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# Internationalisation and Mobility in European Vocational Education and Training

## International Report

Mainz 2011



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Lifelong Learning Programme  
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# **Internationalisation and Mobility in European Vocational Education and Training International Report**

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## **Summary**

This international report is an outcome of the European Leonardo da Vinci project 'Internationalisation and Mobility in the students Curricula' (INtheMC) carried out by eight partners from seven European countries. Purpose of the report is giving an insight into the situation of mobility within VET for the project INtheMC. The project has developed several instruments supporting internationalisation and mobility in VET. By this the report does not claim to be a complete review of the current European discussion. Furthermore, it gives an insight into the main currently discussed aspects in internationalisation and mobility for practitioners in VET on the one hand. On the other hand it summarizes the experiences and insights of the INtheMC-partners, which are mainly partners from VET schools.

The report provides some background and outlining the situation of VET in the partner countries. It reviews the current situation and trends of internationalisation and mobility within VET. Then European instruments that promote internationalisation and mobility in VET (Europass Mobility, the European Qualifications Framework and the European Credit System for VET) are reviewed by the partners of the project. Following this, several available researches on target groups are presented. Examples from best practice and obstacles are shown. Finally the report asks: How to improve internationalisation and educational mobility in order to obtain desired outcomes in VET? It ends with conclusions and proposals for promoting internationalisation and mobility in VET.

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## Preface

The international report on internationalisation and mobility in European vocational education and training (VET) is one of the outcomes of the European Leonardo da Vinci project 'Internationalisation and Mobility in the students Curricula' (INtheMC).<sup>1</sup> Because of the low participation rates in transnational mobility in VET all over Europe, the aim of the project is to provide a ready-to-use methodology for teachers, students and management of VET and at the same time to incorporate the topic into the curricula. Therefore several partners from European countries<sup>2</sup> were invited to join the project and contribute their particular field of expertise. The partners from the Netherlands, Spain, Scotland and Lithuania are experts in the field of professional experience. An input from the point of view of the entrepreneurs will be provided by a second partner from the Netherlands and a partner from France. The partner from Poland is an expert in the field of psychological influences on mobility and equal opportunity. Experience on the mobility of students and the impact at European level comes from the German partner, who also compiled this report with the help of the Polish partner.

To provide a ready-to-use methodology, a lot of preparatory work has to be done. This includes carrying out research into the state of the art on internationalisation and mobility in European VET. Therefore the partners in this project first wrote a national report describing the situation of internationalisation and mobility in VET in their own country. The following report is based on those national reports and on several studies. For this reason this international report is focused on the named partner countries in the project.

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<sup>1</sup> For further information, see project homepage: [www.inthemc-project.org](http://www.inthemc-project.org)

<sup>2</sup> Partner countries of the project with corresponding institution: Landstede Groep, Netherlands (coordinator); Angus College, Scotland, United Kingdom; Politeknika Ikastegia Txorieeri – HETEL, Spain; Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, Germany; Uniwersytet Kazimierza Wilkiego W Bydgoszczy, Poland; Marijampoles profesinio rengimo centras, Lithuania; Stichting Ecabo, Netherlands; Institut Européen de l'entrepreneuriat rural, France

# 1 Background

Internationalisation of vocational education is a topic that the European Union (EU) is strongly focused on. The background to this focus is the internationalisation of the European economy. European companies have international networks. For their special needs they demand experts from different nations and cultures. Therefore they need employees with international competencies.

The Copenhagen Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training and the European Commission (2002) declares 'the need for a European dimension to education and training'. Therefore they promote mobility within a 'high quality vocational education and training'. The Declaration sets four priorities: (1) 'European dimension', (2) 'Transparency, information and guidance', (3) 'Recognition of competences and qualification' and (4) 'Quality assurance'. While the three last priorities focus on the need for transparency and transferability of qualifications within Europe, the first priority focuses especially on the international dimension within existing programmes:

*Strengthening the European dimension in vocational education and training with the aim of improving closer cooperation in order to facilitate and promote mobility and the development of inter-institutional cooperation, partnerships and other transnational initiatives, all in order to raise the profile of the European education and training area in an international context so that Europe will be recognised as a world-wide reference for learners.*

(European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training and the European Commission 2002: 3)

These goals were acknowledged and further developed in subsequent declarations of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training (e.g. Maastricht Communiqué 2004, Helsinki Communiqué 2006, Bordeaux Communiqué 2006).

