in some countries one type of funding might be preferred for specific contextual reasons. For example, in the case of **Italy**, mobility programmes/schemes are funded largely through the ESF Regional Operational Programmes. ESF coordination agencies and offices of the Regions themselves are quite active in these cases and they might guide VET providers in this process. In **Germany**, it is possible to find many programmes/schemes implemented at national or regional level, especially comparatively to other countries. Interviewees noted that this is related to the structure of the VET system itself, which is quite established, and which therefore facilitates the establishment of such opportunities. Moreover, key informants reported that application processes for these mobility programmes/schemes are more straightforward compared to the procedures to apply to EU funding (including Erasmus+).

### **3.2.3 Rationale for the establishment of the programmes/schemes**

A majority of EU level key informants emphasised that a key driver for developing the different programmes/schemes discussed was that **VET mobility is a ‘hot topic’** within the representative organisation they belong and among their members. Meanwhile, many pointed out that most of their members were engaged with Erasmus+ mobilities, rather than non-Erasmus+ opportunities.

As highlighted by different key informants at EU level, the main reasons behind the establishment of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes are the following<sup>72</sup>:

- to respond to gaps that are not addressed by Erasmus+ programmes;
- to have more freedom in the implementation;

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<sup>71</sup> Some opportunities were identified by country researcher for Northern Macedonia, and included in Annex 1. However, no comprehensive information was found online about these schemes.

<sup>72</sup> This list includes the rationale and motivations that were raised by multiple key informants at EU level.

- to respond to specific policies.

In particular, key informants indicated that the establishment of VET mobility programmes/schemes outside of Erasmus+ intends to respond to the gaps that are not necessarily addressed by Erasmus+, such as long-term mobility and international mobility. For example, the Danish PIU programme provides opportunities for longer-term mobility whilst the Finnish EDUFI's support to internationalisation allows for learners to go abroad beyond Europe (e.g. in Japan). EDUFI's support to internationalisation specifically has a focus on fostering industry connections and reinforcing links with third countries and regions within VET. While offering some features that Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes do not offer, the identified non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes have at times encountered some challenges that are already addressed and not faced by the more "tested" Erasmus+ ones. This aspect becomes clearer when exploring the key strengths and obstacles in section 3.2.10.

Furthermore, working with programmes/schemes outside of Erasmus+ might allow for more freedom in their implementation, without having to follow the fixed requirements or without having to face the administrative and bureaucratic burden that comes with Erasmus+ funding applications. This freedom is found for example within the Danish PIU programme and the Italian Torno Subito.

A majority of key informants noted that the establishment of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility schemes are not necessarily specifically related to VET policies or internationalisation strategies, but might equally respond to needs of the labour market, at national, regional and/or local level or other political issues of concern (e.g. relations with neighbouring countries). The reasons for implementing VET mobility programmes/schemes might be linked to employment policies: this is the case, for example of the Youth Guarantee, for which VET mobility in itself is not the priority, but is a possibility. However, a majority of key informants noted that in most cases linkages with national policies might not be particularly explicit.

In some cases, large enterprises might be able to implement mobility opportunities within the company itself, without necessarily relying on external funding. This was the case, for example, of the Austrian ÖMV apprenticeship scheme and the Technical Apprenticeship Programme led by Horizon Nuclear Power (owned by Hitachi)<sup>73</sup>. Overall, a lack of evidence suggests that these programmes/schemes, as implemented by enterprises, are not widespread.

### **3.2.4 Main objectives**

The review of the country factsheets has shown that the programmes/schemes overall address different though often cross-cutting objectives. Those include:

- Individual beneficiaries' centred objectives – e.g. focusing on young people's skills development and wider empowerment including outside Europe
- System-level oriented objectives:
  - aimed at building on today's experience to effectively modernise VET systems;
  - setting ad hoc VET mobility objectives aligned with national-level VET priority objectives.
- Cooperation and mutual learning centred:

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<sup>73</sup> The study team had planned to investigate further these two programmes/schemes through case studies. However, those could not be carried out due to identified key informants' unavailability or lack of interest to be interviewed. Information on these programmes/schemes based on desk research can be found in Annex 1.



- aimed at fostering VET-related cooperation and mutual learning with one or more targeted countries (i.e. through bilateral or multilateral programmes/schemes);
- aimed at establishing networks of professionals – which may later evolve into much larger scale initiatives.
- Objectives that are not necessarily related to the VET systems:
  - aimed at fostering relationships with neighbouring countries;
  - aimed at fostering intercultural understanding and cooperation more broadly.

The analysis from the initial mapping exercise revealed that the identified single country-led mobility schemes mainly addressed the individual beneficiaries' centred objectives. This could be for instance illustrated by a successful scheme, 'INOV Contacto', which was introduced to recent graduates and young personnel members in Portuguese companies. The programme was highly appreciated by local companies that admitted programme's effectiveness in skills development of their young employees. In Austria, the WKO scheme was developed to further support gifted students with outstanding skills.

With regards to bilateral schemes, they most often correspond to cooperation and mutual learning centred objectives. Thus, such programmes are often carried out between countries that are bond by robust cross-border relations and often represent neighbouring countries (i.e. mobility programmes between CZ-DE, DE-FR, DE-NL, PL-DE, PL-UA, PL-LT, UK-FR, CH-LI), or they are a part of international strategic partnership, for example the transatlantic cooperation between the European countries and the US (programmes implemented between DE-US, DK-US, CZ-US). Almost all of such programmes/schemes also carried elements of skills development and wider empowerment (e.g. linguistic skills, intercultural understanding).

An interesting example is the INTERREG funded structure Learning Euregio, implemented by the Netherlands and Germany. This entails three levels of objectives, addressing the individual, system-level and cooperation / mutual learning. 'INTERREG' was initiated in the 1990s with the aim to establish networks of professionals which later evolved into a much larger scale initiative aiming at the key economic areas which can be boosted through cross-border cooperation. Another purpose of the programme is to foster understanding of VET qualifications between countries, so that qualifications can be recognised across borders by employers. The scheme also stands out with its feature to tailor programme priorities to the specific cross-border cooperation potential/issues for different programme implementation periods.

Among the multilateral programmes/schemes which were further explored during the country review task, almost half of them (7) are either centred towards VET cooperation and mutual learning or individual beneficiaries' level objectives. The study team also identified several schemes aimed at system-level objectives. Examples of the latter schemes include the British 'Leadership Exchange Programme' which enables reciprocal visits between leaders and senior managers from skills institutions in the UK and overseas, and the 'Nordplus Adult' scheme implemented by the Nordic countries which, among other objectives, aims for the development of quality and innovation of educational systems in Lifelong Learning (LLL).

The case studies provide complementary insights, as set out below, to understand the main objectives of the non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes at the core of this study. Findings overall reveal similar trends than those emerging from the preceding country review.

A key driver for the implementation of VET mobility programmes/schemes in the different countries has been to respond to specific needs within a specific context. For example, the Danish PIU programme was developed to **alleviate a shortage of placement opportunities** in the country, due to the difficulty of finding host

enterprises. Currently the lack of apprenticeships is still present in Denmark, however the programme is not also seen as pedagogical tool, not just as a way of mitigating national shortcomings when it comes to apprenticeships.

In some cases, VET mobility programmes/schemes have been developed to **foster cooperation between two or more countries** in the VET sector. This was the case of the multilateral Nordplus (Junior and Adult), Eurodyssey and of the bilateral ProTandem exchange programme. In the latter case, the programme was established with the double-purpose of fostering cooperation for young apprentices and young pupils in VET, while reinforcing mobility in the labour market more broadly. The Eurodyssey programme responded to a specific interest in **fostering cooperation across European regions**, both within and outside the EU, creating a mobility programme that was quite unique at the time of its first implementation. In this context, the Eurodyssey programme aimed to foster a sense of belonging to the notion of Europe.

Objectives target both the individual and organisation levels. For example, through mobility activities, one of the key objectives of the programmes/schemes at the core of the case studies is to **promote and enhance individual learning** through cultural exchanges. A commonly identified objective is to **increase youth employability**, through offering opportunities that allow learners to broaden their network and improve their personal and professional skills and competences. Moreover, the reviewed programmes/schemes aim to improve the reputation of participating organisations, **encouraging internationalisation** and the **construction of new bridges and networks** between educational institutions and companies across different countries.

The mobility programmes/schemes at the core of the case studies present many similarities in terms of their key objectives. However, the private-led JIB apprenticeship scheme has specific objectives related to its sector, with the view to **enhance certain areas of the electrical contracting industry** through collaborative working and best practice sharing. The Torno Subito scheme, led by public authorities at regional level in Italy, has the specific objective to **boost and internationalise the regional economic structure**. Moreover, it aims at generating, in the mid-term, smart growth processes. The table below provides an overview of the key objectives of the non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programme/scheme at the core of this comparative analysis.

Table 7. Key objectives of the programmes/ schemes reviewed

Programme/scheme	Key objectives
<b>Public-led</b>	
Eurodyssey (multilateral)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage the mobility of young people</li> <li>To improve their competences</li> <li>To promote the notion of European citizenship</li> </ul>
Nordplus Junior (multilateral)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To strengthen and develop the Nordic-Baltic co-operation on education, including early childhood and care</li> </ul>
PIU (DK)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To alleviate shortage of placement opportunities (apprenticeships) in Denmark</li> <li>To provide Danish VET-learners with additional skills and international experience</li> </ul>

Programme/scheme	Key objectives
ProTandem (DE and FR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To reinforce mobility in the labour market</li><li>• To reinforce cooperation between France and Germany especially for young apprentices and young pupils in VET</li></ul>
Torno Subito (IT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To develop human capital through integrated high training and work experience</li><li>• To generate in the mid-term smart growth processes</li><li>• To boost and internationalising the regional economic structure</li></ul>
<b>Enterprise-led</b>	
JIB Apprenticeship Scheme (UK)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To promote and enhance individual learning through cultural exchanges</li><li>• To try and enhance certain areas of the electrical contracting industry</li></ul>

### 3.2.5 Basic key features of retained programmes/schemes

#### 3.2.5.1 Geographical coverage and size

The 44 programmes/schemes retained in the country factsheets are distributed as follows.

- 22 led by one single country;
- 14 bilateral;
- 8 multilateral.

A detailed overview of the distribution of these programmes/schemes is provided in the table below.

Figure 2. Geographical distribution of selected VET mobility programmes/schemes

<u>Led by one country</u>		<u>Bilateral</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WKO Begabtenfoerderung Lehrlingsmobilitaet (AT)</li> <li>• West vlaanderen uitwisselingsprojecten voor scholen (BE)</li> <li>• PIU (Praktik I Udlandet/ Placements abroad) (DK)</li> <li>• Alliansi Youth Exchange (FI)</li> <li>• EDUFI's support to internationalisation (FI)</li> <li>• Dynastage Apprentis (FR)</li> <li>• Compagnons du Devoir et du Tour de France Programmes (FR)</li> <li>• Baden-Württemberg-STIPENDIUM (DE)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Internship Trade Practice (IITP) (MT)</li> <li>• POWER 2014-2020 (PL)</li> <li>• INOV Contacto (PT)</li> <li>• Exalliev's scholarship (SK)</li> <li>• The Duke of Edinburgh's international Award (SK)</li> <li>• Atlas Partnership (SE)</li> <li>• Atlas Practice (SE)</li> <li>• Praktikantprogrammet (SE)</li> <li>• Leadership Exchange Programme (UK)</li> <li>• Statens Lånekasse (NO)</li> <li>• Visite (LI, CH)</li> <li>• Portugal Tourism international internships (PT)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International School Partnership</li> <li>• High School Teachers Exchange Programme (CZ)</li> <li>• The DK - USA programme (DK, USA)</li> <li>• ProTandem Échanges franco-allemands en formation professionnelle (FR, DE)</li> <li>• Deutsch Amerikanisches Austauschprogramm für Auszubildende (DE, FR)</li> <li>• Deutsch Französisches Jugendwerk (DE, FR)</li> <li>• Austausch mit Auszubildenden der beruflichen Schulen</li> <li>• The learning Euregio: "The learning Euregio does it" and "Learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>without borders" (DE, (NL)</li> <li>• Polish-Ukrainian Youth Exchange Council (Polish: Polsko-Ukrainska Rada Wymiany Młodzieży) (PL, UA)</li> <li>• Polish-German Youth Cooperation (Polish: PNWM - Polsko-Niemiecka Współpraca Młodzieży) (PL, DE)</li> <li>• Polish-Lithuanian Youth Exchange Fund (Polish: Polsko-Litewski Fundusz Wymiany Młodzieży) (PL, LT)</li> <li>• Charles de Gaulle Trust partnerships (FR, UK)</li> <li>• Gjør Det! (NO, DE)</li> <li>• PASCH, Schools: Partners for the Future (CY, DE)</li> </ul>
<p><u>Multilateral</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nordplus Junior</li> <li>• Nordplus Adult</li> <li>• Eurodyssée                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EEA grants (NO)</li> <li>• EEA Scholarship Programme (NO)</li> <li>• Buurklassen (BE, NL)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JIB Apprenticeship Exchange Programme (UK)</li> <li>• Apprentissage Transfrontalier (LU)</li> </ul>		
<p>Regions across 12 countries (DK), (FI), (LT), (LV), (NO), (EE), (IS), (SE)</p>			

Source: ICF

The selection of countries, which are eligible for participation in the various mobility programmes, differs substantially across the analysed programmes/schemes.

The majority of programmes/schemes are led by a single country and support mobilities across the globe (15 out of the 22 programmes/schemes led by a single country). The majority of programmes/schemes include a wide range of countries in which the mobility can be undertaken. Reasons for the selection of those third countries include the fostering international of cooperation between countries (e.g. with the US), as well as a developmental aid for certain African and other developing or emerging countries.

Among these multilateral programmes/schemes:

- Three programmes/schemes<sup>74</sup> have a small geographical scope with less than five targeted countries.
- Five programmes/schemes<sup>75</sup> have a larger scope, supporting mobility with five countries or more.

For further details, see Annex 1.

These multilateral programmes/schemes typically facilitate exchanges with certain European countries or the US. Prominent examples of such multilateral European programmes/schemes include Nordplus (NO, SE, IS, DK, EE, LT, LV, FI) and other schemes that are characterised by a strong regional focus, connecting neighbouring

<sup>74</sup> Buurklassen, Apprentissage Transfrontalier, JIB Apprenticeship Exchange Programme

<sup>75</sup> Nordplus Adult, Nordplus Junior, EEA grants, EEA Scholarship Programme, Eurodyssée

countries with a history of economical and vocational cooperation, such as the *Apprentissage Transfrontalier* (LU).

Participation data was not always available and where available it did not systematically allow for a distinction between VET and other mobilities.

With regard to the programmes'/schemes' annual number of beneficiaries, the analysis reveals a heterogeneous landscape across Europe (see Table 1.1. in Annex 2). Reported numbers range from as little as two participants per year (JIB) to as much as around 10,000 (Nordplus).

For many of the mobility programmes/schemes reviewed in the country factsheets, no information on the number of participants was publicly available, amounting to a total of 28 missing.

### **3.2.5.2 Target group and linkages**

The analysis of the 44 VET mobility programmes/schemes further reviewed reveals that most mobilities involve IVET learners (35 programmes/schemes) and/or staff (21 programmes/schemes) exchanges. Mobility programmes concerning CVET were conversely much difficult to identify, resulting in 13 CVET programmes/schemes for recent graduates and seven for adult workforce specifically retained in the country factsheets. 23 further programmes/schemes addressing other types of beneficiaries were also captured<sup>76</sup>.

An overview of the different target groups covered by the VET mobility programmes/schemes is presented in Table 1.2 in Annex 2.

Compared with Erasmus+ VET mobility actions of a similar nature, a number of these programmes/schemes appear to be both more accessible and to feature a broader, less strong focus on vocational issues (see Table 1.3 in Annex 2 for further information).

The information gathered on the distribution of the programmes/schemes reveals that a quite large portion of the examined programmes/schemes (15 out of 44) link to apprenticeship programmes. Also, a large share (14 programmes/schemes) is linked to or involve partnerships between VET institutions.

Partnerships between VET institutions and employers are less commonly encountered, although where existing those have a wide geographical coverage. The study team found this institutional cooperation in the realm of VET mobility in France, Poland, Germany, Netherlands, UK, Nordic and Baltic countries.

Linkages to employment policies and measures appear explicitly only in Italy, Portugal and the UK. Findings suggest that a connection between VET mobility programmes/schemes and professional qualification programmes is usually found in countries already implementing large scale VET programmes on national level, including several smaller countries (Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Nordic/Baltic countries, Luxembourg, Malta and the UK).

Still, a considerable share of programmes/schemes do not feature any links to the specific policies as discussed above (16 programmes/schemes). Meanwhile, the study team observed potential for positive synergies and economies of scale through reaching out to these programmes and by incorporating them into an overarching set of policies, priorities and initiatives. In other words, adding such linkages in the future can benefit the effectivity and efficiency of the non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes and schemes.

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<sup>76</sup> Please note that the reason these numbers do not add up is because one programme/scheme might target more than one specific group.

### 3.2.5.3 Duration of mobility

The review of the information gathered on the duration of the 44 programmes/schemes reveals that those distribute heterogeneously.

Related insights have been gathered below through two main overview tables (Tables 3.10 and 3.11 of Annex 2) respectively focusing on long-term (three months or more) and short-term mobility programmes/schemes (less than one month to three months).

Overall, the latter show that around half of the analysed programmes/schemes do not exceed a duration of three months, while the other half may take up to one year and more.

Around half of the VET mobility programmes/schemes feature periods of up to one month (16 programmes/schemes – see Table 3.11 in Annex 2). Among those, four programmes/schemes (operated in BE, NL, LT and PL) have a duration of less than ten days. Two of those (i.e. Lithuanian-Polish Youth Exchange Fund and Polish-Ukrainian Youth Exchange Council) have a wider scope than sole VET mobility as more broadly supporting youth exchanges.

As shown in Tables 1.4 and 1.5 of Annex 2, most of the long-term VET mobility programmes/schemes (i.e. 9 out of 12) may last up to 12 months. Only three of them may last longer (in DK, LU, SE).

Linking duration to the size and scope of mobility schemes, the study team found large schemes (> 1,000 beneficiaries annually) to last for up to one year (except Polish-Ukrainian Youth Exchange Council (10 days), whereas smaller schemes commonly do not exceed a duration of six months (except High School Teachers Exchange Programme in the Czech Republic).

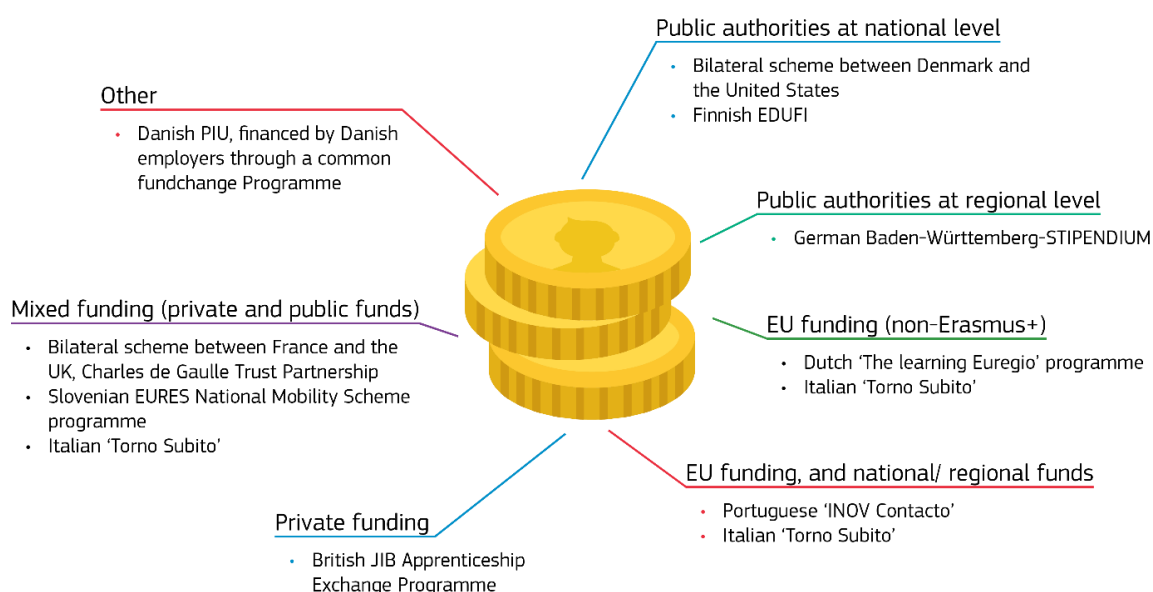
### 3.2.6 Funding arrangements

This subsection presents governance and funding features of the 44 programmes/schemes reviewed.

Findings reveal that the majority receive public funding, at least partially and are then implemented by ministries or other public authorities at either national or regional level (36 out of 44 schemes).

