



ETUCE information note on the Commission Green Paper on Promoting the learning mobility of young people

- **Purpose**

The purpose of this green paper is to open up the debate on how opportunities for young people to benefit from a mobility experience could be increased. Stakeholders and the wider public are invited to consider the questions raised by the paper and in particular to reflect on how the existing mechanisms can be better mobilised to promote learning mobility as well as how the different levels of public authorities, together with stakeholders, can get involved in an efficient way.

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- **Challenges**

The benefits of mobility experiences have been widely accepted. Hence, as consensus has already been reached on the subject, it is now time for a definition of a strategy. One of the main challenges in promoting learning mobility for young people today is to allow for more people to benefit from the initiatives that are already actively running. Only 0.3% of the people in the age between 16 and 29 were in 2006 able to benefit from mobility within European programmes. This is disturbing as several measures have already been taken to ensure that a larger proportion of the young population is able to experience a period of mobility. Furthermore, the green paper is concerned with the fact that the majority of the learning mobility tools and initiatives are directed towards higher education and in a lesser extend towards vocational education and training, internships as well as apprentices.

- **Scope**

Firstly, the green paper focuses exclusively on physical mobility for learning purposes, excluding mobility in the labour market from its scope.

By including learning mobility in all disciplines from culture to science and from arts to technology, the paper aims at reaching out as many learning contexts as possible. In this sense, the green paper addresses all different learning levels and ages, from school to PhD level within University studies, but also internships, apprenticeships, youth exchanges, volunteer work and vocational training. Mobilising in this way opens up for an expansion on the disciplinary and contextual scope of learning mobility. Mobility should also engage cross-sector movements - from the world of education to the world of business, from vocational education to academia, etc.

The primary target group is the group of young people between the ages of 16 to 35. It is made clear, however, that narrowing down the learning group this much does not imply that other age groups are irrelevant when it comes to mobility.

Geographically speaking, while maintaining the focus on transnational mobility within the countries participating in the E&T2010/20 process, the green paper suggests that it should be broadened to cover the wider world.

- **Expected outcomes**

Providing that the green paper specifically aims at promoting organised learning mobility, a need is expressed that every mobility experience is linked to specific learning outcomes. This focus is in line with the increasing attention that has been paid to learning outcomes over the last few years, particularly during the adoption of EQF and ECVET. Attention is thus directed towards what a learner knows and is able to do at the end of a learning process, instead of focusing on input factors such as the duration, location or pedagogical method underpinning a qualification.

- **Questions raised**

The questions raised in the green paper are divided into three sections. The first section considers issues linked to the preparation of a mobility period. The Commission has thus raised questions on how the availability of information and guidance related to mobility could be improved. Furthermore, the promotion and motivation of young people to seek a period of mobility needs to be conducted in a better way to ensure a maximum effect. This section of the paper furthermore addresses issues on linguistic and cultural obstacles; housing issues; legal obstacles; the promotion of mobility to and from the European Union; and finally the difficulties encountered by disabled groups.

The second section focuses on the actual period of the stay abroad and the follow-up. Several instruments have already been adopted by the European Union concerning the recognition and validation of a period of learning mobility. National authorities hold the sole responsibility of their implementation. According to the green paper, however, this process should potentially become faster and policies towards securing recognition in other sectors than Higher education should be developed. The green paper therefore invites its readers to communicate any obstacles towards mobility in regards to the validation and recognition of both formal and non-formal learning.

To overcome the problems and obstacles outlined in section one and two, section three revolves around creating new opportunities and solutions. The green paper calls for innovative ideas on how to further expand the opportunities for mobility as well as how to engage the so-called “multipliers”: how to attract business to get more involved in youth mobility or how to motivate teachers and trainers in promoting young peoples’ mobility? In order to overcome the obstacles mentioned, therefore, it is necessary to join forces and learn from each others’ experiences.

The setting up of mobility targets, such as benchmarks are currently being discussed in the frame of the updated strategic framework for Education and Training 2020. A mobility target has already been reached in Higher education in April 2009 (by 2020, at least 20% of those graduating in the European Higher education Area should have a study or a training period abroad). As a tool for reaching the goal of making mobility learning the rule rather than the exception, the green paper concludes by opening up the possibility of setting new targets or defining a mobility strategy and calls for its readers to consider whether or not such an action would be useful.

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