In 2009 the European Commission published the Green Paper *Promoting the learning mobility of young people*. This paper stresses mobility as a possible means of strengthening the future employability of young people. It underlines the value that employers give to the international experience of young people.

The High Level Expert Forum on Mobility (2008) sees the purposes for mobility in two targets: (1) strengthening European competitiveness within a knowledge-based society and (2) deepening the sense of European identity and citizenship among young people. Therefore they propose that mobility for learning purposes become a regular feature in Europe as a long-term goal. By 2012, at least 15 per cent of young people (around 900,000 young people each year) in Europe should have been involved in mobility for learning purposes, by 2015 at least 30 per cent (around 1,800,000 young people each year) and by 2020 at least 50 per cent (around 2,900,000 young people each year). Concerning VET, the Expert Forum sets a target of 3.5 per cent of all VET students by 2020.

Further need for strengthening internationalisation and mobility could be seen in diverse company initiatives within the dual system in Germany. Several companies are offering their own internal programmes for developing international occupational competencies (Schöpf 2009; Hölbling 2009). As the development of international competencies is often not regularly integrated into VET, it is provided by additional qualification offers. The database for additional qualification offers within VET in Germany shows that the most frequently offered additional qualifications have an international focus (Waldhausen 2006: 5; BIBB 2010: 8).

## **2 Vocational education and training – the situation in partners' countries**

### **2.1 Internationalisation and mobility: Statistics**

The study MoVE-iT, which deals with the obstacles for mobility in initial vocational education and training (IVET) in several European countries, reveals some concrete statistics concerning transnational mobility in IVET. The data presented in the study was collected through a questionnaire which was sent out in each of the countries. One part of this questionnaire dealt with the numbers of those participating (Brandsma and Bruin-Mosch 2006: 3ff.).

Table 1, which presents the total number of participants (IVET) in transnational mobility of the MoVE-It-Study, shows that most of the countries do have at least slightly increasing participation rates in IVET transnational mobility. In particular, the German numbers are increasing rapidly and almost doubled between 2002 (4,129) and 2005 (8,319). This can be partly explained by the growing demand for mobility among IVET students as a result of wide promotion of the topic, but also by changes in legislation through the Vocational Training Act (Berufsbildungsgesetz), which was amended with paragraphs concerning mobility in 2005 (Brandsma and Bruin-Mosch 2006: 13).

A recently published German study carried out by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training revealed that German students from VET are much more involved in mobility programmes than previously estimated. It was stated that in the years 2007 to 2009 about 23,500 students from IVET took part in an internship or a comparable visit abroad. That would be 50 per cent more than estimated (Koerbel and Friedrich 2011, Hübers 2011). This means that around 3% of German students in the first vocational education are mobile. Around 37% of them are supported by the Leonardo da Vinci programme, around 8% by bilateral programmes of the Federal Ministry of Education with France, The Netherlands, Great Britain and Norway. Further 8% are supported by chambers and foundations. Interestingly 39% are completely privately financed. Within the discussion of the INtheMC-project the colleagues estimated that this situation maybe also valid for their countries in The Netherlands, Spain and Great Britain.

Table 1 shows that the numbers for Spain slightly decreased in 2003 and 2004 but then in comparison the numbers from 2005 are highly increasing (Brandsma and Bruin-Mosch 2006: 13). It is estimated that the numbers are still rising. In the year 2009 the overall trend in Spain was, and still is, to increase the number of teachers, stakeholders and students who participate in international programmes. At present the biggest part of the funding from Leonardo programmes in Spain goes to mobility activities (68 per cent), while the rest of the budget is going to Transfer of Innovation (TOI) projects, associations and preparatory visits. In 2010 the overall number of participating VET students and staff in Leonardo programmes was 5,368, of which 25.8 per cent were IVET students (Menica and Megaw 2011: 9ff.).