The Table below offers an illustrative overview of different main types of funding arrangements encountered.

Figure 3. Overview of main types of funding arrangements encountered



Source: ICF

The majority of these programmes/schemes above are implemented by public authorities at national/regional level. Some exceptions are found in the Praktik I Udalndet (Practical Placement Abroad), implemented by the Danish Employers' Reimbursement Fund, or the Charles de Gaulle Trust Partnerships, governed by the British Council.

Moreover, some programmes/schemes are implemented by VET providers themselves. This is the case of: the Exalliev's scholarship in Slovakia, implemented by the secondary technical school of Jan Bosc; "The learning Euregio" programme, implemented by two schools (namely ROC Nijmegen and Graafschap college) in the Netherlands with funding from public sources; and the International Internship Trade Practice (IITP), governed by the Maltese Institute of Tourism Studies. The scale of these programmes/schemes is smaller than some implemented at national level, and they are based on specific agreements between VET providers. Moreover, they might be rather included as part of the curriculum itself. For example, the Maltese IITP is underpinned by a mandatory module for students which is aimed to improve their technical skills and to put in practice their acquired theoretical knowledge. Considering the specific features of the examples above, no comparative analysis could be put together.

### **3.2.7 Financial aspects**

The information gathered on financial aspects for the 44 programmes/schemes reviewed regards more specifically:

- individual grant amounts;
- payment regulations applicable (where existing) to disadvantaged applicants/beneficiaries and;
- regulations applying to reimbursement and co-funding requirements.

#### *Amount and frequency of payments*

- Information on amount and frequency of payments was not available for all programmes/schemes and only with limited comparability for others. For a selection of seven mobility programmes/schemes, the study team could access information on the amount, as well as the payment period of grants, thus enabling a further analysis. Findings suggests that seven pay out monthly grants, ranging from 200€ in Austria to 1,400€ in Spain (for further details, see Table 1.1 in Annex 2).
- Annual pay-out has only been reported for the Danish 'PIU' scheme, providing up to 3,400€ (per year spent in mobility) as a reimbursement for justifiable expenses. These different funding policies limit the comparability of the amount of funding, as they differ largely in their specifications and the extent to which they are eventually consumed.
- Considering only programmes/schemes for which regular payment was specified, the team found an average grant of 915€ per month per learner. The basis of this calculation is further illustrated in Table 1.6 of Annex 2.
- Most commonly, programmes/schemes offering funding for the entire project period through a singular payment were identified. Those range from 800€ (DK) to 11,300€ (UK) and are mostly provided as grants to participants or subsidies to the implementing organisations. Such subsidies were paid out to implementing organisations in the range between 2,750€ to 5,600€, while information on the amounts was only available for Belgian schemes ('Buurklassen' and 'West vlaanderen uitwisselingsprojecten voor scholen').

Scholarships were observed in three instances, namely the Czech Republic, France and Slovakia. In all these cases, no additional funding was available for disadvantaged individuals. Information on the amount of funding has been provided only for the

French scheme ('Compagnons du Devoir et du Tour de France Programmes'), amounting to 722.69€.

#### *Funding dedicated to disadvantaged participants*

Among the programmes/schemes analysed, merely eight (spread across six countries, DK, FI, FR, DE, PL, NO) featured dedicated funding regulations for disadvantaged participants. The additional funding was in all cases tied to specific requirements of the individual case of the disadvantaged participant. As shown in Table 1.7 of Annex 2, the programmes/schemes address a variety of disadvantages. While some are restricting additional funding to individuals facing special needs with regards to a medical condition (Nordplus, Power 2014-2020), others also provide means to include learners with difficult socio-economic backgrounds. Concerning the range of different disadvantages, which are explicitly eligible for additional funding, the German-French scheme 'Deutsch Französisches Jugendwerk' stands out, covering seven different disadvantages<sup>77</sup>.

#### *Reimbursement and co-funding*

- Lump sums for travel and other expenses are only provided in the Nordplus, the Slovenian 'EURES - National Mobility Scheme' and the Norwegian 'Gjør Det!' schemes.
- Three schemes restrict reimbursement to justifiable expenses (DK, DE, UK). While funding in these cases require collecting receipts to reclaim expenses, the maximum amount of available funding per learner ranges between 3,400€ (DK) and 4,600€ (UK).
- Specifications as to what constitutes justifiable expenses are rather general for the German scheme ('Deutsch Amerikanisches Austauschprogramm für Auszubildende') and more extensive for the 'Leadership Exchange Programme'. The latter specifies: "economy flights for the staff participating in the exchange; local travel in the UK and overseas; reasonable accommodation and subsistence costs for staff for visits to partner organisation; reasonable hospitality costs; reasonable production costs (materials development); visa costs for UK staff; costs relating to resources of a specific nature related to the project". It can be concluded that while these funding arrangements might be more restrictive at first, they are usually generous with regards to the total amounts and the range of reimbursable expenses.

In relation to these specific reimbursement regulations, a smaller number of programmes/schemes featured additional information on co-funding (six schemes across FI, DE, NL and UK). For instance, the Dutch Euregio scheme requires participating organisations to contribute to 50% of the respective funding for all VET mobility. Other programmes/schemes typically provide a specific amount of funding or reimburse a distinct range of activities, requiring beneficiaries to cover anything that exceeds these grants by themselves.

In conclusion, the financial setup of the different programmes/schemes for which information could be gathered differs substantially on a variety of indicators. Most commonly, programmes/schemes offer one payment in the form of a grant or a subsidy for a mobility project that fulfils the respective criteria. On average, those which feature a regular pay-out to beneficiaries offer little over 900€ per month. This figure may be substantially higher for programmes/schemes that provide funding in a

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<sup>77</sup> i.e. addressing individuals facing discrimination (e.g. because of their religion or sexual orientation); economically disadvantaged individuals; individuals with a disability (physically or mentally); individuals with learning difficulties; individuals with a migrant or refugee background (or their descendants); ethnic minorities; individuals with chronic disease; individuals from remote areas.



singular payment to a participant or an implementing organisation facilitating multiple such mobilities.

Due to the low number of programmes/schemes that provided such information in a manner suitable for larger comparison, these figures have to be interpreted with caution.

### **3.2.8 Information and guidance support to individuals**

The analysis of the information gathered in the area reveals that various types of communication channels are used for making the programmes/schemes visible to the target groups.

The main types of dissemination activities include online dissemination/communication via:

- the website of programme's/schemes' coordinating organisation;
- dedicated programme/scheme's website,
- beneficiary school's website,
- website of state / local authorities,
- direct communication to schools / potential participants,
- social and traditional media.

The most popular communication channels found are in order: websites of coordinating organisation, project websites and social media. As noted above, the study team also found that on several occasions programmes/schemes were promoted via school websites, websites of state / local authorities or traditional media. Approximately half of the schemes appear to be promoted through at least two different communication channels. In Nordic countries (DK, NO and SE) there is a tendency to communicate programmes/schemes-related information directly to potential end-users (schools, learners) without making the information public.

Among the more custom dissemination activities, the French scheme 'Les Compagnons du Devoir et du Tour de France' involves 'ambassadors' to both support and personalise its promotion and dissemination. The primary role of those ambassadors consists of sharing information with youth and their parents about different types of training and apprenticeships available. Another example concerns UK's 'JIB Apprenticeship Exchange Programme' where the participants are encouraged to update a blog about their experiences during the mobility period.

In Liechtenstein, the youth exchange programme 'Visite' is promoted via a wide network of Rotary Clubs since the programme was initiated and implemented by the Rotary association of Switzerland and Liechtenstein. The French scheme 'Dynastage Apprentis' is also disseminated on the national Euroguidance website and on the job alteration platform providing practical information for those alternating professional profile by participating in VET programmes. Table 1.8 in Annex 2 offers an overview of information and guidance support across the 44 programmes/schemes.

With regard to individual support, evidence suggests that this is typically provided by the bodies implementing the programmes/schemes and VET schools. The support usually takes the form of:

- providing general information about programmes/schemes (e.g. preparation seminars and workshops);
- advising on obtaining funding for interested schools (bodies implementing the schemes);
- assisting candidates with administrative processes during application process, before and/or during the mobility stay;
- post-mobility support to participants, for example, related to their further career guidance.

### **3.2.9 Quality assurance and recognition procedures**

In terms of quality assurance (QA) and recognition procedures, around 1 out of 3 of the programmes/schemes reviewed rely on some forms of quality assurance mechanisms and recognition procedures. The information collated through desk research reveals some specific QA mechanisms and procedures implemented in practice.

The following examples of main types of QA practices were identified across the programmes/schemes:

- The participating VET institution has to deliver an evaluation at the end of the project (BE).
- National procedures require the hosting enterprise abroad to provide information on the training it offers and to assess learning outcomes at the end of the stay (DK).
- A dedicated online tool is used for both application and reporting purposes ('Nordplus' tool 'Espresso') (Nordic/Baltic countries).
- Projects are evaluated by the programme/scheme office. Related outputs serve to inform continued funding allocation (SE).

With regards to recognition procedures, it was found that around one third of programmes/schemes reviewed has them in place (i.e. 14 programmes/ schemes in total). Most often, the mobility periods are recognised by direct integration in the home programmes (e.g. credit points used towards obtaining qualifications in the home programme).

Conversely, formal recognition of learning outcomes in sending and receiving institutions is foreseen only for a few programmes/schemes. For example, in the context of the PIU scheme learning outcomes are assessed by the hosting enterprise and later validated and recognised by the vocational school upon homecoming. The Luxembourgish scheme 'Apprentissage Transfrontalier' foresees an establishment of clear learning objectives in a learning agreement between the individual learner and the hosting organisation which is then shared between the three parties. Also, there is an additional agreement between the VET provider and the enterprise.

For a higher number of the programmes/schemes (21 in total) some follow-up activities are organised (i.e. found in BE, CY, FI, DE, HR, LI, NO, PL, PT, SE and the UK). These include the following practices:

- End-project evaluations prepared by participating training institution;
- Progress reports to coordinating institution;
- Participant mobility reports;
- Debriefing procedures in VET schools with returning learners;
- Meetings between institutions and individual participants to share experiences;
- Programme alumni networks for sharing experience and success stories;
- Interviewing participants;
- Follow-up visits by coordinating organisation.

### **3.2.10 Key strengths and obstacles**

This section outlines the main strengths and obstacles in the implementation of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes as reported by both EU and national level-key informants, and as retrieved through the investigation of the seven case studies.

It is important to specify three aspects related to the interconnection between strengths and obstacles of the investigated programmes/schemes.

- Firstly, some of the reported obstacles might actually be the same as some reported strengths. This is determined by the wide heterogeneity of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes and their features, which does

not allow for a comprehensive comparative analysis. The information presented is rather illustrative and descriptive, highlighting interesting examples and features, as well as potential similarities and differences with VET mobility opportunities implemented with Erasmus+ funding.

- Secondly, in some cases what is considered as a strength might actually be a sort of “trade-off”. For example, some non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes are considered as more straightforward (e.g. more flexible, less burdensome administratively) than Erasmus+ initiatives. However, one of the reasons why Erasmus+ is considered “bureaucratic” is the presence of extensive reporting requirements. These do not exist in many non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes, which contributes to the limited information about scale and impact of initiatives.
- Thirdly, strengths and obstacles can be encountered at different levels. In fact, they might be faced by different actors (e.g. managing organisations, beneficiary organisations or individuals). Moreover, strengths might rather take the form of success factors, and obstacles might be related to both the implementation itself and more general weaknesses. To the extent possible, this section provides a distinction among different types of strengths and obstacles.

### **3.2.10.1 Strengths and success factors of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes**

All key informants consulted at EU and national level (i.e. through both KIIs and the case studies) valued the **positive impact** of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes on a **positive impact** on individual beneficiaries (in the case of both long-term or short-term opportunities). Interviewees highlighted that this is not only specific to non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes, but that it applies to all mobility opportunities, including the ones funded by Erasmus+. This aspect is further discussed in sections 4 and 5.

Across the information gathered through KIIs and the case studies, the main types of strengths and success factors emerging from the review of the case studies are of the following types:

- **Organisational**: related to the role of managing organisations and coordinators;
- **Procedural**: concerning ways to handle application processes;
- **Financial**: related to funding opportunities available to beneficiary organisations and individuals
- **Geographical**: scope of the scheme/programme;
- **Governance-related**, for example in relation to their nature as a bilateral or multilateral programmes/scheme;
- **Dissemination-related**, concerning the communication strategy for the implementation of the programme/scheme

The most commonly reported strengths identified by key stakeholders lie on the **nature of some programmes/schemes**, which might address features of mobility that are not addressed by Erasmus+ programmes.

- For example, some programmes/schemes also provide **attractive destinations** as options for the beneficiaries, even beyond the EU, such as in the case of the opportunities funded under the EDUFI’s support to internationalisation, the Danish PIU and the Italian Torno Subito, for which destinations are not limited to EU borders. These make the programmes/schemes appealing for individual beneficiaries and participating organisations alike. Key informants also noted that in some cases non-Erasmus+ VET mobility opportunities might allow for **longer-term mobility** opportunities, beyond the scope offered by the current Erasmus+ programme.

- Furthermore, in some cases application procedures are particularly “user friendly” and simple. This was reported as a success factor as **not posing administrative burden** on organisations or individual beneficiaries. This was highlighted as an important success factor for the Danish PIU, as well as the Nordic Nordplus and the interregional Eurodyssey. As highlighted above, this might apply to many different non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes, but it might also entail some “trade-offs”, such as the lack of comprehensive reporting mechanisms.

Another reported success factor was considered to be the **proactive involvement of the managing organisation**, and in particular its **strong support** to the individual beneficiaries and the participating organisations. This support materialises for instance in the form of language courses or preparatory visits as encountered in the ProTandem and Nordplus programmes.

Moreover, a **close relationship with the partners**, and **good cooperation between schools and companies** were highlighted as essential success factors by interviewees across all five public-led programmes/schemes reviewed to integrate preliminary findings in the present report. In this context, a close cooperation is crucial between stakeholders at all level, including public authorities (where relevant), sending and hosting organisations.

In some cases, **individual learners are at the centre**, being responsible for the design of their own mobility opportunity. This approach was reported by interviewees as an important success factor, which made the programmes attractive to potential applicants, as well as fostered their motivation and strong engagement in the activities. This is the case, for example, of the Italian scheme Torno Subito and the multi-lateral Eurodyssey programme. Learners and participants do not have this kind of opportunity under Erasmus+ initiatives. Learners’ possibility to create their own project was considered nevertheless as both a strength and a weakness though. Indeed, on the one hand this allows for a lot of space and creativity of the learner to pursue something they are truly interested in. On the other hand, since learners are the ones to identify the receiving organisations, there might be difficulties for the managing authorities to verify the quality of those organisations, from the perspective of the managing authorities.

The review of the insights also reveals that success factors may also be specific depending on the structure of the programme/scheme itself.

For example, the Italian Torno Subito programme, funded through the European Social Fund (ESF), as well as the Danish PIU programme and the Nordic Nordplus offer **attractive financing and allowances**. These allowances offer an opportunity to beneficiaries from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds as well, as they might not be encouraged to apply if allowances were not as generous. Moreover, some programmes/schemes (i.e. Torno Subito) give the learner most of or all the **funding at the beginning of the experience**. This allows the learner to better plan their own experience depending on their needs, and it allows for better inclusion of groups from a disadvantaged socio-economic background, so that the support is in place from the beginning of the experience.

Another important success factor regards the capability of the organisations responsible for the programmes/schemes to effectively **communicate, promote and disseminate information** on the latter (e.g. about application procedures and selection criteria, target groups). This was highlighted by interviewees for the Nordplus and Eurodyssey programmes/schemes as a factor that affects the popularity and attractiveness of the programmes at hand.

One key informant highlighted as well that some strengths might be dependent on the **specific scope of the scheme**: for example, bilateral programmes/schemes could be considered as stable and established, as they also represent the will of two countries or regions to establish a partnership and cooperation.

### **3.2.10.2 Obstacles of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes**

The obstacles faced by different stakeholders of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes are encountered also in the implementation of Erasmus+ initiatives, except some specific examples such as visa issues for mobility with third countries, and the lack of support mechanisms for learners, which are generally present under Erasmus+.

Insights gained from key informants at EU and national level and the case studies helped to identify four main overarching types of obstacles and barriers often faced by stakeholders (i.e. managing organisations, participating organisations and individuals) involved in the VET mobility programmes/schemes.

- Key stakeholders face in some cases **administrative and bureaucratic burden** of certain procedures and processes. While for some non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes such procedures can be straightforward, as highlighted in sub-section 3.2.10.1 above, some non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes can have complex procedures and processes. This confirms once more the heterogeneity of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes and it reminds us that a comprehensive analysis needs to take into account such diversity.
- Another overarching obstacle is the **identification of host companies** that can effectively offer appropriate training opportunities. This is in some cases tackled by the managing organisation, through monitored cooperation or working through already established partnerships. Individual beneficiaries might also be faced with this challenge, and the role of managing organisations in supporting the beneficiaries in this context becomes essential.
- Moreover, in some cases there might be a **“mismatch” of students’ expectations and realistic work placements**. This is an issue and obstacle for all parties involved in the implementation of the mobility programme.
- The **duration of the mobility** might in some cases be considered too brief. This could reduce the overall added value of the action, for all stakeholders involved.

Insights gathered through the case studies suggest that the following types of barriers and obstacles are encountered by managing organisations, participating organisations and individual beneficiaries:

- **Managing organisations:**
  - The **allocation and use of financial resources** may be challenging for managing organisations. For example, key informants from the Torno Subito programme noted that the Region of Lazio is in charge of managing the funding from the ESF. The complexity of related rules to adhere to were said to be deterrent factors.
  - **Changes in government** were also reported as having deterrent effects on the implementation of the programme by interviewees from managing organisations of the Eurodyssey programme. Those highlighted that managing organisations should be aware of this potential risk, as governmental priorities can change over time, and less attention (and funding) could be placed on learners’ mobility.
  - In some cases, there might be some issues in **specific partnerships**: in fact, on the side of one country there might be more financial support, which cannot however be matched by the counterpart abroad.
- **Participating organisations:**
  - Findings suggest that small companies encounter specific challenges, as they do not necessarily see the advantage of letting young apprentices go to companies in the partner country. This is the case also because in small and

medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) apprentices have quite relevant responsibilities, and they leave an evident gap in the workforce when participating in an exchange/ mobility activity. This was for instance reported as an issue by a key informant representing the ProTandem exchanges. SMEs often would require external funding to implement mobility opportunities, but they are usually ill-equipped due to the lack of human resources and they therefore often lack dedicated staff that can guide these processes. The above was notably reported by key informants from the private sector at national level, as well as at EU level.

- Participating organisations also encounter challenges with specific **partnerships** in the counterpart abroad, where cooperation is not as smooth as previously hoped and expected at the time of its establishment. This can be an issue also under Erasmus+ initiatives. However, this risk is mitigated more under Erasmus+ initiatives, thanks to the requirements and the extensive reporting mechanisms, that ensure better monitoring and evaluation.
- **Individual beneficiaries** are exposed to the following types of obstacles:
  - In some cases, **beneficiaries are not accompanied** and have to go abroad on their own. This may discourage young apprentices and their families. Support measures from the managing and host organisations are important in this context. In the case of the JIB apprenticeship scheme, this challenge was addressed by sending apprentices to the location of the exchange two by two.
  - **Linguistic barriers** are also an issue. In particular, interviewees noted that it is particularly difficult for individual beneficiaries to undertake mobility opportunities in countries where the native language is neither their own nor English.
  - Individual beneficiaries face challenges in obtaining the **visa permits** necessary for the duration of the exchange, especially when it comes to mobility opportunities beyond the European Union. This challenge is closely related to the **lack of mechanisms** that support and accompany beneficiaries in their application process and before the departure.
  - Students in some cases **compete with the local workforce**. Sometimes, companies might find it easier to hire students and apprentices from their own country. This was noted as a challenge by a representative of the Danish PIU programme.

More anecdotally reported were the following types of obstacles:

- The **VET structure** within a specific context might constitute an obstacle in itself: for example, in Northern Macedonia, a key informant noted that long-term absence from schools is not possible according to the law itself and the VET system in the country.
- The **differences between VET systems** of partner countries can also pose some challenges. For example, an interviewee noted that Austrian apprentices are often younger (14 years old) than apprentices in partner countries (16 years old or older). This might constitute a challenge, as employers might struggle to understand the VET system and might not trust the young apprentices with larger responsibilities. Another interviewee noted that in Germany VET is rather practice-oriented, but this is not the case in all other countries. This might be a challenge to effectively match opportunities with partner countries, but it can also be a positive element for students and apprentices to improve skills they would otherwise not improve in their own system. It is important to highlight that these challenges may also be encountered by Erasmus+ programmes, but the more established nature of the programme, in comparison with most of the identified non-Erasmus+

programmes/schemes allows for these issues to be addressed at an earlier stage of implementation.