The Netherlands shows a sharp increase in mobility numbers from the year 2004 to 2005 of more than 100 per cent. This is explained by a rising participation in Leonardo da Vinci programmes and this in turn is based on an increasing budget for mobility in the year 2005. It is also due to a larger management capacity in the field of internationalisation in schools and because of a bigger cooperative school network. This might be the same explanation for the big increase in numbers since 2003 in the UK (Brandsma and Bruin-Mosch 2006: 15).

Table 1: Total number of participants (IVET) in transnational mobility

	2002	2003	2004	2005
BE1	528	554	698	962
CZ	973	905	2096	2061
DK	-	-	1530	1825
DE	4129	6389	8023	8319
EE	91	82	79	74
EL2	483	382	-	-
ES3	2211	2199	2184	2797
FR4	1598	-	-	-
IE	1799	2135	3047	4188
IT	7792	8187	7499	8555
CY	40	53	169	199
LV	156	137	212	257
LT	142	155	287	263
LU	59	78	127	145
HU	371	745	861	1159
MT	-	22	6	120
NL	973	1236	1388	2589
AT	-	575	1000	1333
PL	1799	1885	5120	5657
PT	866	1051	945	1342
SI	323	364	525	724
SK	483	483	961	1094
FI	3680	4570	4080	4480
SE	-	-	1680	1439
UK	-	2817	3417	4555
IS	55	22	64	70
LI	-	-	11	18
NO	490	738	671	376
BG	229	250	545	722
RO	326	311	356	330
HR	-	-	-	-
TR	-	-	281	1572
CH	125	133	167	138

1 Figures for Belgium are based on the filled out questionnaire for the Flemish speaking community and on statistical data obtained via the website of the National Leonardo da Vinci Agency for the French speaking community.

2 Figures for Greece are based on statistical data obtained via the website of the National Leonardo da Vinci agency (only VET students; data for 2004 and 2005 not available).

3 Figures for Spain are based on a statistical publication obtained via the website of the National Leonardo da Vinci Agency.

4 France indicated that it could not provide participation figures. Figures for 2002 are based on newsletters published on the website of the National Leonardo da Vinci Agency. The estimation for 2006 (based on granted requests) is 2282 participants.

Source: Brandsma and Bruin-Mosch 2006: 13



*Table 2: Total number of participants in IVET transnational mobility under Leonardo and under other programmes*

	2004		2005	
	Leonardo da Vinci	Other programmes	Leonardo da Vinci	Other programmes
BE	698		962	
CZ	1,419	677	1,567	494
DK	330	1074	513	1393
DE	5,854	2,274	6,255	2,118
EE	79		74	
EL	NA		NA	
ES	2,184		2,797	
FR	NA		NA	
IE	436	2,611	538	3,650
IT	2,144	5,355	2,733	5,822
CY	169		199	
LV	212		257	
LT	287		263	
LU	127		145	
HU	861	NA	850	309
MT	6		120	
NL	1,175	213	2,464	125
AT	942	58	1277	56
PL	5120		5657	
PT	945		1342	
SI	525		724	
SK	886	75	1,012	74
FI	632	3448	600	3880
SE	480	1,200	500	939
UK	3,417		4,555	
IS	64		70	
LI	11		18	
NO	485	186	260	116
BG	545		722	
RO	356		330	
HR	-		-	
TR	261	20	1337	235
CH	35	132	38	100

Source: Brandsma and Bruin-Mosch 2006: 16

Concerning the participation rates within Leonardo and other programmes, Table 2 shows the total number of participants in IVET transnational mobility itemised under Leonardo programmes and other programmes.

*Overall, it can be stated that the extent to which countries stimulate transnational mobility in IVET through other programmes, in particular national, bilateral or other programmes, does increase the absolute numbers of participants in IVET transnational mobility. In some countries, mobility under those other programmes outweighs mobility under the Leonardo da Vinci programme, while in other countries the reverse is the case.*

(Brandsma and Bruin-Mosch 2006: 18)

In Lithuania, the main programmes for mobility in VET are the lifelong learning programmes, e.g. ERASMUS, Leonardo and Grundtvig. More than 1,000 VET students and specialists participate in Leonardo mobility programmes every year; 45 per cent of them are students. Interestingly, the participation rate in the years 2006 to 2008 of VET specialists was higher than the participation rate of students. But there are also other programmes for mobility in Lithuania such as TOI programmes which were developed for improvement of the teaching system. Since 2007 the Lithuanian funding for TOI programmes has been very steady (five or six projects every year). Furthermore, there are also partnership projects going on in Lithuania. Those projects have built a framework for cooperation between VET and training institutions from countries participating in lifelong learning programmes (Zygmantaite and Zableckiene 2011: 4ff.).

Because mobility in VET is mainly determined by the funds available from the EU, the most popular programmes dealing with mobility in Poland are the Leonardo programme (see Table 2) and the Comenius programme. In Poland, mobility includes mainly students training abroad. Polish border regions are very active in mobility with their corresponding neighbouring countries (especially Germany and Lithuania) (Blachnio 2011: 14).

In the French national report it was stated that in the year 2005, 623 apprentices participated in Leonardo programmes in France. This number has steadily increased up to 1,827 apprentices in the year 2008. And again, the increase in the budget for mobility is one of the reasons for that: the budget was increased from €754,636 in 2005 to €3,025,890 in 2008 (Duquenne, Toutain and Gaucher 2011: 9ff.).

German statistics show that the interest in Leonardo da Vinci mobility programmes has grown so that over 1.6 per cent of all students undertook initial VET in 2008 (Fahrle 2008). This means that around 10,000 students participated in IVET in 2009 (BiBB 2010: 412). Furthermore, the duration of mobility placements has increased on average to over 5.4 months per placement. It is very clear from Table 2 that in Germany, the number of participants within Leonardo programmes is much higher than the number of participants in other programmes.

Overall, the numbers are increasing in almost every country and it is estimated that they will continue to grow in the coming years. These total numbers can give a first impression about the situation and the trends that are going on in the countries. But still no estimation can be made concerning the overall picture. It is important to recognise that those numbers can be very vague because there is still no systematic research on transnational mobility in VET on either a European or a national level. Other aspects that need to be kept in mind when looking at the numbers are their relationship to the size of the countries and the size of their VET system (Brandsma and Bruin-Mosch 2006: 23).

Table 3 provides a more detailed overview by displaying the 'calculated number of participants in IVET transnational mobility as a percentage of all IVET students enrolled (upper secondary level)' (Brandsma and Bruin-Mosch 2006: 23).

**Table 3: Percentage of IVET students participating in transnational mobility**

	% of IVET students participating in transnational mobility
BE	< 0.01
CZ	0.4
DK	1.0
DE	0.4
EE	0.2
EL	< 0,01
ES1	0.2
FR2	0.2
IE3	0.02
IT	< 0.01
CY	4.2
LV	0.5
LT	0.6
LU	0.5
HU	0.8
MT	0.03
NL	0.5
AT	0.3
PL	0.3
PT	0.4
SI	< 0.01
SK	0.2
FI	3.3
SE	0.9
UK	0.4
IS	0.01
LI	0.02
NO	0.5
BG	0.3
RO	0.01
HR	-
TR	0.2
CH	< 0.01

- 1 For Spain the annual average of IVET transnational mobility participants over the period 2000-2005 has been used for the calculation of the proportion.
- 2 For France the estimated number of IVET transnational mobility participants in 2006 has been the basis for the calculation of the proportion.
- 3 Though Ireland hardly has any IVET within the educational system (see also the introduction to this chapter), people can and do apply with FETAC (the national qualification authority) to have their qualifications assessed and accredited. The estimation is that on an annual basis this concerns about 185,000 people. This figure has been used as the basis for the calculation.

Source: Brandsma and Bruin-Mosch 2006: 24

The overall numbers of participants in transnational mobility programmes in VET are increasing in most of the countries. Although not all of the countries have a higher participation rate in Leonardo programmes than in other programmes (which are also often from the European Lifelong Learning Programme), they are also helping to promote the topic of mobility in this field. But still the main goal is to involve 80,000 students in job mobility programmes. With this number in mind and a closer look at Table 3, it is very clear that a lot of work needs to be done to promote transnational mobility in VET. Only three countries (Denmark, Cyprus and Finland) have a percentage over 1 per cent.