- Another issue is related to the people that **guide and support** the application procedures within schools themselves. For example, in the case of Italy, this role is often assigned to teachers themselves. However, these roles are not institutionalised but rather depend on the individual teachers' availability and interest in taking on additional tasks to provide guidance to the students. This system comes with limitations, since it does not ensure a constant structure for students' guidance in this context.
- Two key informants observed that the **age of VET learners** also plays a role: in fact, their young age is at times an element that prevents them to undertake a mobility opportunity, especially if long-termed.
- Three key informants noted the **difficulty in disseminating information** and reaching the specific target group with the specific relevant details about the mobility programmes/schemes, as highlighted by a French key informant. Key informants from Bulgaria and from Italy noted that in particular there is a lack of a centralised repository for information on available programmes/schemes.

## **4 Impacts-related qualitative insights and statistics on non-Erasmus+ and Erasmus+ VET mobility**

This section starts presenting impact-related qualitative insights, in the form of anecdotal evidence, obtained from key informants (consulted through national-level KIIs and case studies - see section 4.1). It then offers an overview of available statistics (i.e. impact-related where available and more widely outlining available key data of given non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes) on a few non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes as well as some complementary evidence benchmarking a few non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes against Erasmus+ (see section 4.2).

### **4.1 Impact-related anecdotal evidence from KIIs and case studies**

#### **4.1.1 Individual level impacts**

All key informants at EU and national level highlighted the positive impact that VET mobility programmes/schemes have on individual beneficiaries, concerning both long-term and short-term opportunities. Interviewees emphasised that this is not specific to non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes, but that it applies to all mobility opportunities.

##### *Personal and professional development*

Key informants associated the benefits of transnational mobility with increased learners' skills ranging from personal (e.g. improved soft skills such as self-esteem and resilience, autonomy, problem solving, entrepreneurial skills, linguistic skills and curiosity) to professional skills.

Through the case studies, the most commonly reported type of impact also relates to increased **personal and professional skills** (e.g. including technical, intercultural and linguistic skills) amongst beneficiary learners, resulting from their exposure to a new country and learning environment. Apprentices are furthermore exposed to foreign companies and **different work culture and methods**. In this context, beneficiaries were also reported to have learnt to quickly adapt to a new environment. This also resulted in an **increased confidence and independence** of participants, both at a personal and professional level.

*Other anecdotal evidence reported more sporadically is presented in the boxes below.*

#### **Gender**

A Lithuanian VET school representative explained that the VET mobility scheme he is familiar with has not only equipped beneficiary learners with new skills, but also helped to contribute to changing mind-sets and addressing gender stereotypes by enabling female beneficiaries to gain knowledge in areas commonly regarded as 'male professions', such as taking part in car mechanics-related activities. (source: KII)

Personal empowerment was valued in the case of the private-led JIB apprenticeship scheme. Being a woman was for the VET learner interviewed of great significance, in terms of the specific knowledge and experience she gained in her host destination. In practice, the VET learner had the opportunity to meet with groups dedicated to supporting women in the electrical contracting industry. This empowered the apprentice, who, upon returning to the UK, looked for similar groups to support her work. This was particularly relevant as women are acutely underrepresented in the electrical contracting industry, constituting only 2%, as noted by the key informant. (source: case study)



### **Employability**

Representatives of the Polish managing agency and the trade union of the construction industry reported that mobility placements helped to increase employability of learners in sectors such as automotive, construction, catering or hospitality. The fact that vacancies were filled across borders was conversely perceived as a side-effect on national workforce by some stakeholders. (source: KII)

Enhanced employability was also reported under the case studies by representatives of ProTandem, PIU, Eurodyssey and Torno Subito. This is possible both directly (e.g. host companies directly hiring the apprentices following the exchange) and indirectly (e.g. international experience being valued in their CV). (source: case studies)

### **Internationalisation**

The participation in VET mobility opportunities may further open the doors to additional mobility opportunities, as noted by interviewees from the ProTandem programme. Once participants returned to their home countries, the international experience in their CV is valued in other recruitment processes, as well as their acquisition of new linguistic skills. (source: case study)

The fact that several bilateral schemes (i.e. between DK-USA, CZ-USA, DE-US) allow mobility periods between different continents, whereas Scandinavian countries (e.g. DK, NO) offer programmes/schemes without any geographic limitations was seen as an asset at learner level. For several key informants from these countries, this was considered as a benefit in comparison with Erasmus+ as generating positive impacts such as:

- offering more opportunities to respond to any personal interests;
- allowing to learn or get acquainted with more languages;
- getting a feeling of being a world citizen;
- fostering intercultural awareness or exploring the world outside EU.

(source: KIIs)

### **Added value**

One of the most tangible benefits to Danish learners, as reported by the agency coordinating the national PIU programme, is a requirement to pay a salary to a trainee if an apprenticeship contract is made in Denmark. This is also possible as a part of Erasmus+ funded mobility, albeit optional (and not particularly widespread) rather than being a formal requirement. This requirement of the PIU may also have an impact on the system level, tackling the issue of apprentices being considered as cheap labour. A successful introduction of ErasmusPro could crowd out PIU and employers may in large part stop paying wages to VET learners from abroad on long-term placements.

(source: case study plus further study team analysis)

Several key informants also reported that individual programme beneficiaries noticed that Erasmus+ offers more generous funding than other schemes. Besides, non-Erasmus+ funded programmes were quite often (though not always) regarded as allowing for more flexibility in terms of administration and more accessible to VET-schools with limited institutional capacities. These flexible structures were also said to make the programmes more accessible including to disadvantaged individuals (for example, by allowing individual (personal) applications or higher day-rates). This was

for instance reported by interviewees from the German VET research and development centre and the Nordplus Adult programme managing organisation. Bearing in mind that most of the programmes/schemes identified as part of the mapping task (Task 1) do not have specific measures for disadvantaged students, the latter statement is however to be taken cautiously - and should be further verified based on actual participation data (not publicly available for the programme discussed).

#### *Staff-level*

There was consensus among key informants from several EU Member States (CZ, BE, DK, LT, PT, SE, SK and DE to some extent) on the fact that mobility experience has a **positive impact on teaching/training staff** who participate in VET mobility initiatives. Teachers and trainers reportedly return to their home institutions with more **positive attitudes** and **improved skillsets** (e.g. networking skills), which are then shared with other colleagues in home institutions.

On a less positive note, while learners tend in principle to absorb new experiences with less effort and time, one interviewee noted that for some teachers it was often a challenge to reconsider their **work methods** and dive into **new learning environments** offered by mobility programmes. Therefore, mobility experience may have a certain positive impact on those teachers who are already keen to learn, while it may have little effect on the more reserved staff members who are less likely to choose such a mode of professional development.

#### **4.1.2 Organisational level impacts**

The most significant impact of VET mobility programmes/schemes at organisation level, as reported by interviewees, is an **improvement of the reputation and prestige** of participating organisations. Related participation was said to allow VET providers and companies to promote themselves and build new bridges and networks through partnerships with other VET providers and companies abroad. This would in turn allow them to become more attractive to new students, as well as to other partners at national and international level.

Most key informants from participating organisations of the Eurodyssey programme reported for instance that it gave them the opportunity to have a **more international and diverse staff** that ultimately brings additional value to the organisation. Moreover, the fact that organisations started **sharing information on new methods**, techniques, industrial relations policy and procedures was identified as a key benefit for all involved stakeholders, as highlighted by interviewees from Eurodyssey, Torno Subito and the JIB Apprenticeship Scheme. This also allows the development and sharing of **innovative approaches**, as highlighted by interviewees from Eurodyssey and Nordplus. This was noted as well by the representatives of the Torno Subito programme, who emphasised its impact on the exchange and dissemination of innovative ideas and practices, for instance in the field of tourism. Furthermore, as noted by interviewees from Nordplus (Adult), building new partnerships provides the opportunity to **establish a benchmark** for the quality of teaching and training.

All key informants also highlighted a positive effect of the mobility on the confidence and morale of employees. This was said to have had a positive impact on the functioning of the organisation itself and its **productivity**, as highlighted by representatives of the ProTandem programme/scheme. In this sense, participating companies see the skill-sets of their apprentices broadened. Students as well are found to be more motivated and to return to their sending schools performing better.

#### *VET provider-level*

Most key informants emphasised the prestige and attractiveness that mobility programmes generate to VET schools. They also gain organisational benefits as a result of staff mobility, being able to learn from new teaching methods, innovative practices or adopting good practices from abroad.

As informed by a key informant representing the Danish International Programme Office (responsible for implementation of mobility programmes between DK-USA, Nordplus Junior and Adult, as well as PIU), many VET schools choose to implement mobility activities notably because this generates positive effects in terms of their attractiveness and visibility. This sentiment was shared by the UK representative of a managing organisation who reported a wide-spread practice in the UK of college labelling<sup>78</sup> for those institutions that participated in the mobility programmes. This materialises in practice as follows: colleges that are actively involved in and provide mobility opportunities to their learners can be awarded a badge by a quality assurance body. The rewarding nature of the initiative can thus be considered as both an example of positive impact and inspiring case at organisation level.

As reported by another Danish key informant, the PIU scheme only targets VET learners and does not include staff members which can be considered as a limiting factor by the potential beneficiary organisations. As the representative of the managing agency observed, mobility of VET staff may further contribute to organisational development of VET-institutions. This is reached by increased quality of teaching methods, adoption of innovative practices and good practice, and a better visibility of schools on both national and international levels.

A Lithuanian project manager valued the positive impact of taking part in VET mobility programmes in terms of networking and exchange of experience, referring to the example of the successful reorganisation of a Lithuanian VET school informed by an Estonian counterpart who had already undergone a similar process. Similarly, an Austrian interviewee informed that the association promoting the mobility of skilled workers assesses how VET mobility is conducted in other countries (e.g. in Finland). Related data are used to inform mutual learning including learn from good practices to further improve such activities in Austria. A Czech key informant also highlighted the importance of mutual learning by obtaining valuable information about other VET practices, for instance about the dual system's principles in Germany.

#### *Company-level*

From the company perspective, insights gathered suggest that mobility programmes allow both to upskill their present staff and to secure future employees, either by providing such training to their apprentices/trainees or by recruiting skilled workers who often see mobility opportunities as an advantage.

As observed by an Austrian key informant, VET mobilities are said to have contributed to enrich the pool of competences within participating companies, especially English skills. It was further noted that apprentices, who were enabled to go on mobility as part of their VET, were perceived as more loyal towards their employer and less likely to leave for another job after completion of their education than non-mobile counterparts.

Large international companies (e.g. in AT, DE, DK, FI, PL) are said to benefit from sending their apprentices to their subsidiaries and outlets abroad. For such enterprises mobility periods are an efficient way of equipping their trainees with the company-specific skills which may also help to secure future employees. Also, employers profit from VET mobility as they become more attractive to prospective apprentices, which is especially crucial to anticipate the shortage of skilled labour. They further gain contacts to other companies, often sparking sustainable cooperation between employers and business partners.

Moreover, arrangement of apprenticeships pays off to companies as they benefit from regular state incomes as, for example, in Denmark. For larger enterprises with subsidiaries abroad, it is easier to send apprentices on placements there, as the paid-

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<sup>78</sup> Labelling of colleges is a wide spread practice in the UK which corresponds to the good practice or good quality of a certain training element within VET-school.

out compensation remains within the company. This, however, works quite opposite to smaller enterprises that do not have international contacts and networks. They often face serious obstacles if they wish to send their apprentices abroad. Even though they may receive supplementary funding, they are still responsible for covering wage costs of the apprentice, and they can be held financially accountable for any learning deficits that may arise because of the time the apprentice has spent abroad.

One project manager from Lithuania raised another point which has impact at company level. According to the key informant, mobility participants not only develop their professional skills when going on placements to the Nordic countries but may also bring back different impressions of work conditions. This may in turn generate pressure to improve on local companies.

Company-related improvement based on experiences of returning apprentices was also reported by an UK's programme manager. The latter reported that after their mobility placements in Australia, the British apprentices came back to share their experiences on the way environmental policies were being implemented in Australian public buildings, and how low energy systems could be implemented in the UK. It resulted in the practical application of apprentices' practices and it was further promoted to the wider industry.

#### **4.1.3 System level impacts**

Among system-level impacts, key informants highlighted the following: improved VET accessibility, increased awareness and promotion of VET mobility countrywide and increased collaboration among public authorities, social partners and other stakeholders. Several key informants shared a general belief that different kinds of mobility placements (e.g. work exchange, internships, voluntary services, VET mobility, etc.) have a positive impact on society and effectively complement formal training programmes.

More specifically, according to one programme manager from Poland, even non-Erasmus+ funded mobility projects benefit from and foster the take-up of European initiatives in the area of education and training, for example the tools for transparency, recognition and validation of learning outcomes and qualifications. The key informant also highlighted the system level collaboration between institutions as a result of mobility projects. It was reported that a mobility programme they implement requires involvement of local and regional educational authorities together with national structures. This process brought VET schools, companies and labour offices together to offer further perspectives of social and economic inclusion of various beneficiaries.

As one representative of VET providers association in Finland noted, mobility is even more important in those economies that highly depend on export. This market feature requires more workforce equipped with certain skills needed for production which is demanded on international markets. In this regard, mobility programmes were said to provide access to foreign skills and know-how which can be then used in developing national products and services. For some SMEs, even the improved English skills play a crucial role if they trade internationally.

Several Danish representatives also anecdotally highlighted a well-known success story in their country in the field of gastronomy that has paved the career trajectories of many Danish chefs and waiters who made the Danish cuisine worldwide known. Before the Danish PIU scheme was introduced, there was a high demand for traineeships across most sectors, including gastronomy. After introduction of PIU, it became possible to offer placements abroad for future chefs and waiters who received training in a wide network of restaurants around the globe. This international experience evolved into world-famous Danish cuisine and some best-ranked restaurants. In Denmark, currently there are 26 Michelin star-ranked restaurants.

Other key informants (as witnessed by Polish and Danish interviewees) conversely believed that VET mobility programmes are not suitable for tackling the most urgent challenges in the labour market, namely the recruitment of individuals with the required skills, retention of skilled employees and lack of placement opportunities.

Another system-level impact reported by several key informants (e.g. from Poland in particular) was a workforce drain to other countries than the one funding the mobility scheme. This trend is often observed in less economically advanced countries that send learners to more developed countries. Interestingly, the interviewed programme managers from these countries do not regard such trend uniquely as negative. They also appreciate the individual benefits of the participants who still contribute to regional economy more generally, in case they do not return to their home countries. This, however, might be seen quite opposite by governments as they first see mobility programmes as a threat to national economic interests and therefore decision makers tend to be rather reserved in terms of such training opportunities. Many sectors (e.g. construction industry, hospitality, health care and agriculture) are short of skilled workers and exposed to a risk of mobility participants not returning to their home countries.

## **4.2 Statistics and comparison with Erasmus+**

This section provides an analysis of illustrative regional VET mobility programmes/schemes between Germany and France<sup>79</sup> against comparable mobility actions under Erasmus+. Using the case of Germany, available research from the BIBB has been used to examine the interplay of VET mobility on a national scale and regional initiatives, illustrating the prevalence and peculiarities of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility in this context. As an additional example, data on the Nordplus regional scheme was analysed against comparable Erasmus+ VET mobility actions.

The section concludes with a further analysis of Erasmus+ VET mobility using the dedicated VET mobility survey designed for this study, as well as additional Erasmus+ programme data to complement the latter. It is important to highlight the methodological limitations concerning the surveys, as discussed earlier (for details, see section 2.3.5). Conclusions derived from this analysis have thus to be interpreted with caution and are not representative for the entirety of Erasmus+ beneficiary VET learners or staff.

### **4.2.1 Regional VET mobility schemes**

To complement the impact-related insights discussed above, the study team undertook a literature review of recent available monitoring or evaluation reports, produced to inform the development of certain non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes, namely focusing on: BMBF bilateral exchange programmes, ProTandem, Franco German Youth Office, Nordplus. This task was aimed to gather quantitative data (e.g. on participation rates or budget allocated to the schemes/programmes over recent years) and additional qualitative evidence on the latter to benchmark those against Erasmus+ data on VET mobility actions of a similar nature where appropriate. This review was also aimed to assess whether any quantitative or qualitative evidence of the impact of those non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes (i.e. at the individual, organisation or system level) has been supplied throughout the reports reviewed.

#### **4.2.1.1 VET mobility statistics from Germany**

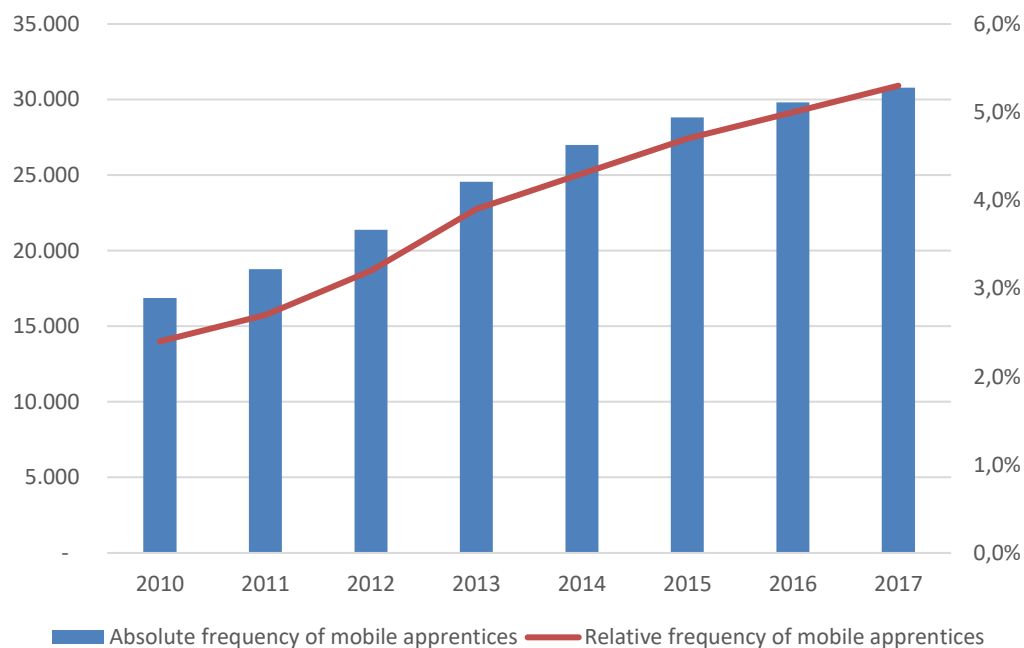
While impact related figures on VET mobility are scarce across most Erasmus+ programme countries, the study team found a relatively solid research base in this regard for Germany. In particular, the BIBB provides quite comprehensive quantitative analysis of German VET mobility schemes in and outside of Erasmus+.

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<sup>79</sup> Based on publicly available data in the area

The 2010 BIBB study "Hidden Mobility in Initial Education and Training" and its follow-up study in 2017<sup>80</sup> assessed for instance the incidence of apprentices and VET students in Germany, who had completed a mobility experience as part of their VET. The authors found that 3% of German IVET learners have been mobile between the years 2007 and 2009, and a subsequent increase to 5.3% of IVET learners in 2017. Between 2007 and 2009, on average 16,000 apprentices and 7,500 IVET students participated in transnational mobility, amounting to a total of 23,500 mobile VET learners each year. The mobility rate of VET students hereby is 3.4%, while the rate for apprentices is slightly lower at 2.9%. In 2017, this figure has grown to 30,785 mobile IVET learners, as illustrated in the following Figure.

Figure 4. Frequency of mobile apprentices in Germany

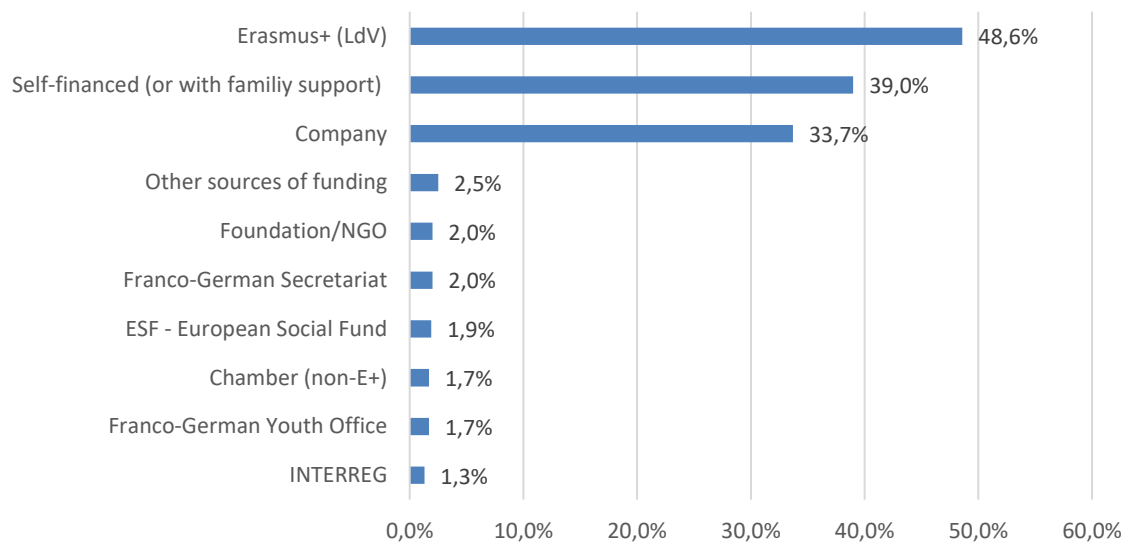


Source: Extrapolation by the BIBB (2017), in *Transnational Mobility in Initial Vocational Education and Training in 2017*

As shown in Figure 5, the survey conducted for the study in 2017 sheds further light on the incidence of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility in Germany and the prevalence of public and private-funded schemes.

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.na-bibb.de/presse/news/studyonmobility/>

Figure 5. Funding of IVET mobility in Germany



Source: BIBB survey 2017 (n=563)

As found by the BIBB in 2010, transnational VET mobility leads to a substantial improvement of foreign language skills, social competences and vocational competences and knowledge more broadly. For German VET learners, the study found mobilities to benefit especially intercultural competence (76%), foreign language skills (71%) and their international technical skills (61%).

In their 2017 survey, the BIBB further found that all potential positive mobility outcomes were confirmed by respondents. Surveying three stakeholder groups, namely participants, schools and companies, the BIBB found this positive uniformity to be accentuated differently between the groups. Notably the assessment by schools has been more positive than the employers' judgement, which has been more positive again than the learners' self-assessment. This may be explained by the difficulty of assessing one's own development in comparison to that of others. Across the different outcome dimensions, respondents indicated mobility to most strongly benefit the following areas.

#### *Personal competences*

- Self-confidence
- Willingness to take responsibility
- Motivation
- Working independently

#### *Knowledge*

- Language skills
- Intercultural knowledge

#### *Professional skills*

- Working with international teams or contacts
- Dealing with new tasks more easily

#### *Career opportunities*

- Better chances on the labour market

A key driver behind these positive developments and overarching actor behind 45% of all German VET mobility is the BMBF, funding a range of bilateral exchange programmes. On the other hand, nearly 40% of mobilities are fully financed by enterprises or beneficiaries themselves. These subsidised programmes rarely provide full funding for mobility activities. Two thirds of beneficiaries of these programmes indicated that they or their employers contributed to the funding of their mobility experiences.

While only 6% of employers in 2010 enabled mobilities for their VET students, 33% would have potentially supported such mobilities in the future and a further 6% would definitely support such opportunities in the future. The majority of enterprises (79%) surveyed by the BIBB in 2010 reported problems associated with recognition of mobilities. Most of the employers hoped for the assistance of chambers (75%) and vocational schools (64%) to arrange mobilities. While most mobile apprentices stemmed from SMEs (69%), very few of these employers were directly involved in the mobility projects. For the facilitation and implementation of their mobilities, apprentices trained at SMEs thus turned to VET schools, chambers and other service providers. The vast majority of VET mobilities from Germany are directed towards another European country (circa 90%). The remaining destinations are scattered across the world.

The BMBF reports that the intensity of documentation under Erasmus+ is substantially higher than for comparable mobility programmes. Consequently, Erasmus+ features higher levels of recognition and documentation of acquired competences. In 2010, a total of 94% of participants in Leonardo da Vinci mobility projects and BMBF bilateral exchange programmes received a certificate recognising their mobility, while other non-Erasmus+ VET mobility schemes only issued certificates in 70% of the examined cases. In a similar vein, Europass mobility is substantially more common in Erasmus+ and BMBF bilateral mobility activities. Europass mobility certificates have only been issued by 4% of other non-Erasmus+ VET mobility schemes.

#### **4.2.1.2 VET mobility between France and Germany**

Cooperation between German and French VET stakeholders has a long-lasting tradition, starting in the middle of the last century.

In 2017, the BIBB surveyed all organisations involved in Erasmus+ VET mobility about VET exchanges between Germany and France. Their survey revealed that even though merely half of institutions have a French partner for such exchanges, three quarters of respondents could imagine initiating such a mobility project in the future or to join an existing one.

The three current key stakeholders in the arena of Franco-German VET exchanges are ProTandem (Former German-French Secretariat, DFS), the Franco German Youth Office (DJFW), and the Erasmus+ National Agency located at the BIBB.<sup>81</sup>

##### ***ProTandem***

ProTandem, the Franco-German Agency for Vocational Training Exchange, promotes group exchanges in training and further education. In addition, ProTandem places applicants with a French institution and advises the partners before, during and after their stays abroad. The effort required to apply for the funds is low and the agency is known for its intensive advice and support during the exchanges. Especially at the beginning of a new Franco-German partnership, ProTandem assumes a coordinating and mediating function and supports the institutions in planning their stays abroad. A language course integrated into the exchange as well as language support for the groups are further advantages of ProTandem. In 2017, more than 100 such exchanges were funded. In addition, ProTandem promotes individual exchanges of teaching staff

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<sup>81</sup> Bildung für Europa - Nr. 2018/28: Deutsch-französische Partnerschaft



and trainers and organises Franco-German language courses twice a year for people who supervise these measures between the two countries.

**The Franco German Youth Office (DJFW)**

The DFJW also promotes mobility encounters in VET involving German and French participants. These meetings usually take place at the partner's location, but can also take place at a third location in France or Germany. In another variant, a partner from a third country can also be involved. Vocational training institutions in the border area also have the option of promoting encounters between vocational training personnel. Due to DFJW's broad spectrum, the project executing agencies are embedded in an environment that offers a wide range of support and encouragement for project implementation and further development through materials, language tools (language animation, PARKUR platform, "Mobidico" language app, etc.), publications and further training. People in initial vocational training can also apply individually under certain conditions and receive a scholarship for an internship in a French company.

**Erasmus+**

In Germany, the Erasmus+ programme in the vocational education and training sector is implemented by the NA at the BIBB. The programme promotes stays abroad for initial and continuing vocational training for learners and vocational training personnel in the 33 programme countries. In one project application, stays abroad of the different target groups, occupations, target countries and length of stay can be combined as desired. In Germany, funds can be applied for the secondment of persons from Germany to the programme countries. Foreign institutions apply for funds for stays in Germany at their respective National Agency (NA), French institutions apply to the French NA. Individuals can apply for a scholarship in Erasmus+ pool of projects. Vocational training institutions have the option of being accredited in the Erasmus+ programme and thus securing a multi-year funding option and access to simplified procedures.

**Comparison between the schemes**

These three schemes which address a similar target group (i.e. IVET learners and staff) and which aim to achieve comparable goals through the facilitation of VET mobility for learners and staff make for an interesting case to compare the impact of Erasmus+ against similar non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes.

As shown in Table 8, Erasmus+ is particularly well endowed with administrative staff in comparison to the other programmes. This may largely be explained by the extensive bureaucratic processes (e.g. application, reporting) associated with Erasmus+ and the widespread responsibilities of the NA at the BIBB.

The Erasmus+ programme naturally benefits from its size and popularity, attracting by far most participants in 2017 (25,684). During the KIIs, some German interviewees noted that Erasmus+ might thus crowd out some of the alternative mobility schemes. This notion cannot be confirmed for Franco-German VET exchanges, as the Franco German Youth Office manages a larger budget and facilitates substantially more IVET and staff exchanges between the two countries than what has been reported for Erasmus+ VET mobility actions.

*Table 8. Franco German VET mobility programmes: Erasmus+ vs non-Erasmus+*

	<b>ProTandem</b>	<b>Franco German Youth Office (DFJW)</b>	<b>NA at the BIBB (Erasmus+)</b>
<b>Employees</b>	6	70	92
<b>Funding body</b>	Federal Ministry for Education and Research	Federal Ministry of Family Affairs,	EU Commission and Federal Ministry for

	<b>ProTandem</b>	<b>Franco German Youth Office (DFJW)</b>	<b>NA at the BIBB (Erasmus+)</b>
		Senior Citizens, Women and Youth	Education and Research
<b>Budget (in 2017)</b>	1.57 Million EUR	3.4 Million EUR (DE to FR and vice versa)	2.3 Million EUR (only to DE to FR)
<b>Participants (total VET)</b>	2,839	10,227	25,684
<b>Participants (IVET)</b>	1,102	9,166	1,163
<b>Participants (DE to FR)</b>	1,417	M	1,457
<b>Participants (FR to DE)</b>	m	M	M
<b>Participants (Staff from DE to FR)</b>	315	1,061	294
<b>Focus areas and organisational format</b>	<p>Group exchanges (min. 8 participants) and CVET (min. 6 participants)</p> <p>Relies on mutual exchanges</p> <p>Includes staff exchanges</p> <p>Language courses for adults</p>	<p>VET mobilities in the form of meetings of participants from both countries (up to 3 weeks)</p> <p>Includes mobilities of pupils</p> <p>VET mobilities in meeting format at third venues</p> <p>Trinational school exchanges</p> <p>Meetings between pupils and foreign partners</p>	<p>Erasmus+ VET mobility</p> <p>VET learners and staff can participate</p> <p>33 programme countries</p> <p>Organised by sending country</p>

Source: BIBB 2018<sup>82</sup>

Unlike Erasmus+, we further observe a more concise thematic focus of ProTandem and the DFJW. These programmes do not provide the same mobility opportunities funded under Erasmus+, but use different formats, namely mutual group exchanges under ProTandem and mobility meetings under the DFJW. Consequently, the non-Erasmus+ address organisations and individuals with a different mobility focus. Enabling short-term exchanges in group formats may also improve accessibility for certain disadvantaged VET learners, which is an explicit priority of all three programmes. Finally, ProTandem and the DFJW both focus on interregional and international cooperation between France and Germany. These tenured schemes are able to address the peculiarities in the Franco-German relationship on a national and vocational level more precisely than a programme like Erasmus+ which needs to encompass 32 destinations. Hence, the examined non-Erasmus+ VET mobility

<sup>82</sup> <https://www.na-bibb.de/presse/news/austausch-in-der-berufsbildung-zwischen-deutschland-und-frankreich/>

schemes go beyond merely replicating mobility experiences as offered under Erasmus+, but complement these offers with binational mobility programmes using different organisational formats that are best placed to support cooperation between France and Germany in the VET sector and otherwise.

#### **4.2.1.3 VET mobility in Nordic Countries**

In comparison to Erasmus+, Nordplus features substantially simpler application and reporting procedures, as well as a lower threshold for contacts with administrators caused by the absence of any language barriers. Because of this simplicity in comparison to Erasmus+, Nordplus regards the programme as a first step towards internationalisation. Both programmes are targeting similar learners and are funding similar activities. However, Erasmus+ encompasses 33 countries and consequently features a much larger programme budget. The individual grants in Erasmus+ are also often higher than in Nordplus. Therefore, Nordplus beneficiaries have stated that their level of support is low compared to Erasmus+ and other transnational mobility programmes.

Some organisations apply for Nordplus grants for the initial development of networks and ideas, only to then move to Erasmus+, as it offers wider mobility activities with better funding. Hence, Nordplus needs to enhance and promote its unique features to distinguish itself against other programmes.

Nordplus Junior offers a range of activities which are not available under Erasmus+. Such activities include preparatory visits which were removed from Erasmus+ in the transition from the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP). Grants for preparatory visits are supposed to fund travel expenses for institutions that wish to establish cooperation in a project, to meet and prepare an application for Nordplus Junior grants. Administrators and applicants value these visits as they improve the quality of the applications and the projects under Nordplus.

The target groups of Nordplus Junior are pupils, teachers, and other pedagogical staff in pre-primary, primary, lower and upper secondary schools, vocational schools, cultural schools and organisations or institutions involved in the area of school education. Due to the scope of the programme, it is difficult to distinguish the incidence of VET mobility and associated figures from the other forms of school education. As shown in Table 9, applications for the overall programme decreased in 2015, but both the number of successful applications, as well as the allocated amount remained relatively stable.

*Table 9. Nordplus Junior figures (2012-2015)*

<b>Applications/granted activities</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Total number of applications	245	238	232	194
Applied amount (Million EUR)	6.8	6	6.6	4.2
Number of granted applications	127	110	120	134
Granted amount (Million EUR)	2.4	2.4	2.9	2.5

*Source: Nordplus evaluation 2012-2016*

Similar to Nordplus Junior, Nordplus Adult also supports and promotes mobility among Nordic countries. Through mobility and collaboration projects, Nordplus Adult further funds different forms of collaboration and exchange between Nordic and Baltic adult learning institutions. The mobility activities concern preparatory visits, exchange of teachers and pedagogical staff and exchange of adult learners. As shown in Table 10, Nordplus Adult also remained relatively stable in terms of successful applications and grants allocated between 2012 and 2015.

Table 10. Nordplus Adult figures (2012-2015)

Applications/granted activities	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total number of applications	104	83	104	119
Applied amount (Million EUR)	3.5	2.9	3.8	4.4
Number of granted applications	50	43	41	52
Granted amount (Million EUR)	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2

Source: Nordplus evaluation 2012-2016

Overall, the incidence of Norwegian learners in upper secondary education, who participate in transnational mobility programmes, has been however continuously decreasing over the past five years.<sup>83</sup> This is somehow striking considering the stable number of beneficiaries of both Nordplus Adult and Nordplus Junior. Moreover, we observe increasing application numbers for Nordplus Adult, which does not translate into more funded mobilities due to budget constraints. While some mobility initiatives in Norway seem to be declining in numbers, Nordplus, as well as Erasmus+ appear to be unaffected by this trend. A possible conclusion that can be drawn from this is that the regional character of Nordplus and the low threshold for participation in the programme help it to prevail and to maintain its participation figures.

#### 4.2.2 VET mobility surveys and Erasmus+ programme data

A survey data collection was carried out by the study team to gather quantifiable information on the features and impacts of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility. As this initial data collection did not yield a sufficient number of responses enabling robust enough statistical analysis, we present aggregated descriptive results regarding two pooled samples of VET learners and staff, each grouping together mobile participants in and outside Erasmus+. The results presented below thus need to be interpreted with caution and indicate potential trends rather than hard evidence. To sharpen this picture, the study team undertook a further analysis of Erasmus+ programme data to confirm and complement the survey results produced under this study. Related findings are presented below.

##### 4.2.2.1 Learner survey

For the survey among mobile VET learners, 106 responses were received of which 37 have been completed. The vast majority reported on Erasmus+ related experience. Only four respondents commented on their participation in non-Erasmus+ VET schemes/programmes. Of the few respondents who reported participation in non-Erasmus+ VET mobility schemes, one participated in an Austrian programme (IFA – Fachkraefteustausch) while another one went to Cork (IE) for an international internship. The remainder of participants in non-Erasmus+ VET mobility schemes did not specify a particular programme.

Responses could be collected from learners in Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Italy, Romania, Spain, Turkey and UK.

One third of the respondents were males and two thirds were female learners. With regards to their role, 20 respondents considered themselves IVET learners and seven respondents flagged themselves as CVET learners. The remainder of respondents did not allocate themselves under the categories provided in the questionnaire.

Queried about the economic sector of their VET, respondents revealed a widespread range of subject areas. Among the areas mentioned more than once, respondents

<sup>83</sup><https://statistikk.diku.no/details?country=0&county=0&level=2&institution=0&portfolio=0&program=0&from=2007&to=2018&&dimension=&bookmark=MobilityOutgoing&freetext=&tableVar=Any&rowVar=Country&columnVar=Year>

indicated 'Hospitality and Tourism' (five mentions), Wholesale and retail trade, renting and leasing (five mentions), Business administration (two mentions), Chemical industry (six mentions).

As shown in Figure 6, more than half of respondents undertook a mobility of between 15 days and a month. While another four respondents indicated to have followed a mobility of 1-3 months, longer durations were only mentioned by two respondents. At the same time, only one respondent undertook a mobility shorter than 15 days.

Figure 6. Mobility duration of respondents



Source: ICF VET mobility survey, n=16

The average age of respondents has been 21, with a substantial share of the respondents indicating to be between 16 and 18 years old (17 individuals).

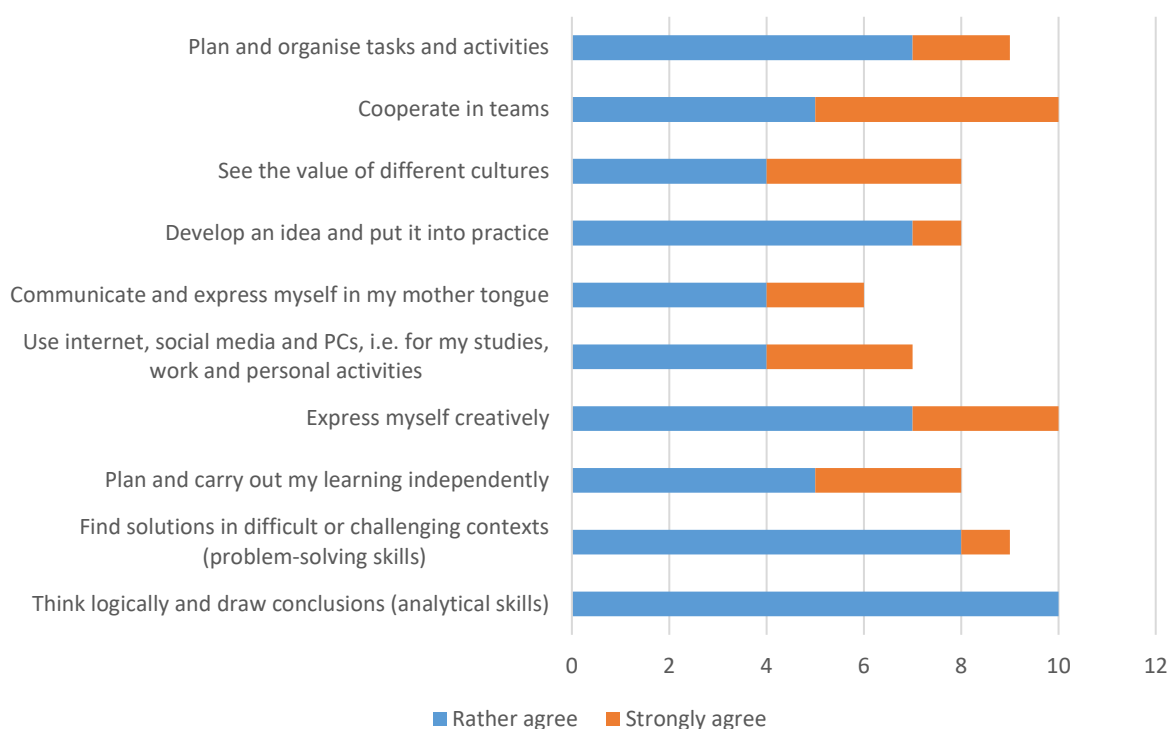
The analysis below focuses on impact relevant items captured by the VET mobility questionnaire. As the surveys collected further insights on background characteristics of mobility participants, these are presented as an additional annex (Annex 5).

### **Personal skills and competences development**

Exploring the subjective judgements of mobile VET students as to which competences and skills they have developed as a consequence of their mobility experience, we observe a strong positive effect on a range of items. The overall high incidence of improvements of personal skills and competences has also been reflected in the Erasmus+ participant reports. Between 2014 and 2018, an average 62% of learners indicated to have improved their skills and competences.

As shown in Figure 7, half of the respondents reported some development on each of the presented items. Notably, we observe strong agreement to an increased capability to cooperate in teams. This trend may underline the pronounced character of group-based VET mobilities in our sample. Creative expression, as well as planning and organising skills were reported similarly often, hinting at the importance of these skills in VET mobility experiences.