Several studies that have compared diverse sectors show that VET students from industry are less represented in VET mobility. In contrast, students from the hotel and restaurant business and from children's education are overrepresented (WSF 2007:16; Wordelmann 2009: 6).

## 2.2 A comparison of national trends

In the following section, the trends in transnational mobility in the different partner countries from the INtheMC project are described.

Since 2005, the German Vocational Training Act (Berufsbildungsgesetz) allows VET students to complete up to one-quarter of their training (up to 9 months) abroad. For mobility placements of over four weeks, the home institution has to agree with the host institution on an educational plan (learning agreement). This plan has to focus on the vocational goals of the specific VET (Möll 2008).

In France, the training and education centres are responsible for transnational mobility. Those mobility activities are covered by a mobility agreement. The French regions are very involved in transnational mobility by encouraging students and apprentices. They have invested in an optional mobility policy in coherence with existing education, training and employment policies. The regions have become the main players when it comes to transnational mobility; all 26 of them have a lot of tools to promote it. They are not only doing it in the field of higher education but also in VET (Duquenne, Toutain and Gaucher 2011: 9ff.).

An Education Exchange Support Foundation (EESF) was launched in Lithuania in 2007. The main responsibility of this national agency was to implement the EU Lifelong Learning Programme in Lithuania. Before the launch of this national agency, from 2000 to 2006 only 65 international projects were funded but in 2007 the number increased significantly (Zygmantaite and Zableckiene 2011: 4ff.)

The Dutch Council for Vocational Training and Adult Education made a statement on the future of transnational mobility in VET in the Netherlands. Three main priorities were identified:

- *Facilitate more and better mobility in VET*
- *Include VET in the discussion about skills development*
- *Evaluate European instruments like EQF and ECVET and implement them on a national level*

(Bastiaannet and Kroese 2011: 9)

These three priorities will be the focus in the Netherlands in the year 2011 (Bastiaannet and Kroese 2011: 9).

The national reports<sup>3</sup> show that awareness about transnational mobility in VET is growing in the different countries. In particular, there is a big focus on mobility in VET. There are different strategies in place for promoting this topic and to put it in a legal framework.

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<sup>3</sup> As mentioned in the preface, the national reports were written within the INtheMC project. They cover the situation in internationalisation and mobility in VET in their own countries. The following countries were involved: Germany, France, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom (Scotland).

### **3 European instruments for promoting internationalisation in VET**

The main target of European policy in education is the development of transparency and comparability within the various European educational systems. One strategy therefore is the promotion of mobility for pupils and students who are studying in the different educational programmes in Europe.

In the following sections, we will look at three main European instruments that have the objective of supporting internationalisation processes within European education.

#### **3.1 Europass Mobility**

The Europass Mobility<sup>4</sup> is an instrument which was developed in conjunction with the Europass Curriculum Vitae. Europass Mobility documents the international mobility of young people for learning purposes (e.g. work placements, voluntary placements, academic term) in a standardised way.<sup>5</sup> Therefore it includes the following sections: name of the mobile person, data of the home and the host institution, description of the Europass Mobility experience, and description of skills and competencies acquired during the Europass Mobility experience. Europass Mobility is available in several European languages and can be obtained from the National Europass Centres.<sup>6</sup>

#### **3.2 European Qualifications Framework (EQF)**

The EQF is a translation device for making national qualifications more readable across Europe in order to support the mobility of working people as well as learning mobility. It supports the lifelong learning process of everybody. The aim of the EQF is to shift the different national qualification systems to a common European reference framework.