Figure 7. Self-reported skills development among mobile VET students



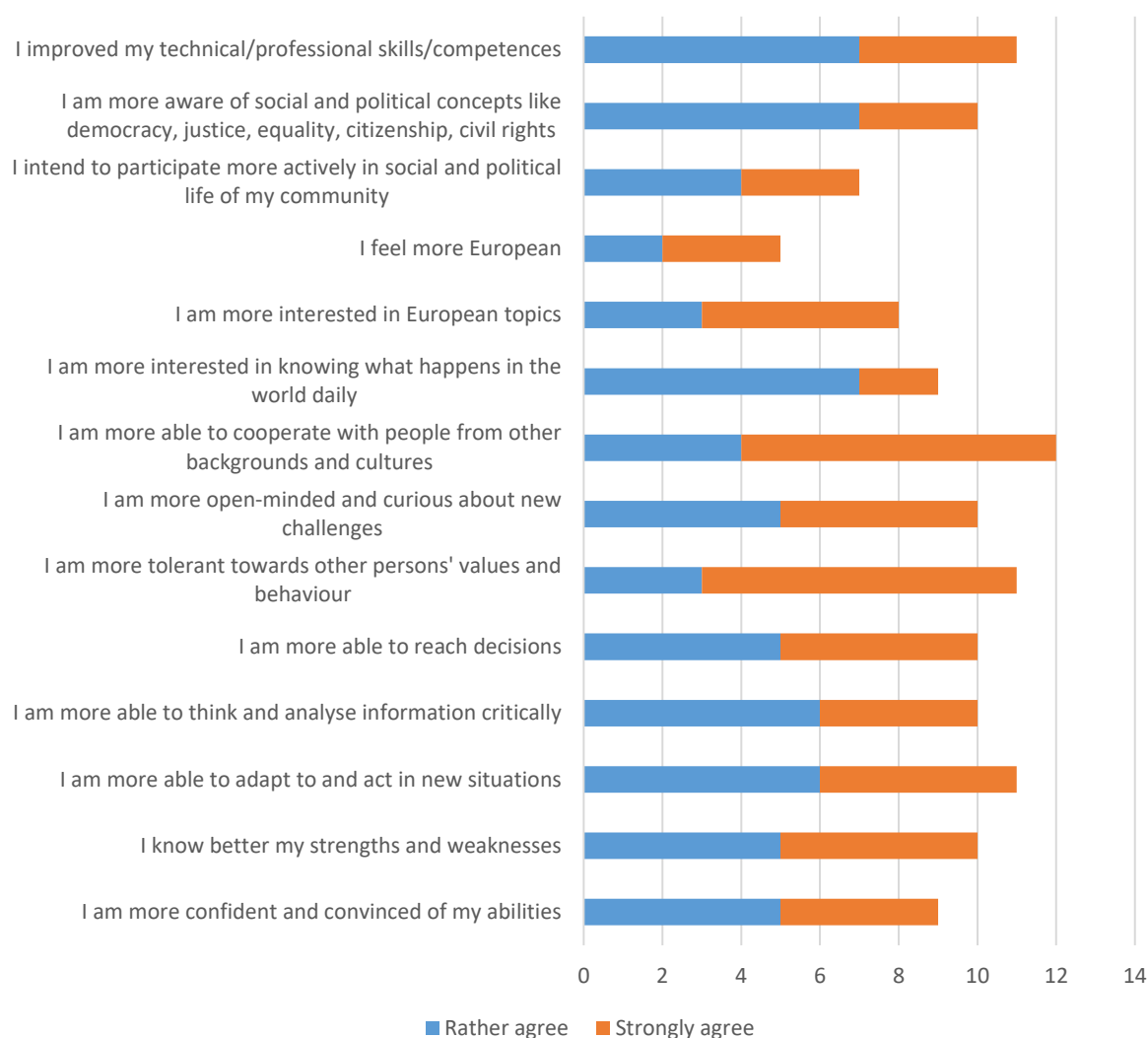
Source: ICF VET mobility survey, n=15

Data suggests weaker agreement to a development in entrepreneurship, problem-solving skills and analytical skills, presumably because improvements in these competences require prolonged mobility experiences and may take more time to develop and become apparent to the individual. Analytical skills stand out in this regard, no strong agreement to improvements is found in this area while, however, two thirds of respondents somewhat agreed to have developed in this regard. This may in part be explained by the abstract nature of this construct in relation to VET mobility experiences.

Contradicting the positive findings for mobile VET students' attitudes towards European citizenship under the Erasmus+ evaluation<sup>84</sup>, only five respondents feeling more European as a result of their mobility were found. In a similar fashion, fewer respondents reported to be more interested in European topics and merely seven VET learners display more active citizenship behaviour as a result of their mobility. As shown in Figure 8, this picture is contrasted by strong agreement to the development of intercultural competence (86%). VET mobility experiences thus appear to enhance tolerance and openness, even though European citizenship is not directly promoted.

<sup>84</sup> Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents/evaluations\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents/evaluations_en)

Figure 8. Self-reported competences development among mobile students



Source: ICF VET mobility survey, n=14

With regards to professional skills, the majority of respondents (79%) agreed to have experienced notable improvements through their transnational mobility. Even though data suggests widespread agreement to mobility-induced competence development, there is slightly less evidence for positive effects on self-confidence (71% across five indicators<sup>85</sup>). This is surprising in the sense that improvements in respondents' self-confidence have been raised frequently as a main strength of VET mobility by interviewees during the KIIs and the case studies. This slight discrepancy between surveyed students' self-perception and interviewed VET staff may be due to difficulties in assessing one's own developments accurately. However, as noted above, due to the small sample size this contradiction has to be interpreted with caution.

<sup>85</sup> I am more confident and convinced of my abilities; I know better my strengths and weaknesses; I am more able to adapt to and act in new situations; I am more able to think and analyse information critically; I am more able to reach decisions.

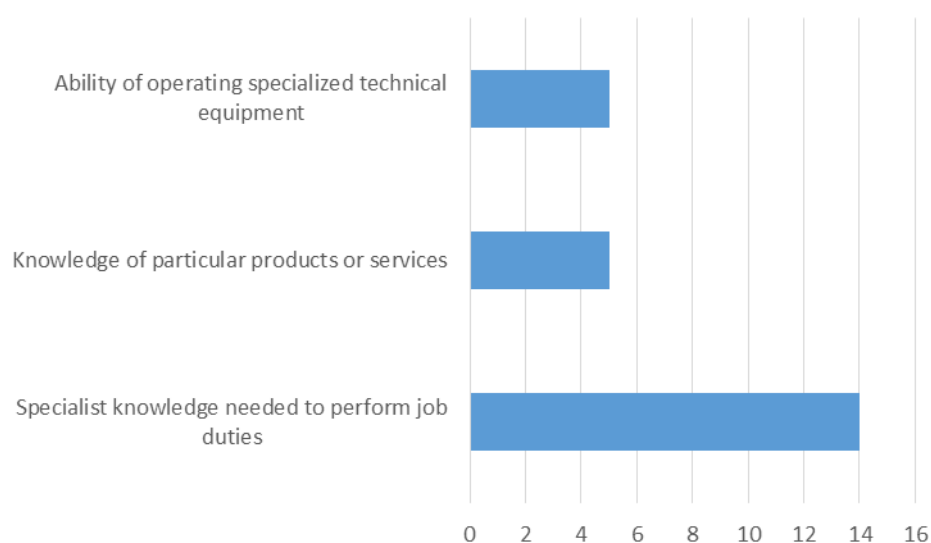
### Language skills

The results of the survey concur with the findings from the Erasmus+ evaluation with regards to the beneficial effects of VET mobility on the development of language skills. All individuals surveyed under the current study indicated they had improved their language skills as a result of their mobility. Half of these learners received additional linguistic support by then.

### Professional skills and competences

As shown in Figure 9, only a third of mobile VET learners acquired new knowledge of products or services or the ability to operate technical equipment. Respondents indicated that they rather profited more broadly, gaining specialist knowledge necessary to perform their job duties appropriately.

Figure 9. Job-specific skills/competences developed during mobility



Source: ICF VET mobility survey, n=15

These results support the notion that the examined VET mobilities focus on transversal skills and put less emphasis on tangible professional skills. In other words, mobile learners rather acquire soft skills than skills in operating new equipment or knowledge regarding new products. These soft-skills however are perceived to be extremely relevant for the respective occupation and thus help VET learners to perform their jobs more effectively, a notion which has been supported through evidence from the KIIs, as well as the case studies.

Development of new professional skills has been reported as an outcome of their mobility by more than half of the respondents. Particularly strong agreement was voiced in relation to the development of sector specific skills, as well as team-working skills.

As shown in Figure 10, improvements were reported in similar frequency across all areas of professional skills. Slightly weaker agreement was associated with analytical and problem-solving skills.



Figure 10. Novel professional skills developed during mobility



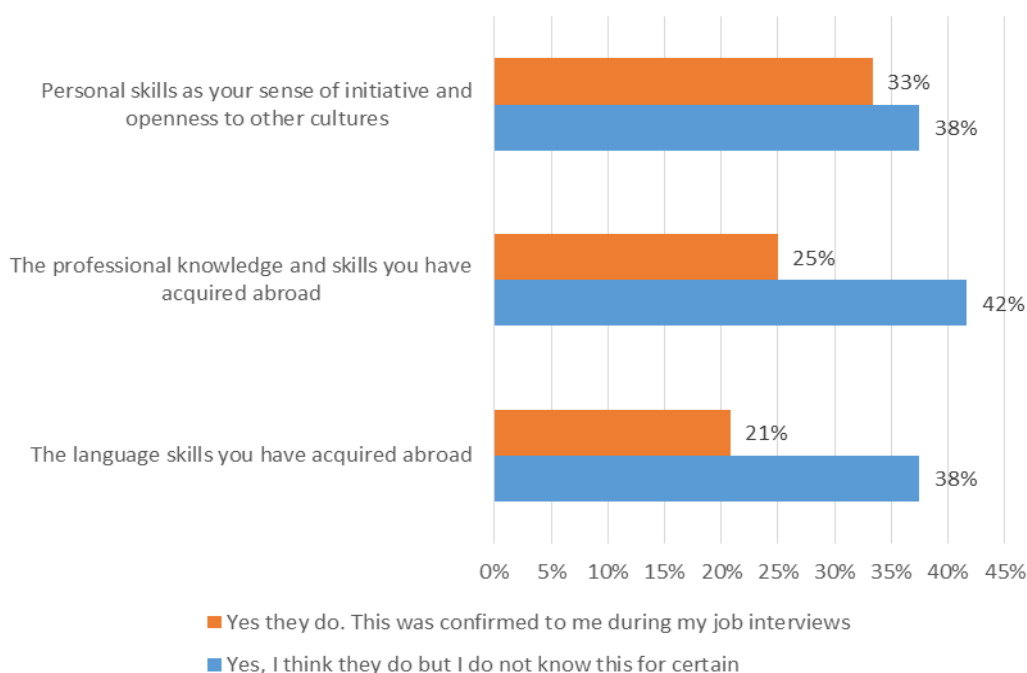
Source: ICF VET mobility survey, n=14

**Employability and recognition of participation and learning outcomes**

Out of 24 respondents, 23 reported that their mobility experience is being valued by their employers and the labour market more broadly. Ten of these learners also had this perception confirmed during subsequent job interviews.

As shown in Figure 11, more than two thirds of respondents have the perception that their mobility experience is valued by employers. Prompted about whether this has been confirmed to them during a job interview, respondents indicated that their personal skills gained through mobility experiences were more often appreciated (33%) than professional (25%) or language skills (21%).

Figure 11. Employability benefits of mobility



Source: ICF VET mobility survey, n=24

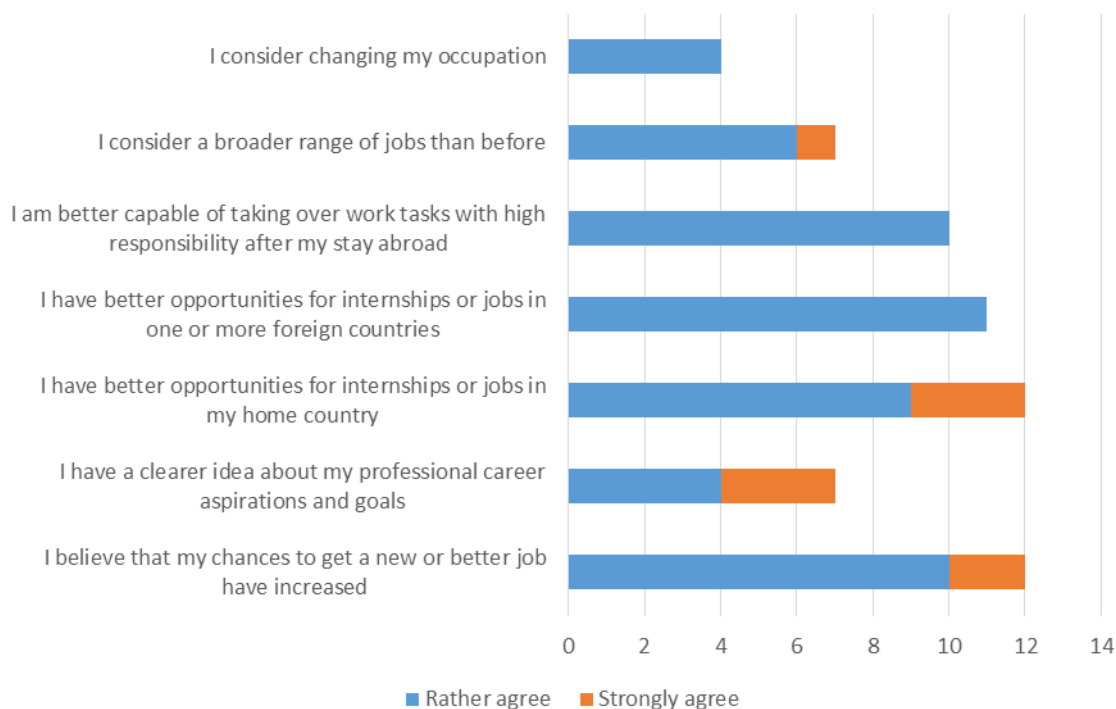
The positive results with regards to the recognition of learning outcomes through employers are contrasted by the comparatively low incidence of formal recognition among VET learners (average of 55% between 2014 and 2018) as reported by beneficiaries in the Erasmus+ participant reports. In comparison to non-Erasmus+ VET mobility schemes however, it has to be taken into account that these typically feature simpler recognition documents that are in turn not as widely recognised as Erasmus+ related documents.

Further to the relatively low level of formal recognition as found in Erasmus+ programme data, regression analysis (OLS) of the data revealed a significant positive correlation between formal recognition of learning outcomes and respondents' perception to have improved their skills. This correlation may hint at a differentiation between 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' mobilities under Erasmus+, in which the former feature formal recognition and improvements of skills and competences, whereas the latter might lack both positive factors. The fact that such a polarisation has not been reported with regards to non-Erasmus+ VET mobility schemes may largely be explained by the differences in the programmes size, as well as the different data collection methods used for this study.

### Labour market outcomes

Only few VET learners (27%) consider changing their occupation as a result of their mobility. In a similar vein, less than half of respondents (47%) gained more clarity with regards to their career aspirations. As shown in Figure 12, individuals rather appreciate the enhanced career opportunities in their home country, something that has been voiced by almost all respondents.

Figure 12. Labour market outcomes associated with mobility



Source: ICF VET mobility survey, n=15

Weaker agreement to international career opportunities (73% rather agree) and self-confidence (67% rather agree) in taking over more responsibility at work was conversely found. While especially the latter result appears to contradict evidence from KIIs and the case studies, it is important to highlight that relative agreement to

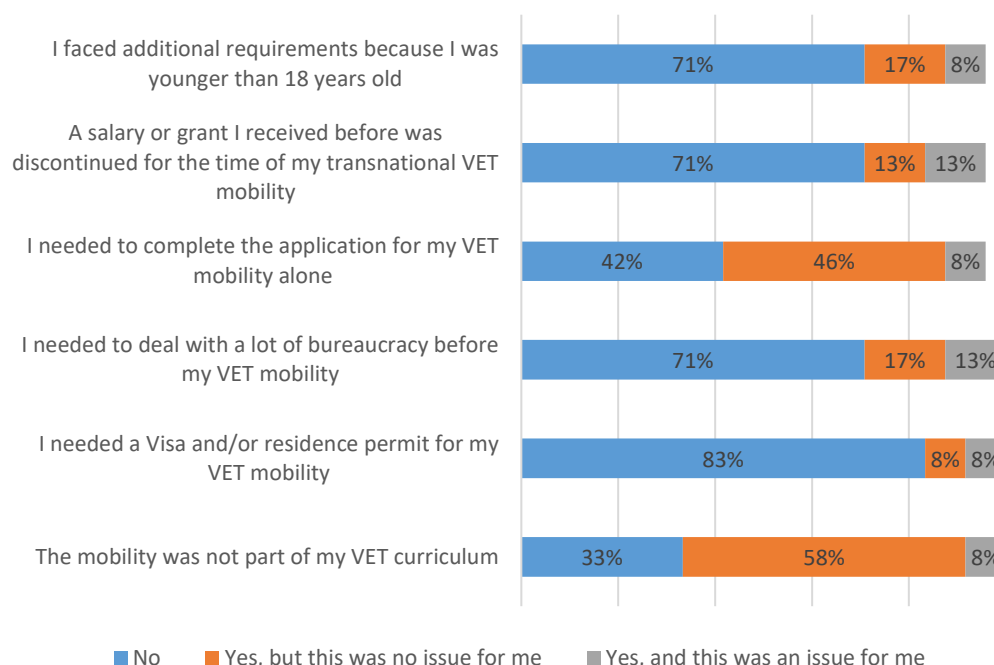
self-confidence in professional contexts has still been reported by two thirds of respondents.

### Barriers

As highlighted in the previous section, VET mobility for learners offers a range of different benefits for participants' careers and personal development. There are however obstacles to VET mobility that prevent VET learners to participate or which make participation in such activities more difficult and less accessible. For instance, the survey found 42% of respondents to have needed to pass an additional examination subsequent to their mobility.<sup>86</sup>

As shown in Figure 13, issues were most commonly voiced with the necessary bureaucracy, as well as the discontinuation of salaries and/or grants during the mobility period. Streamlining administrative processes and integrating VET mobility programmes in a way that beneficiaries remain eligible to their grants and salaries are both areas in which the EU may provide guidance and support structures.

Figure 13. Obstacles encountered by VET learners during/after their mobility



Source: ICF VET mobility survey, n=24

The survey results provide an indication that applicants for VET learner mobility did not receive support in assembling their application, as well as a lack of integration of the mobility in the respective VET curriculum is also found. However, for the majority of learners reporting such situations, they have not been perceived as an issue. This in turn hints at the self-selectiveness of VET mobility schemes, attracting pro-active and well-organised individuals more often. Focusing only on participants in non-Erasmus+ VET mobility schemes, we find no deviation from these trends. Mobile learners under these schemes encounter a lack of support in the application process and indicated that their mobility was not part of their VET curriculum, however out of the three respondents to this question from this sub-group, none perceived this as obstacle to their personal mobility experience.

<sup>86</sup> This finding is influenced by a substantial country bias, as certain countries (e.g. Germany and Spain) are heavily overrepresented in the survey sample. The finding needs to be interpreted with caution.

#### 4.2.2.2 Staff survey

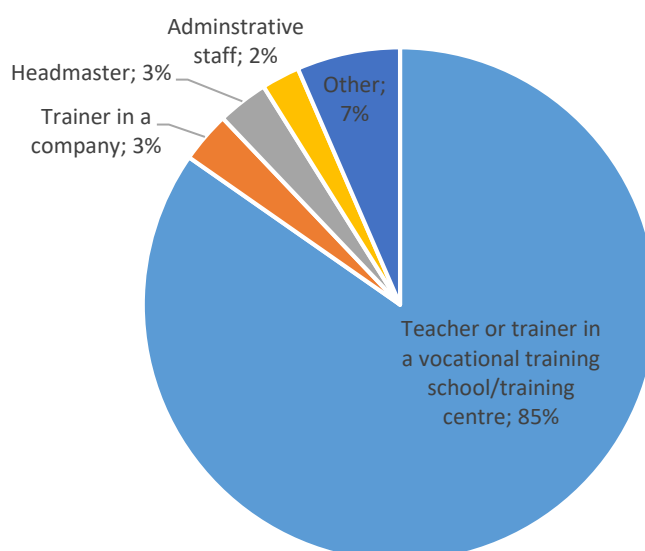
In comparison to the learner survey, a substantially larger number of responses was received. Including partials, the study team collected a total of 190 responses of mobile VET staff across Europe. Unfortunately, among 141 completed responses, the number of respondents stemming from non-Erasmus+ VET mobility schemes (8 respondents), as well as non-mobile staff (13 responses) has been insufficient for a statistically sound comparison and were excluded. Similarly, to the learner survey results, the following findings are to be interpreted with caution.

##### **Background**

Among respondents, there was equal gender representation (i.e. 48% male respondents and 52% female respondents). The VET staff surveyed featured an average age of 48 years.

The majority of respondents (85%) currently work as a teacher or trainer in a VET institution. Only a fraction of respondents indicated other roles in the VET system. As shown in Figure 14, each 3% of respondents acted as trainer in a company or headmaster of a VET institution respectively. A further 2% of respondents were employed as administrative staff, while 7% opted for 'other', most of whom worked in a coordinating function.

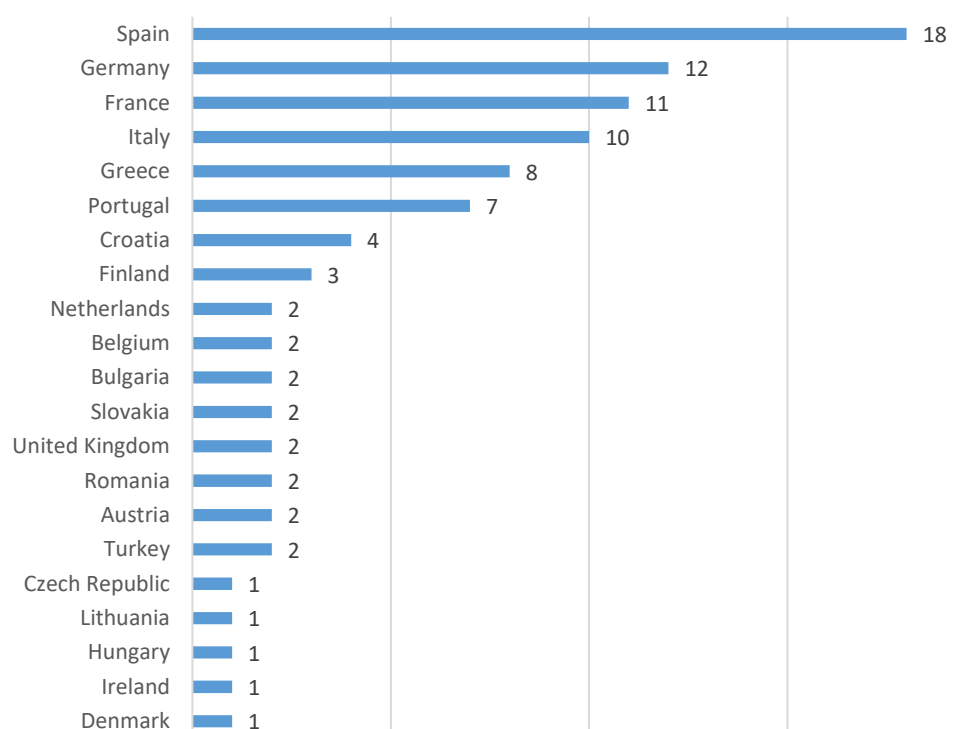
Figure 14. Role of respondents



Source: ICF VET mobility survey, n=124

As shown in Figure 15, the survey has been answered by staff from 21 different EU countries. The survey has been answered more frequently by individuals from larger countries like Spain, Germany, France or Italy. However, for the majority of smaller EU Member States, it has been possible to obtain at least some responses.

Figure 15. Nationality of respondents (VET staff)



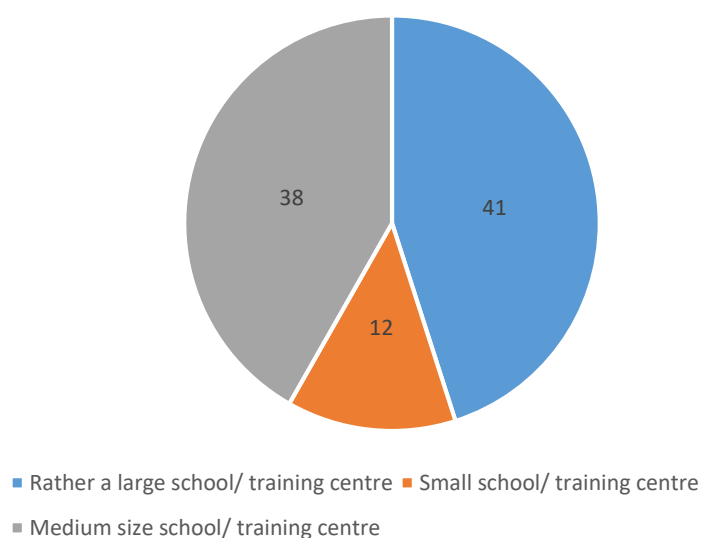
Source: ICF VET mobility survey, n=94

Among the different respondents, only 4% (four responses) indicated that they now live in a different country.

*Size of the VET schools/training centres of respondents*

Figure 16 shows that while staff mobility is equally common in medium-sized and large schools and training centres, comparatively few individuals were working for small VET institutions.

Figure 16. Size of respondents' schools/ training centres



Source: ICF VET mobility survey, n=91

A reason for this underrepresentation might be the fact that smaller schools and training centres struggle with sending their staff abroad for a mobility experience. These organisations may not be able to compensate for the absence of a staff member as easily as larger institutions in the same area.

Considering the fact that 26% of respondents indicated to have already had another mobility experience in the past, it appears that individuals in larger organisations may be presented with especially favourable framework conditions enabling mobilities. However, the incidence of respondents from smaller VET schools/training centres among respondents with a mobility history is proportional to the overall sample, thus there is no support for this notion.

### ***Individual level impact on competences development***

#### *Language skills*

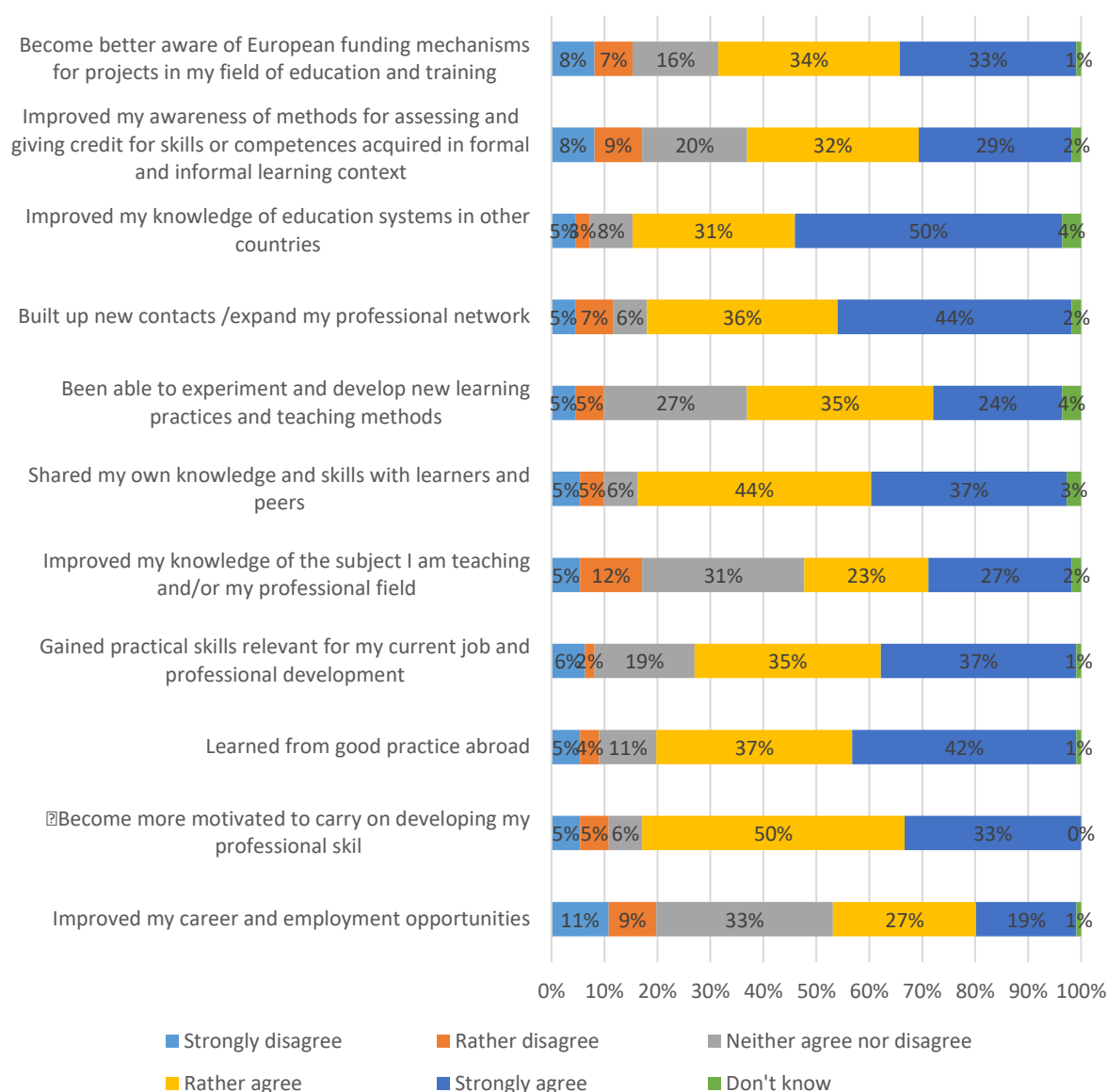
In line with findings from the Erasmus+ evaluation for VET staff, three quarters of the surveyed mobile VET staff reported improvement of their language skills as a result of their mobility experience. 19% of these respondents received some form of language support prior to their time abroad. In total, only 4% of the surveyed respondents stated that their mobility experience did not benefit their language skills.

#### *Self-reported competences development*

Exploring merely participants' general self-reported impact of Erasmus+ staff mobility, the Erasmus+ programme data finds an average of 53% of respondents to have improved skills or competences through their mobility experience. In line with these findings, this study's survey finds moderate evidence for direct improvement of respondents' career prospects (46%) and professional knowledge (59%) whilst, mobility appears to greatly enhance the motivation of participants to engage in further learning to improve their professional skills in the future for most respondents (83%). The positive impact of VET staff mobility on employment prospects may thus be delayed as it is an indirect one driven by enhanced motivation, this notion would however need to be confirmed to further sources due to the unrepresentative sample of the survey concerned.

Figure 17 also shows that VET staff mobility appears to strengthen international networks, exchanges and collaboration. This notion is supported by the fact that 81% of respondents reported they improved their knowledge of foreign educational systems, and 79% of the surveyed VET staff stated that they learned from good practices abroad. These exchanges as part of staff mobility appear to work in both ways, as 81% of survey participants stated to have shared their knowledge and skills with learners and peers.

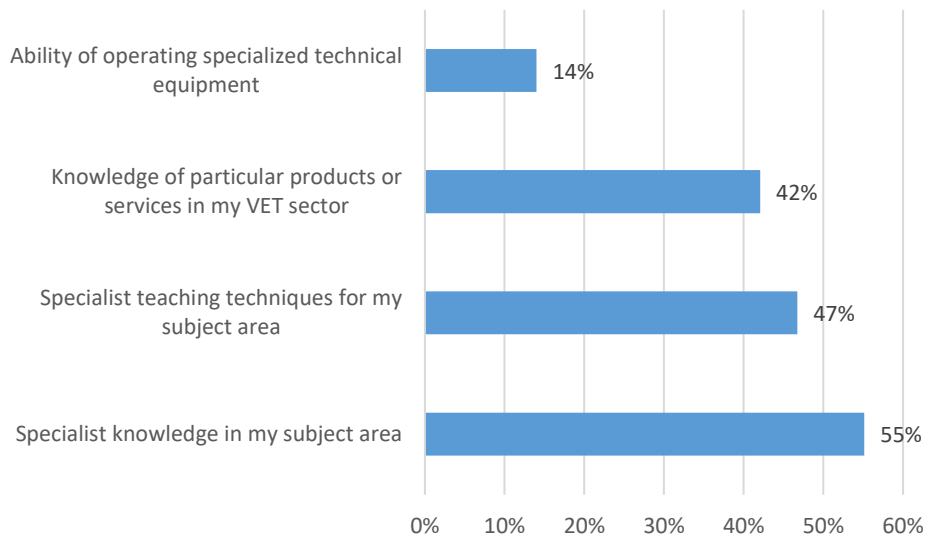
Figure 17. Self-reported competences development as result of mobility



Source: ICF VET mobility survey, n=111

As shown in Figure 18, merely 14% of respondents gained new skills in using of technical equipment (e.g. operating a new machine such as an oven). At the same time, half of the respondents have improved their knowledge of products (e.g. novel recipes for bakers) in their sector. The same share of respondents also acquired further specialist knowledge and/or didactic techniques for their subject area.

Figure 18. Self-reported competences and knowledge developed as a result of mobility

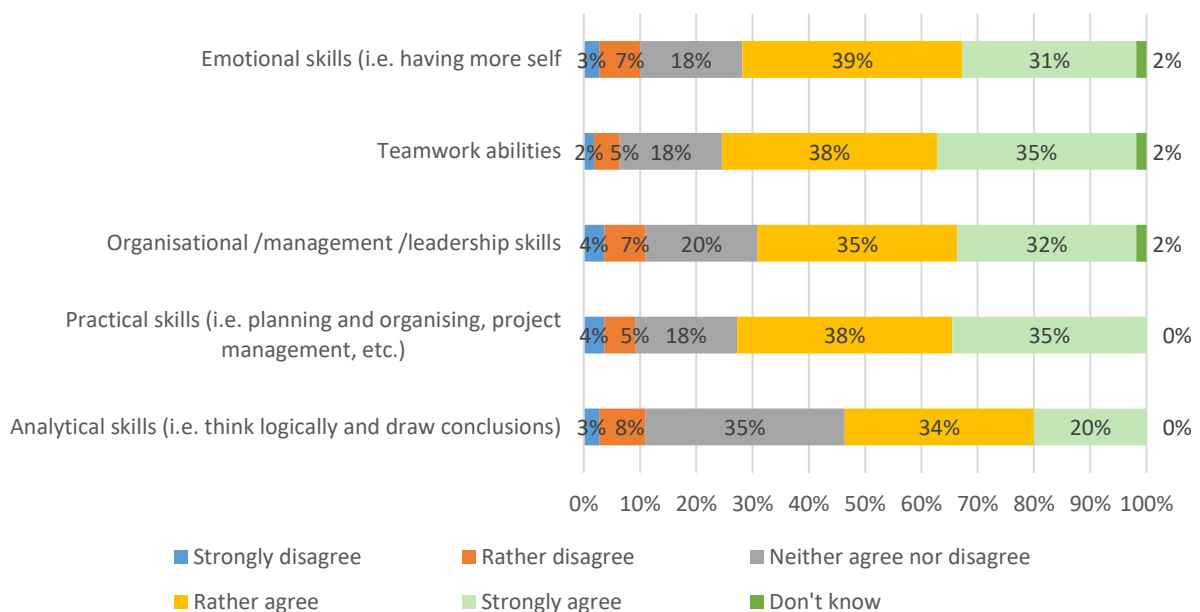


Source: ICF VET mobility survey, n=107

In turn, a substantial share of respondents experienced development in only one of the areas listed above. On average, respondents reported improvement in 1.6 areas, with none indicating no development at all.

Examining the development of skills, there are substantially higher levels of agreement as to whether respondents improved in these areas. As illustrated in Figure 19, two thirds of the surveyed VET staff reported positive developments of their emotional, teamwork, organisational and practical skills, as a result of their mobility experience. There are lower levels of agreement only with regards to respondents' analytical skills. This notion is supported by the relatively high share of respondents who indicated "neither agree nor disagree" to the question whether they have developed their analytical skills as a result of their mobility.

Figure 19. Respondents' agreement to skills developed as a result of mobility



Source: ICF VET mobility survey, n=110



### **Organisational level impacts**

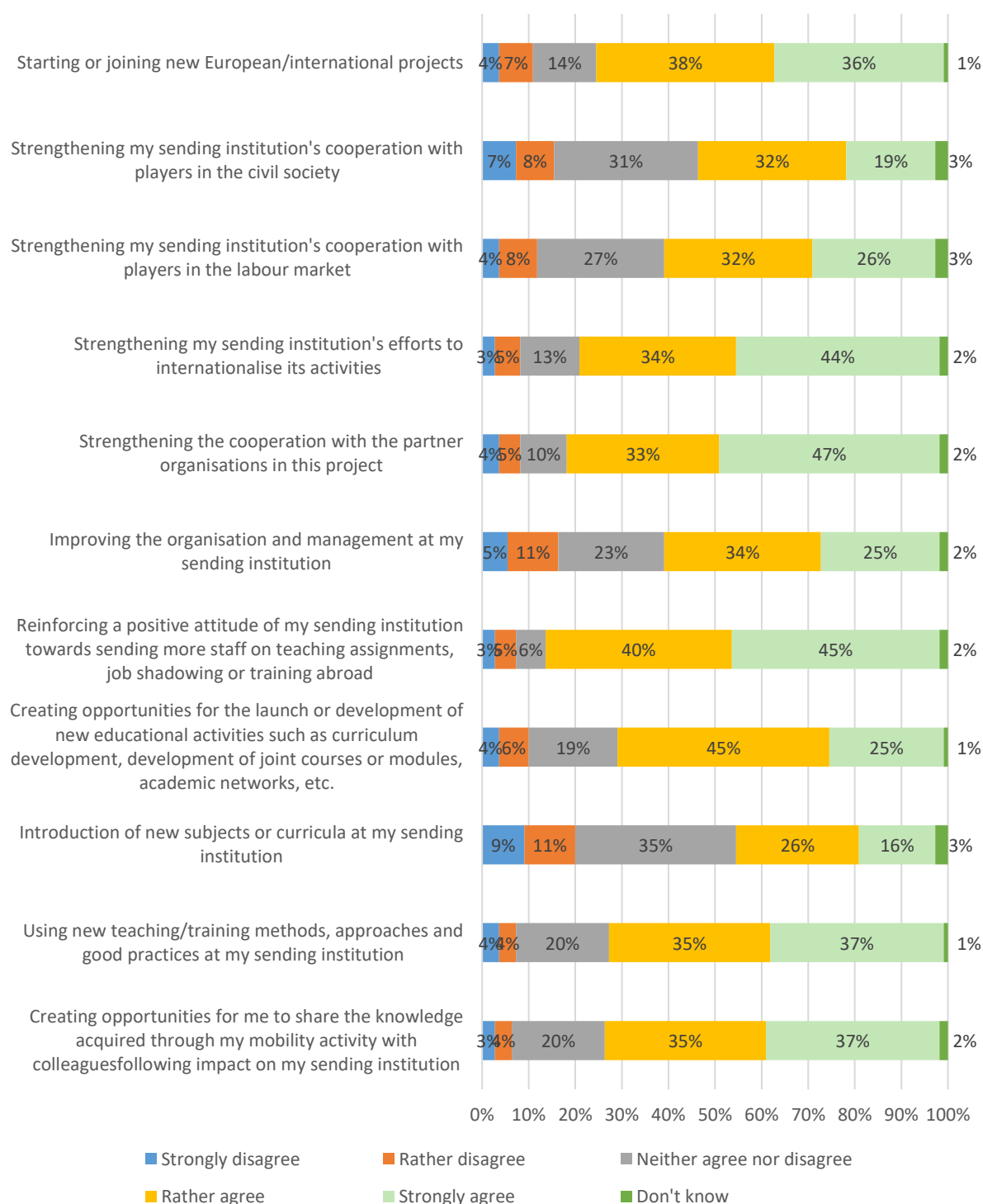
In addition to the above and based on other recent evidence (e.g. combined evaluation of Erasmus+ and predecessor programmes), findings suggest that staff mobility often generates positive effects at the level of both sending and receiving organisations.

As shown in Figure 20, almost all respondents (85%) found their mobility to improve the perception of staff mobilities in their home institution. In a similar vein, the positive experiences with their mobilities subsequently increased the sending institutions internationalisation efforts (78%).

A second natural consequence of successful VET staff mobility has been an enhanced cooperation with partner organisations from the other participating countries (80%), as well as the emergence of new international projects (74%).

Less often there is indication of improved cooperation with partners from the civil society (51%) or the introduction of new subjects and curricula (42%). However, there is overall high agreement to the whole range of potential areas for organisational and system level benefits. Disagreement of close to 20% has only been voiced in relation to the introduction of new curricula and an improvement of the sending organisations' management structures – both of which are admittedly difficult to emerge as a result from a singular staff mobility experience.

Figure 20. Respondents' sentiment on organisation level impacts



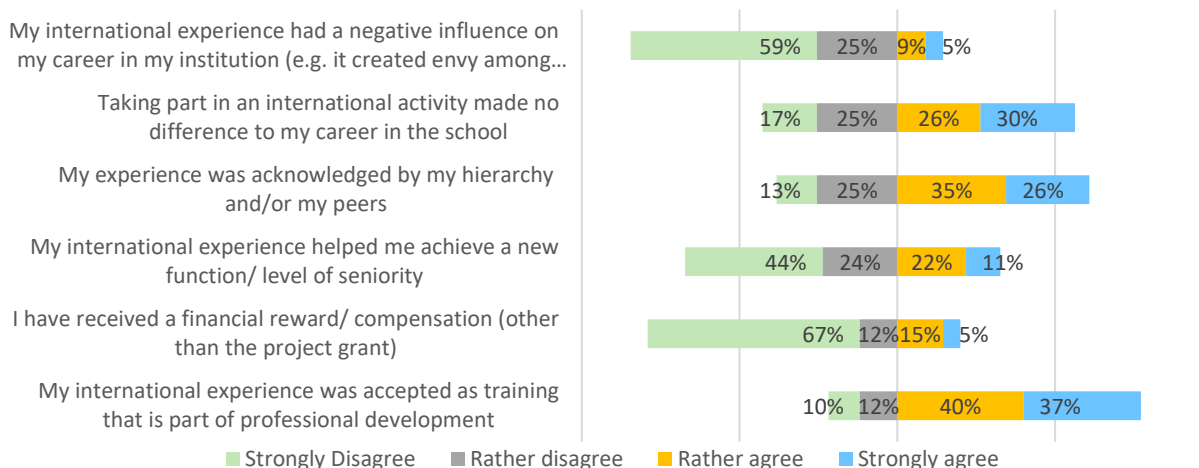
Source: ICF VET mobility survey, n=110

### Recognition of participation in VET mobility

Out of 105 respondents, 73% indicated that they received formal recognition for satisfactorily completed activities of the programme. These recognition levels for this study's VET mobility survey are however substantially higher than the 50% (average between 2014 and 2018) reported through the Erasmus+ participant reports. The striking difference further illustrates the prevalent lack of accuracy of the VET mobility survey as a result of the insufficient sample size.