The EQF aims to create more transparency between the various European educational programmes. Therefore it divides qualifications into eight levels, whereby the highest – Level 8 – is equivalent to a PhD degree.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/home/vernav/InformationOn/EuropassMobility.csp>

<sup>5</sup> [http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/img/dynamic/c1386/type.FileContent.file/MobExamples\\_en\\_GB.pdf](http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/img/dynamic/c1386/type.FileContent.file/MobExamples_en_GB.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/home/vernav/Information+and++Support/National+Europass+Centres.csp>

Table 4: The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning

		<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Competence</b>
		In the context of EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.	In the context of EQF, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).	In the context of EQF, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.
<b>Level 1</b>	The learning outcomes relevant to <u>Level 1</u> are	Basic general knowledge	Basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	Work of study under direct supervision in a structured context
<b>Level 2</b>	The learning outcomes relevant to <u>Level 2</u> are	Basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study	Basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools	Work of study under supervision with some autonomy

<b>Level 3</b>	The learning outcomes relevant to <u>Level 3</u> are	Knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work of study	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study</li> <li>- adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems</li> </ul>
<b>Level 4</b>	The learning outcomes relevant to <u>Level 4</u> are	Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change</li> <li>- supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work of study activities</li> </ul>
<b>Level 5*</b>	The learning outcomes relevant to <u>Level 5</u> are	Comprehensive, specialized, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work of study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- exercise management and supervision in contexts of work and study activities where there is unpredictable change</li> <li>- review and develop performance of self and others</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Level 6**</b></p>	<p>The learning outcomes relevant to <u>Level 6</u> are</p>	<p>Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles</p>	<p>Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialized field of work or study</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts</li> <li>- take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Level 7***</b></p>	<p>The learning outcomes relevant to <u>Level 7</u> are</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- highly specialized knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research</li> <li>- critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and the interface between different fields</li> </ul>	<p>Specialized problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches</li> <li>- take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams</li> </ul>



<b>Level 8****7</b>	The learning outcomes relevant to <u>Level 8</u> are	Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and the interface between fields	The most advanced and specialized skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice	Demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research
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Source: Directorate-General for Education and Culture (n.y.): 2ff.

<sup>7</sup> \* The descriptor for the higher education short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle), developed by the Joint Quality Initiative as part of Bologna process, corresponds to the learning outcomes for EQF Level 5

\*\* The descriptor for the first cycle in the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area agreed by the ministers responsible for higher education at their meeting in Bergen in May 2005 in the framework of the Bologna process corresponds to the learning outcomes for EQF Level 6.

\*\*\* The descriptor for the second cycle in the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area agreed by the ministers responsible for higher education at their meeting in Bergen in May 2005 in the framework of the Bologna process corresponds to the learning outcomes for EQF Level 7.

\*\*\*\* The descriptor for the third cycle in the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area agreed by the ministers responsible for higher education at their meeting in Bergen in May 2005 in the framework of the Bologna process corresponds to the learning outcomes for EQF Level 8' (Directorate-General for Education and Culture (no date): 3).

In 2008 the EQF was adopted by the European Parliament. The European countries are now encouraged to connect their national qualifications frameworks with the EQF. The target is that by 2012 every new qualification will equate to a certain EQF level. For this reason most countries are developing their own national qualifications framework with close reference to the EQF.

All of the partner countries from the INtheMC project have established committees of experts and stakeholders to develop a national qualifications framework with reference to the EQF. In the year 2010 the first drafts of the national qualifications frameworks were piloted in each of the countries and using the evaluation from this testing period the countries are now working on improvements in order to fully implement the qualifications frameworks in 2012.

The situation of Scotland is different from the other countries. The national qualifications framework of Scotland is called the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Its main purpose is to make the relationships between the different qualifications clearer. The SCQF describes the level and the credit value, which means how much the qualification is worth. The SCQF consists of 12 levels: Level 1 represents the learning outcomes of learners with learning difficulties and Level 12 represents the outcomes in doctoral studies. 'These qualifications provide the foundations of a learning and credit transfer framework that is being embedded throughout Scotland's education and training provision'. Table 5 shows the references from the SCQF to the EQF. This framework was established in 2001 in Scotland. While the other European countries need the time to develop a national qualifications framework, Scotland already had one (McGregor 2011: 9).