With regards to informal recognition, most respondents' mobility experience has been accepted as part of professional development (77%). As shown in Figure 21, comparable shares of respondents indicated that their mobility has been acknowledged by their superiors and that it did not make a difference to their career. However, the absence of a tangible career impacts does not appear to discourage participants, as it has been shown that a substantial share of VET staff has been undertaking their second or third mobility.

Figure 21. Informal recognition of participation in VET staff mobility



Source: ICF VET mobility survey, n=110

While their mobilities had no tangible effect on respondents' careers, the mobilities also rarely featured financial compensation beyond the dedicated project grant. In the absence of monetary incentives or promotions, it is not surprising that the mobility experiences were not associated with negative consequences, such as colleagues' envy at the home institution.

## **5 Conclusions and recommendations**

### **5.1 What can the EU and Erasmus+ programme countries<sup>87</sup> do?**

#### **5.1.1 Main types of programmes/schemes and key features**

Study findings show a great diversity of situations in terms of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes throughout Europe (i.e. EU Member States and EFTA countries covered) with uneven distribution from country to country. In some countries, Erasmus+ dominates in the area of transnational mobility of VET learners and/or staff. For example, no non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes were found in Bulgaria, Hungary and Turkey.

Where existing, those are encountered in different contexts and take various forms – ranging from large-scale multinational programmes/schemes to those with national, regional or sectoral mobility ambitions. Some part of them are specifically designed as dedicated mobility programmes<sup>88</sup> while others seek different objectives but still hold a mobility element. These programmes/schemes draw on different sources of funding, be it public, private or a mixture of both.

The majority of identified programmes/schemes are cross-sectoral, without a specific sectoral focus; enterprise-led schemes naturally target specific sectors of VET.

The results of the study also show that the overwhelming majority of the mobility programmes/schemes identified is in the field of IVET. Only few targeting CVET were identified. Considering the limited knowledge base in the area, the study team initially made the assumption that such schemes might be primarily funded and led by enterprises, operated within closed networks, and therefore somehow flying under the radar. However, no tangible evidence could be found to confirm this, concurring with the results of a previous study<sup>89</sup> that also tried to uncover this gap of knowledge.

Another key finding that emerges from the study is that the review of schemes 'labelled' as enterprise-led shows that many of them use, at least intermittently, Erasmus+ to co-finance their activities. A phenomenon of 'invisibly-EU funded' mobility is also suspected (i.e. initiatives featuring as private-led but which are in reality supported by EU funding sources (Erasmus+ or even other EU funds)). Based on the above, one can fairly conclude that non-Erasmus+ funded CVET mobility constitutes a rare phenomenon which does not play a significant role in the overall picture of learning mobility in VET.

With regard to IVET programmes/schemes, findings reveal that the provision of VET through learning mobility or mobility for placements is mainly seen as best fitting the younger learners' interests who may be more flexible and open for a such venture. Programmes/schemes targeting teaching and training staff in the VET sector are proportionally less commonly encountered; equally, only a small number of programmes/schemes specifically target the adult workforce, whether in employment or not.

Work placement and exposure to real working environments appear to be the most commonly implemented activity among mobile VET learners. Mobility among VET teachers and trainers mainly takes the form of exchanges supporting continuing professional development (CPD).

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<sup>87</sup> i.e. EU28, Northern Macedonia, IS, LI, NO and TR, falling under the scope of the study.

<sup>88</sup> i.e. programmes/schemes which primary purpose is to support VET mobility activities. As opposed to non-dedicated programmes/schemes, the latter may be 'labelled' as VET mobility and are usually easier to capture than their counterparts.

<sup>89</sup> European Commission (2012), Study on mobility developments in school education, vocational education and training, adult education and youth exchanges. Available at: [https://www.jugendpolitikineuropa.de/downloads/4-20-3421/Mobility\\_Study\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](https://www.jugendpolitikineuropa.de/downloads/4-20-3421/Mobility_Study_Final_Report.pdf)

Funding-wise, most of the identified IVET programmes/schemes are financed by national/regional authorities, but at the same time there are publicly funded programmes/schemes which rely on EU financing other than Erasmus+ (e.g. ESF, INTERREG, EaSI).

Insights gained from key informants suggest potential need for action in the area to foster synergies and get comprehensive information on existing VET mobility opportunities (and funding sources) that exist at both EU and national level.

### **5.1.2 Policy approaches**

The analysis of policy approaches at national level shows that in most of the countries there is no explicit definitions of VET mobility provided in any national legislation and/or other policy documents.

Still, some national-level legislation (e.g. in AT, DE, DK, FR and NL) foresee rather precise regulations on the main elements to respect when organising VET mobility.

Meanwhile, far more countries (around two-thirds) have VET mobility included into one or more policy planning/implementation documents which indicates a certain level of priority attributed to this type of training.

In a few countries, namely Finland, Germany and the Netherlands, findings show that VET mobility has even attracted some publicity. This public debate considered topics such as gaining more visibility and weight to VET in the context of internationalisation of education and training, technical aspects of VET developments, and openness of VET systems to current training and labour market trends outside national borders. Considering that VET mobility has become one of the topical areas on the VET policy agenda of other Erasmus+ programme countries over the past years, one may fairly assume that other similar examples – even though not specifically discussed through this study – may be found elsewhere. A general trend that seems to emerge from the study is that the interest and effective debates in the area have rather waxed and waned though as yet.

### **5.1.3 Governance and implementation of the programmes/schemes**

The observed diversity of implementation of non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes suggests that centralised or decentralised implementation may have different implications in terms of effectiveness and quality of mobility.

Those countries where implementation of mobility programmes/schemes (e.g. AT, DK) is steered by strong policy support generally offer a higher level of public access, more effective administration and a higher quality standard. In the case of small countries, one may assume that this may also link to the fact that the VET landscape is easy to overview.

In the case of bigger countries, the example of Germany is worth being highlighted. The study team identified that besides the programmes/schemes that have been retained and reviewed through the study, there exists a number of bilateral agreements through which VET mobility could be potentially funded. However, related insights were difficult to capture, making it difficult to get a comprehensive overview in the area. Meanwhile, findings show that there is a high degree of public awareness of VET learning mobility and a form of national coordination/monitoring and information provision through BIBB. As section 4.2 above discusses, interesting complementarities are also found between VET mobility actions run by ProTandem (former German-French Secretariat, DFS), the Franco German Youth Office (DJFW), and the Erasmus+ National Agency located at the BIBB.

With regard to countries (e.g. ES, IT, NL, SI, SK) that adopted a decentralised approach, those tend to tackle rather specific issues at local level, for example in border regions where different languages and cultures meet or where local enterprises may readily prepare their future staff. However, such mode of implementation requires more administrative resources. Due to their small scale and/or to the fact

they are embedded in other contexts than VET (i.e. making it difficult to extract information and statistics specifically related to VET-aspects), these programmes/schemes are found to be less regularly monitored and evaluated.

There are also intermediate modes in the spectrum of centralised/decentralised implementation, where programmes/schemes are managed by different associations in VET sector. Such institutional arrangements allow for an involvement of more diverse partners and hold a capacity of putting programmes/schemes even on international level.

As a more general trend, scarce evidence was found on the extent to which and how the programmes/schemes reviewed are regularly monitored (for details, see 3.2.2).

#### **5.1.4 Rationale for the establishment of the programmes/schemes**

Findings reveal that many of the programmes/schemes have a rationale outside of a VET context – e.g. in connection with relationships to neighbouring countries or “intercultural understanding” in general. This may not involve, or be aligned with, VET or labour market policies but may equally respond to needs of the labour market or other political issues of concern (e.g. relations with neighbouring countries), at national, regional and/or local level. Some of them also include VET learners as part of a different policy perspective (e.g. as “young people” more than VET learners such as in the case of Franco German Youth Office (DFJW)).

Where aligning with VET policies, the study found that the establishment of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes may be aimed to address the lack of VET placement opportunities on national level, or even reduce youth unemployment rates or labour market policies. However, due to a general lack of monitoring measures/tools in place in most Member States as discussed earlier, no evidence could be grasped (through desk research and key informants) on whether and how any of the programmes/schemes concerned have successfully contributed to the objectives above.

Findings also show that some non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes offer different features than those commonly encountered through Erasmus+. This is for instance the case of programmes/schemes that offer VET mobility with a wider international footprint (i.e. involving countries not currently supported by Erasmus+ VET mobility such as in the case of PIU, EDUFI or Torno Subito) or that offer longer-term mobilities of at least 12 months (e.g. PIU, Nordplus, High School Teachers Exchange Programme, Apprentissage Transfrontalier). Here again, no comprehensive statistical or impact-related data, which could have been put in perspective with Erasmus+ data, were found.

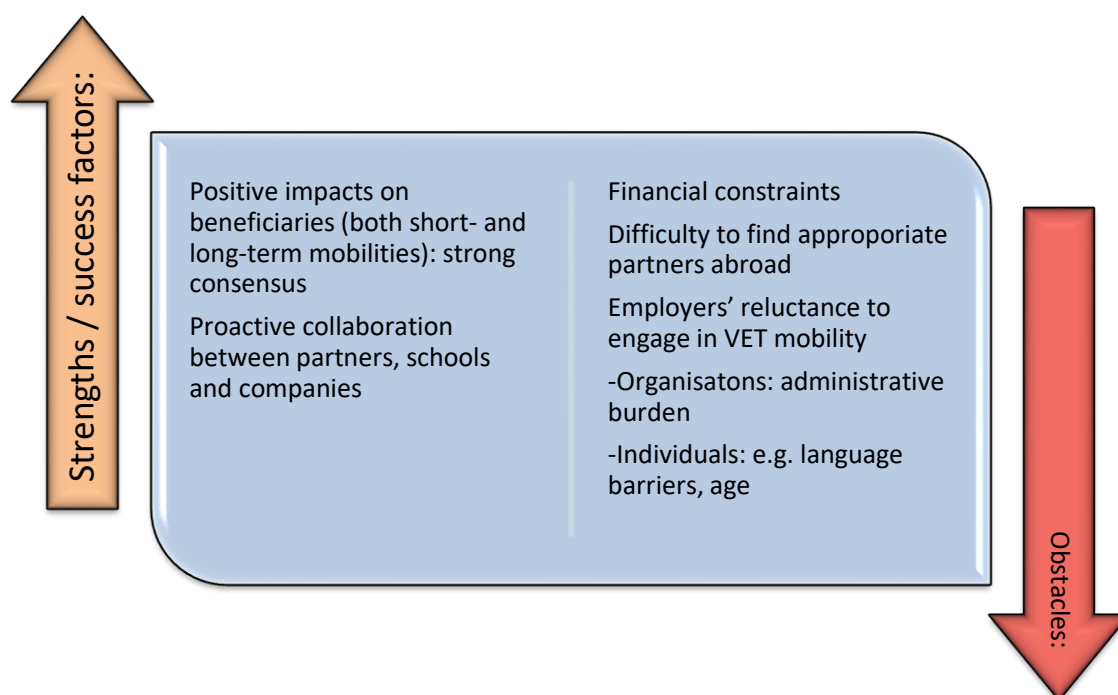
Another finding is that those VET mobility programmes/schemes that have a (inter-) regional (e.g. interregional Eurodyssey programmes) remit are often said to offer more flexibility (than Erasmus+) which in turn would be better tailored to respond to the needs of the labour market at national as well as regional and local levels.

#### **5.1.5 Key strengths, success factors and obstacles**

The study reveals that non-Erasmus and Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes often share similar types of key strengths, success factors and obstacles.

These are briefly outlined in the following figure.

Figure 22. Common key strengths/success factors and obstacles: non-Erasmus+/Erasmus programmes/schemes



Source: ICF

Meanwhile, specific strengths or obstacles were identified for some non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes. These constitute interesting differentiators to inform possible areas where EU-level decision makers could further reflect upon (e.g. drawing on lessons learnt from given examples below to inform the development of Erasmus+ and/or other EU funds supporting VET mobility for the years ahead) and/or where the potential complementarities could be further explored at both EU and Member States level.

The following country-level specific obstacles were commonly identified by the study team:

- No explicit definition of VET mobility (e.g. whether IVET, CVET, higher VET related or all; supported by national/regional- and/or EU funding) and/or related approach to it in national legislation (e.g. about basic quality requirements, recognition of outcomes, portability of citizens' rights);
- Lack of statistical data and monitoring mechanisms to track individual schemes' implementation and related impacts in most countries. Potentially inspiring practice examples exist though in a few countries (DE, DK, FI, DE, NL, SE and NO)<sup>90</sup>. In Germany for instance, BIBB plays a central role in the area by e.g. disseminating VET mobility-related information, providing quantitative analysis of German VET mobility schemes in and outside of Erasmus+);
- Lack of knowledge-base and mutual learning on non-Erasmus+ VET mobility opportunities at both country and EU level. This also links with lack of knowledge on the different EU funding opportunities (i.e. beyond Erasmus+) and/or perceived complexity or opacity as reported by some key informants at national level;

<sup>90</sup> E.g. studies and evaluations are also released in a small number of countries (e.g. DK, DE and SE) for which ad hoc resources have been earmarked at country level.

- Varying approaches to ensure transparency and recognition of VET mobility abroad;
- Reluctance to engage in VET mobility at organisation level (including enterprises, SMEs notably): in a few cases, beneficiary organisations (i.e. sending and/or hosting) were said to be more exposed to limited staff capacities (than under Erasmus+) that are required to mentor learners or compensate work in case of leave. The deterrent effects of mobility for placements in terms of the competition generated with the local workforce was also reported;
- Measures addressed to disadvantaged target groups only addressed in a very small number of non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes;
- Other: changes in government may have deterrent effects on public-led schemes/programmes funding and/or implementation;
- Legal/visa barriers issues (i.e. for programmes/schemes offering mobility outside Europe).

In addition to the above, the following general trend is worth being emphasised. On several occasions, reference was made (by key informants notably) to the Erasmus+ programme, as a prevalent programme benefitting from its size and popularity. This is seen both as a strength (i.e. powerful programme that may crowd out some non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes) and a potential threat (i.e. potentially competing with the latter) depending on individual non-Erasmus+ programmes'/schemes' key features.

With regard to country-level specific strengths (or key differentiators to Erasmus+), those comprise:

- Inspiring lessons or potential synergies that can be drawn from a few longstanding programmes, for instance:
  - the Danish PIU programme was originally set up to address apprenticeship placement shortages in Denmark. Over time, it has shifted to be now comprehended as a pedagogical tool in the country. This can be an inspiring example to other countries as well as to the EU level.
  - The German ProTandem and DFJW schemes do not provide the same mobility opportunities funded under Erasmus+ but use different valuable formats such as mutual group exchanges under ProTandem and mobility meetings under the DFJW. This is again an interesting illustrative example of potentially inspiring practices to other countries as well as to the EU level.
- Some VET mobility programmes/schemes have specific value added compared to Erasmus+:
  - Some (e.g. PIU, Torno Subito, EDUFI placement scholarships) offer a **wider choice of destinations** than Erasmus+. Two of them (PIU and Torno Subito) have for instance no geographical limits per se. In the light of Erasmus+ next programming period (2021-2027) which will open-up VET mobility to third countries lessons learnt from the above would certainly be helpful to EU-level decision makers responsible for the implementation of the future Erasmus programme.
  - Some (e.g. PIU, Nordplus, High School Teachers Exchange Programme, Apprentissage Transfrontalier) offer longer-term mobility opportunities. However, no comprehensive statistical or impact-related data were available, hence not allowing those to be put in perspective with Erasmus+ data though.
  - A few (e.g. Torno Subito, PIU or Nordplus programmes) offer **attractive financing and allowances**. These allowances offer a better opportunity to beneficiaries from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. The German-French scheme 'Deutsch Französisches Jugendwerk' stands out,



offering measures addressed to applicants with personal or socio-economic disadvantages, identified in seven main areas<sup>91</sup>. Further research on their respective impacts and any key success factors compared to Erasmus+ would be needed though.

- **Less complex or administratively burdensome application or implementation procedures:** application procedures were said to be particularly “user friendly” in the case of Danish PIU, Nordplus and the interregional Eurodyssey programmes. Meanwhile, this is to be nuanced: one of the reasons why Erasmus+ may be considered “bureaucratic” may link to the extensive reporting requirements. These do not exist in many non-Erasmus+ schemes.
- **Autonomy of the learner** in designing their mobility project: this is the case through the ‘Torno Subito’ programme or the Polish-German Youth Cooperation). Meanwhile, this feature somehow diminishes the opportunity to verify the quality of such mobility periods.
- Strengths dependent on the scope of the scheme, for example:
  - bilateral programmes/schemes are often carried out between countries that are bound by robust cross-border relations and often represent neighbouring countries. They are said to be more stable as representing the will of two countries or regions to establish a partnership and cooperation (e.g. German-French scheme ‘Deutsch Französisches Jugendwerk’);
  - programmes/schemes run at regional programmes/schemes to boost and internationalise the regional economic structure (e.g. Torno Subito) or involving ad hoc bodies (e.g. Ikaslan and Tknica bodies in Spain (Basque country) which work together to help identify the hosting companies).

Overall, it can be concluded that while some non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes complement Erasmus+ provisions, thus creating a larger and more diverse range of opportunities, many others have overlaps in terms of their rationale, objectives or coverage.

### **5.1.6 Impacts**

As anticipated, insights gained through the study on the impact of non-Erasmus+ VET mobility schemes/programmes do not differ much than those identified for Erasmus+ VET mobility actions. Despite the limitations encountered in collating data in this area (see details in section 2), the general trend that emerges is that the most commonly reported types of impacts are indeed very similar to those observed through Erasmus+ data:

At the **individual level**:

- Improved personal skills and motivation, as well as networking capacities of teachers and trainers.
- Increased employability.

At **organisational level**:

- Increased organisational development through the introduction of new teaching methods, sharing of good practice.

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<sup>91</sup> i.e. addressing individuals facing discrimination (e.g. because of their religion or sexual orientation); economically disadvantaged individuals; individuals with a disability (physically or mentally); individuals with learning difficulties; individuals with a migrant or refugee background (or their descendants); ethnic minorities; individuals with chronic disease; individuals from remote areas.

- Improved prestige of beneficiary VET schools/centres or companies – making them more visible both to new students and partners at national and international levels.
- Enhanced VET-institutions' networking and adoption of good practices.
- In-company mobility placements helps equip the staff with necessary skills and potentially secure future employees.

At **system level**:

- Making use of and fostering the take-up of EU-level tools and instruments (e.g. ECVET) in the area of VET. More intensive collaboration between education-related institutions at local, regional and state levels.
- Limited impact to address most urgent labour market needs.
- Participation in mobility programmes may constitute to workforce drain from less to more economically advanced countries or regions.

No examples of diverging or unintended types of impact emerged from the study.

Impact at system level has been reported mostly by key informants, rather than within the surveys.

## **5.2 Increasing the quality and effectiveness of VET mobility across Europe: what could the EU and Erasmus+ programme countries do?**

In the light of the key findings presented above, more specifically those regarding the main obstacles identified across the non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes reviewed as well as their key strengths or distinguishable features, this section discusses whether any EU-led actions would be needed to help enhance the quality and effectiveness of VET mobility in Europe (i.e. both supported through Erasmus+ and outside Erasmus+). Whilst doing so, it also touches upon the need for complementary actions at country level and/or for exploring potential synergies between given non-Erasmus+ and Erasmus+ VET mobility initiatives.

This section then presents some options that could be envisaged at EU as well as national/regional level to further the quality and effectiveness of VET mobility (both within and outside Erasmus +) in the years ahead.

### **5.2.1 Is there a need for EU level action in the area?**

As mentioned earlier (see section 0), the longstanding experience that the EU/EC have acquired in supporting VET mobility at policy and programme level over the past decades is to be firstly emphasised.

At policy level, promoting VET mobility is a standing issue. The benefits of VET mobility in supporting development and growth at the individual, organisation and system level have been repeatedly voiced over time<sup>92</sup>. EU level instruments such as ECVET or networks such as Euroguidance<sup>93</sup> were developed mainly to support VET mobility. Ongoing developments are also taking place to move forward the European benchmark for IVET mobility<sup>94</sup>.

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<sup>92</sup> E.g., mobility priority objectives have been for instance set until 2020 through the 2015 Riga Conclusions.

<sup>93</sup> <https://www.euroguidance.eu/>

<sup>94</sup> i.e. establishing that "by 2020, an EU average of at least 6% of 18-34-year-olds with an IVET qualification should have had an initial VET-related study or training period (including work placements) abroad lasting a minimum of two weeks [ten working days], or less if documented by Europass.

At programme level, training experiences abroad have been financed since 1964 through the programme for the exchange of young workers, absorbed into the PETRA programme in the early 1990s. Since then mobility programmes for learners and staff have been a part of the VET landscape, forming an important part of subsequent EU-level funding programmes targeting change and improvement in VET (Leonardo da Vinci, Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP), Erasmus+) as well as, more or less directly, the ESF and INTERREG). Over recent years, increasing attention has been paid to the topic in particular through Erasmus+, including via a greater emphasis on long-duration mobility for VET students and recent graduates in work-placements abroad (ErasmusPro). The new programme which will be underpinned by a doubled budget for the next programming period (2021-2027) furthermore envisions to triple the number its total mobile learners and staff <sup>95</sup> until 2027. To achieve this, a number of priority actions are foreseen such as: opening up VET mobility of learners and staff to third countries destination; supporting the establishment of Platforms of "Centres of vocational excellence" or developing small-scale partnerships to strengthen the participation of small organisations.

Over the years both EU policy making and programmes development have been informed by evidence-based research (studies and evaluations) as well as by outputs from targeted mutual learning events held in the remit of the Open Method of Coordination.

In the light of the above, the EU/EC would be well placed for creating favourable framework conditions for VET mobility to further support effective mutual learning, synergies and multiplier effects at both EU and national level. To take the sole examples of EU-funded outputs such as ECVET, Euroguidance or Eurodesk, those have proven to be much valuable to foster such mutual learning and/or support VET mobility at national level over time. They are clear examples of where the EU can effectively support or complement national actions.

On the other hand, despite the continuous attention and significant investments placed in the area, a number of challenges still persist at learner/staff, organisation and system level as both recent research and current study evidence. Findings from preliminary desk review confirmed persistent challenges in the following overarching areas (not in specific order): widening access and participation in VET mobility; strengthening policies, financing and support; increasing employers' awareness and participation in VET mobility and enhancing recognition and promoting synergies in European transparency tools, instruments and frameworks. In many regards, those concur with the findings of the present study.

Against this background, the key messages emerging from the above are as follows:

- The large amount of resources invested at the EU level, for more than two decades, to inform and steer VET mobility developments across Europe has materialised in many positive achievements at both EU and national level.
- This has however not sufficed, in itself, to help overcome challenges that are still faced at national level as discussed above.
- The review of the obstacles emerging from the study shows that:
  - a number of them are of a similar nature than those encountered under Erasmus+, suggesting that lessons learned from both sides (i.e. Erasmus+ and non-Erasmus+ programme/schemes) could be mutually reinforcing.
  - some obstacles are more specific to non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes. To inform future actions in the area, interesting practices exist at national level and could be inspiring to other non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes. However, those practices often lack visibility outside the country(ies) where they are operated.

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<sup>95</sup> i.e. from 650.000 (2014-2020) to around 2 million (2021-2027).

This suggests that favourable framework conditions to support more effective and quality of VET mobility (i.e. both Erasmus+ and non-Erasmus+ funded) should be created. To address this, there is scope for action at **both EU and national levels**: each level should work towards minimizing existing or potential overlaps and fostering complementarities between non-Erasmus+ and Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes.

Examples of overlapping areas (e.g. in terms of rationale, priority objectives as well as key strengths or obstacles) as well as complementarities between non-Erasmus+ and Erasmus+ programmes/schemes were identified through the study. These constitute areas where there is indeed a clear but insufficiently explored potential in terms of mutual learning and exchange of experience. Effectively addressing this could indeed positively influence the development of both main types of programmes/schemes – and be in turn beneficial to wider VET mobility developments across Europe (including in the remit of next Erasmus programme in the period 2021-2027).

Drawing on the legacy of past and existing EU-level measures/tools, it would be advisable for the EC to concentrate their efforts on those measures/tools that have proven to be most beneficial at national level – and which could not have been established by individual countries on their own – and on planned new ones which development could be informed by lessons learnt from given non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes (e.g. in mobility outside Europe, measures targeted at disadvantaged learners or longer-term mobility).

EU Member States (and other Erasmus+ countries) would, in turn, be better placed to undertake VET mobility related actions that could act complementarily with the above. Fostering knowledge-base and raising awareness on non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes against Erasmus+ ones (e.g. on the key features, specificities, impact, added value and *raison d'être*) would be for instance highly beneficial. As further discussed below, actors such as Euroguidance, Eurodesk or Erasmus+ National Agencies (NAs) might be well suited to contribute to the process.

At a time when Erasmus+ holds a rather prominent position in the VET mobility landscape in Europe and that its successor Erasmus (2021-2027) is much likely to feature at least the same whilst being underpinned by an increased budget, the benefits of fostering knowledge-base and visibility of non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes would be twofold:

- To inform the development and/or implementation of the future Erasmus;
- To enable non-Erasmus programmes/schemes to position themselves and find their niche market to be complementary to the 'big' Erasmus.

### **5.2.2 Possible options for EU-level or national-level action**

In the light of the above, possible options for EU-level and/or national-level action have been identified to address the following underlying questions:

- What should be done to help establish currently missing favourable framework conditions for VET mobility referred to the above? and;
- What should be done at EU level (and/or at national/regional levels) to increase synergies/ complementarities between Erasmus+ and non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes?

With regard to the first question, the options presented below have been identified against the following main types of obstacles to effective and of quality VET mobility across Europe:

- Lack of knowledge-base and mutual learning measures on non-EU funded VET mobility initiatives;
- Lack of statistical data and monitoring mechanisms;
- Varying approaches to ensure transparency and recognition of VET mobility abroad;

- Complexity/opacity of EU funding opportunities in the area for mobility schemes outside Erasmus+.

### **Lack of knowledge-base and mutual learning measures on non-EU funded VET mobility initiatives**

Findings suggest that there is a need for offering regular updates and further knowledge-base on non-EU funded VET mobility initiatives (e.g. including evidence-based research to explore complementarity and synergies EU and non-EU funded VET mobility initiatives).

#### **Options at EU level:**

- At the EU level a number of actions and settings (e.g. within ECVET Secretariat, VET mobility Working Group<sup>96</sup>, Transnational Cooperation Activities (TCAs) that bring together Erasmus+ National Agencies and beneficiaries under themes in relation to VET mobility<sup>97</sup>) are already in place to foster dialogue and knowledge sharing on a number of VET mobility-related topics. Those commonly involve ministerial officials, VET experts and in some of them other key stakeholders (e.g. VET practitioners or VET learners' representatives) too. These spaces offer the opportunity to national representatives to showcase practice examples and/or to learn about others implemented in other countries. Their format is valued and is even gaining visibility and attractiveness as in the case of the yearly European Vocational Skills Week.

In addition, the following possible options could be considered:

- To expand existing online dissemination platform(s) to offer information on non-EU established VET mobility initiatives: the Eurodesk and Euroguidance platforms could be potential candidates. Eurodesk as a support organisation to Erasmus+ is experienced in making information on learning mobility accessible to young people and those who work with them. The platform e.g. offers a practical tool in the form of an 'opportunity finder' (e.g. on grants) for its users. This part of the tool could be for instance expanded to also include information on non-Erasmus+ VET mobility opportunities. Euroguidance which is a European network of national resources and information centres for guidance disseminates information on international mobility opportunities as well as on European initiatives and programmes in the field. Their target groups not being the same (i.e. young people and teachers/trainers and guidance practitioners and policy-makers respectively) would legitimate action in both cases to maximise dissemination of and access to information to different target groups.
- Complementarily with the above, Cedefop could explore the possibility to add information on non-Erasmus+ VET mobility through the Mobility Scoreboard which is fed by national ReferNet experts.

#### **Options at country level:**

##### **Government:**

- To explore the option of creating VET mobility observatories at country level (where appropriate)<sup>98</sup>: these could be used to create an overview of existing non-EU as well as EU funded VET mobility initiatives, compile statistics, offer coordination and monitoring activities, disseminate evaluative studies (i.e. an

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<sup>96</sup> i.e. comprised by Erasmus+ National Agencies experts.

<sup>97</sup> E.g. such as internationalisation of VET institutions.

<sup>98</sup> i.e. where there exists established non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes and/or where there is a need for this. For instance, this may not be relevant for countries where VET mobility outside Erasmus+ is very limited or non-existent.

inspiring model could be what BIBB is doing in Germany). The could be hosted within Erasmus+ National Agencies where/as appropriate.

- To hold/promote events, debates and/or commission evidence-based research on VET mobility implementation (and related results and impacts).
- To explore the need and feasibility for creating a VET mobility observatory in the country whilst consulting key stakeholders including those who could effectively support its establishment and/or implementation (e.g. Erasmus+ National Agencies, Eurodesk national coordinators, Euroguidance national centres). Where appropriate, also consult the EU/EC. For countries where non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes is very limited or non-existent, to consider using Eurodesk and Euroguidance to offer information on non-EU VET mobility initiatives.

#### **Erasmus+ National Agency (NA):**

- To ensure better synergies/complementarities in the way information on the different programmes is presented and made accessible to (potential) applicants (i.e. particularly in countries where the NA is responsible for other mobility programmes but possibly in others too, as/where appropriate).
- To gain or share insights on good practice examples for NAs counterparts.

#### **Eurodesk/Euroguidance:**

- Eurodesk national coordinators/Euroguidance national resource and information centres: to consider working together to ensure common approaches (and ultimate outputs) to include information of relevance to their target groups on non-Erasmus+ VET mobility on their online platforms.
- Eurodesk national coordinators: to mobilise their local contact points to feed into the above.

### **Lack of statistical data and monitoring mechanisms**

Findings suggest that there is a lack of statistics available on non-Erasmus+ VET mobility and of related data collection and monitoring mechanisms in most of the countries under the scope of the study.

#### **Options at EU level:**

- To foster targeted collaboration with Member States to discuss monitoring practices further to the publication (expected in 2019) of the feasibility study aimed to inform a possible revision of the IVET mobility benchmark definition. This could for instance take place in the remit of the ET2020 working group on VET, possibly via a targeted sub-group<sup>99</sup>.
- To explore with Member States (and/or other Erasmus+ programme countries) the opportunity to establish VET mobility observatories at country level (see previous box), which could also play a role in collecting statistical data.
- Similarly to the above, explore potential support from Euroguidance or Eurodesk national contact points to play a supporting role in the area. The potential role the Mobility Scoreboard could play in providing qualitative data on VET mobility should be investigated too.

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<sup>99</sup> Offering targeted/thematic subgroups as part of the ET2020 Working groups is one of the recommendations of the 'Assessment of tools and deliverables under the framework for cooperation in education and training (ET 2020)' study to be published in 2019.

### **Options at country level:**

#### **Government:**

- To take part in EU level working groups/events in the area and effectively disseminate related outputs at national level.
- To raise awareness and stimulate exchanges and events on the value of monitoring VET mobility programmes/schemes and effectively disseminating related results bringing together key stakeholders (e.g. Erasmus+ NAs, non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes leading organisation(s) – if any).
- Depending on the results of above-mentioned feasibility study to consider the option of getting support from IVET institutions in data collection (i.e. gathering information on their students'/graduates' learning mobility characteristics)<sup>100</sup>.

#### **Erasmus+ NAs and/or non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes leading organisation(s) (if any):**

- To actively take part in the above and where appropriate work together to disseminate related data or monitoring reports of the respective programmes/schemes.

### **Varying approaches to ensure transparency and recognition of VET mobility abroad**

Findings reveal that many VET centres do not have or fail to be familiar with approaches or tools (including EU-level ones – see below) that can be used to ensure quality of mobility pathways. In particular, more effort should be put into ensuring that the learner can capitalise on the learning outcomes acquired through mobility, e.g. to improve their chances on getting a job, or to avoid duplication of learning and build on what was learnt already during the mobility. Existing tools and approaches to assess, document, validate and recognise learning outcomes acquired abroad in the home country should be better exploited and further developed. This concerns learning outcomes related to training content that are relevant to acquire a qualification, but also key competences such as language skills, IT skills and personal skills and communication skills.

#### **Options at EU level:**

- To make the significant experience of Erasmus+ in developing and delivering quality-assured VET mobility more visible to the benefits of non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes. Selected success stories could be disseminated on Erasmus+ website (e.g. the webpage presenting successful Erasmus+ projects<sup>101</sup> could be adjusted to host VET mobility success stories) and/or showcased on e.g. European Vocational Skills Week webpage(s)
- Further promote, and develop as appropriate, EU tools that support the quality of mobility. For instance, ECVET provides a well-developed framework to ensure the quality of geographical mobility in IVET, and enable transparency of learning outcomes.<sup>102</sup> Practical ECVET tools to support VET centres in organising mobility projects (e.g. Memorandum of Understanding and Learning Agreement) are

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<sup>100</sup> i.e. similar to the approach for the EU-level higher education benchmark indicator.

<sup>101</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/>

<sup>102</sup> <http://www.ecvet-secretariat.eu/en/what-is-ecvet>

available that have been road-tested by Erasmus+ National Agencies and other mobility practitioners.<sup>103</sup>

Other tools like Europass mobility<sup>104</sup>, Youth Pass<sup>105</sup>, and Open Badges<sup>106</sup> also show how learning outcomes from international mobility can be assessed, documented, validated and recognised in the home country. This relates to professional competences as well as key competences (language skills, IT skills, personal skills, etc.).

#### **Options at country level:**

##### **Government:**

- To consider adding mobility as an integral part of VET programmes. For this purpose, to keep abreast of latest developments in the area at EU and Member States level through active participation in EU-level (e.g. WG on VET, ECVET Secretariat) or national-level events, whilst furthering ECVET implementation.
- To organise mutual learning events (involving key stakeholders among which main non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes held in the country, at national, regional or local level) and support good practice examples (from both Erasmus+ and non-Erasmus+ VET mobility) collation and dissemination at country level – for instance through a VET mobility observatory.

##### **Non-Erasmus+ VET mobility/programmes leading organisations:**

- To take part in events organised at country level and/or organise targeted events themselves to share their experience (difficulties encountered and successful approaches) with their counterparts.

##### **Erasmus+ NAs:**

- To identify, select success stories and share those with the EC which would in turn disseminate those (or a sample) at EU level. NA would also disseminate the full set of selected stories on their website.

##### **Euroguidance/Eurodesk main online tools:**

- To provide weblinks to the above and disseminate complementary inspiring practice examples implemented through non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes.

### **Complexity/opacity of EU funding opportunities**

Next to Erasmus+, other EU funds (e.g. ESF, INTERREG) support VET mobility. However, they may be considered too complex by prospective applicants at country level. The study also identified that the EU funding sources may be blurred (i.e. suspected phenomenon of 'invisibly-EU funded' mobility discussed earlier) in some VET mobility initiatives. For a matter of transparency and cost-effectiveness, it would be of benefit to the EU/EC to gain better overview on this phenomenon as well as on existing overlaps and synergies among these funds.

#### **Options at EU level:**

- To further map areas of synergies and overlaps between EU and non-EU funded main VET mobility initiatives.

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<sup>103</sup> <http://www.ecvet-toolkit.eu/>

<sup>104</sup> <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass-dokumenti/evropski-pasosh-veshtina/europass-mobility>

<sup>105</sup> <https://www.youthpass.eu/en/>

<sup>106</sup> <https://ebawebsite.net/badge-systems/>



- Develop case studies to demonstrate complementarities and synergies between EU and non-EU funded VET mobility initiatives.

**Options at country level:**

- To engage key bodies (e.g. VET mobility observatories or support from Eurodesk and/or Euroguidance where/as most appropriate – see proposed above -, Erasmus+ National Agencies, Ministries responsible for VET) to support communication and dissemination and/or monitoring activities.

In addition to the above, the following should be considered, at the EU, national or regional levels to foster synergies/complementarities or help minimise overlaps between Erasmus+ and non-Erasmus programmes/schemes:

**Drawing on lessons learnt from inspiring examples**

**Options at EU /national level:**

to further explore and maximise (jointly with respective programmes/schemes leading organisations as appropriate) complementarities between Erasmus+ and non-Erasmus+ VET mobility programmes/schemes such as:

- PIU: the features (e.g. work placements are paid), duration of mobility (i.e. from one month to over two years) and target students (e.g. on average older than Erasmus+ beneficiaries) of the programme are different but meanwhile complementary to those of Erasmus+. Insights gained through the study suggest that Erasmus+ would be a stepping stone to PIU – with examples of Erasmus+ beneficiaries subsequently applying for additional work placement abroad through PIU. the possibility to redirect those Erasmus+ beneficiaries (also eligible to PIU) interested to extend the duration of the VET mobility (but to whom a 'zero grant'<sup>107</sup> could only be offered) to PIU could be for instance considered.
- PIU, Torno Subito, EDUFI (placement scholarships) these programmes/schemes have a wider international footprint (i.e. offering mobility opportunities outside Europe): considering Erasmus+ (2021-2027) ambitions to become more open to the rest of the world but also to inform non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes interested to expand their geographical scope, experiences gained through the programmes/schemes above could be considered at both EU and national level.
- ProTandem: the ProTandem Agency offers intensive advice and support during the exchanges (coordinating and supporting beneficiary institutions in planning their stays abroad). It furthermore offers specific measures to address disadvantaged target groups. These features are of potential interest to Erasmus+ programme managers at EU/EC level as well as to non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes leading organisations to inform and/or adjust their implementation approaches.
- Nordplus (i.e. Nordplus Junior and Nordplus Adults): the simplicity in application and reporting procedures under the programme were valued by interviewees. Practices that could be potentially replicated to Erasmus+ and/or other non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes could be explored at EU/EC and national level. Nordplus furthermore appears to be a stepping stone to Erasmus+: cases of organisations applying for Nordplus grants to first develop/test ideas and networks, and then apply experiences gained to apply for Erasmus+ grants to

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<sup>107</sup> i.e. Erasmus+ beneficiary learners taking part in mobility for placement may request an extension in duration of their mobility experience to the sending organisation. Unless the entire available budget has not been fully allocated yet, they are usually offered an extension in the form a "zero-grant" period.

expand the geographical scope of the projects whilst getting increased funding provision are observed. Such complementarities should be further explored at both Nordplus and Erasmus+ programmes level.

### **Options at national/regional level:**

To ensure complementarities with Erasmus+ whilst making the specificities of non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes more visible, action at national- and/or regional-level would be crucial, in particular in areas such as those listed below.

Examples of areas of possible action:

- Monitoring VET mobility: the experience gained in a few Member States (e.g. DE, DK, FI, NL, SE) in monitoring VET mobility (e.g. BIBB in Germany) should be made more visible at national level. Depending on country situations/needs, the appropriateness of organising (or taking part) in ad hoc mutual learning events should be explored.
- Mutual learning on bilateral, regional programmes/schemes<sup>108</sup>: making information more visible at country level (e.g. channelled via Eurodesk, Euroguidance centres and/or Erasmus+ National Agencies) would be beneficial to various key stakeholders (e.g. programmes/schemes' coordinating organisations, VET schools/centres, enterprises, researchers or policy makers) to gain knowledge on programmes/schemes presenting similar features or facing similar needs or obstacles than theirs. Organising peer learning events at national or regional level (bringing together programmes/schemes coordinators and other relevant stakeholders) to support exchanges of experience could be envisaged too. Based on study findings, interesting practice examples could be drawn from instance from well-established initiatives (e.g. Eurodyssee, Torno Subito) or supporting bodies (e.g. Ikaslan and Tknica in Spain).
- Language support provision: for a number of reasons (cost, size of the programme/scheme, etc.) offering formal language support to beneficiary learners is not common practice across non-Erasmus+ programme/schemes whilst language barriers remain an important obstacle to effective participation in VET mobility. Besides the (non-easily replicable) experience gained through Erasmus+ OLS at EU level, a few good practice examples exist at national level (e.g. language courses or related support services offered through ProTandem or Nordplus). Those could be inspiring to individual programme/schemes leading organisations and should be thus made more visible at national level.
- Programmes/schemes coordination: some Erasmus+ National Agencies (NAs) are responsible for the coordination of Erasmus+ as well as from other schemes. There are also a few non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes that have gained considerable experience in the area (e.g. ProTandem agency, PIU, Nordplus). Sharing and/or making their experience more visible in the area would certainly be of interest to other non-Erasmus+ programmes/schemes leading organisations.

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<sup>108</sup> Their outreach is often limited to the regions and actors directly involved. National policy level stakeholders should ensure that these programmes/schemes are visible and integrated in the respective national VET mobility landscape. Learners and organisations interested in transnational exchanges could in turn resort to such opportunities, even if they are not based in the same region. By increasing awareness of these non-Erasmus+ VET mobility schemes across regions, national level stakeholders (e.g. the respective Erasmus+ NA) could for instance match newer or previously unsuccessful applicants and thus increase participation in VET mobility overall.

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