Table 5: Transferring the SCQF level to the EQF level

SCQF	EQF	Summary
12	8	SCQF Levels 11 and 12 can be confidently referenced to EQF Levels 7 and 8.
11	7	
10	6	SCQF Level 10 can be confidently referenced to EQF Level 6.
9	6	While SCQF Level 9 is intended to be more demanding than EQF Level 5, it may not reference fully to EQF Level 6 in terms of the language of the descriptors. It is agreed, however, that SCQF Level 9 should be referenced to EQF Level 6.
8	5	SCQF Level 8 can be confidently referenced to EQF Level 5.
7	5	For SCQF Level 7, it is difficult to employ 'best fit' on the basis of an analysis of the descriptors alone. However, it is agreed that SCQF Level 7 should be referenced to EQF Level 5.
6	4	SCQF Levels 3-6 can be confidently referenced to EQF Levels 1-4.
5	3	
4	2	
3	1	
2		SCQF Level 2 can be referenced to EQF Level 1 only in some domains. This partial matching was not typical of other levels. Considering the intention of the SCQF level and the extent to which referencing is not possible, it is agreed that SCQF Level 2 should not be referenced to the EQF.
1		There are no grounds for referencing SCQF Level 1 to the EQF.

Source: McGregor 2011: 10

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) describes the levels of qualifications. Learners are better informed through the NQF about which level of qualification they want to achieve and which way is the best to achieve the desired outcome. The NQF has been steadily improved up to the year 2004 until today and now consists of nine levels. The entry level starts with a certificate in adult literacy and the highest level is on a master or a doctoral level (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority 2006).

### **3.3 European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)**

The target of ECVET is to support mobility through the recognition of VET systems and qualifications throughout Europe. The basis of ECVET is the description of VET in terms of individual units. These units describe the different knowledge, skills and competencies that students acquire within a specified VET programme. These units are formulated as learning outcomes and are the smallest certifiable unit within VET. Each unit is assigned a specific number of credits, which signifies its relationship to the whole qualification. Through ECVET it should be easier to transfer a single unit of VET from one European country to another as well as from one learning pathway to another within a country.

In the preparation stage of a mobility project, the participating institutions sign a memorandum of understanding. In this document, general rules for the recognition of acquired knowledge, skills and competencies should be set out. Furthermore, a learning contract between the student, the host institution and the home institution is formulated before the mobility placement starts. It regulates which knowledge, skills and competencies should be developed by the student during the mobility experience.

The state of the art in the various countries concerning the implementation of ECVET is almost at the same stage as the implementation of the EQF. Countries are currently testing and making improvements.

In France, ECVET covers tertiary qualifications, including VET. In secondary VET, there is no convention for awarding credit points. However, the VET qualification system of the national education ministry in France can be described as a credit system without points. That is because units can be accumulated and there are some mechanisms in place for awarding credits. Furthermore, providers have the right to exempt learners from certain parts of their training pathways (Duquenne, Toutain and Gaucher 2011: 7).

Spain is dealing with a similar situation to France. The decree regulating the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications constitutes the structure of the national qualifications system and the VET system with regard to levels of qualifications. At least it is in line with the conceptual model of ECVET. Initial VET and continuing VET have acted as a credit system without points, focusing on the learning outcomes. Therefore a lot of flexibility has to be implemented in the national qualifications system in Spain (Menica and Megaw 2011: 7).

## 4 Research on target groups

### 4.1 Teachers and trainers

As classic goals for VET mobility, Kristensen (2004) formulates the following: (1) development of personality and occupational orientation; (2) development of intercultural competencies; (3) development of language skills; and (4) development of occupational skills during a longer stay abroad. To reach these goals, a good 'match' between the occupational skills of the student and the apprenticeship training position is necessary. Furthermore, a local mentor should be appointed for the duration of the mobility placement. Besides these conditions, preparation concerning language, culture, psychological and practical aspects is necessary as well as personal and pedagogical follow-up.

In the Dutch report, an interesting aspect was mentioned concerning teacher mobility and its outcomes. Even though the report refers to mobility in the field of higher education, a transition can be made to the mobility of teachers in VET. In the report, it is said that the outcomes and values of teacher mobility are for the individual whereas the whole team can benefit from incoming teacher mobility (Bastiaannet and Kroese 2011: 11). So it is not only important to send teaching personnel abroad but also to invite foreign personnel into one's own institution.

### 4.2 Students and trainees

The Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, BiBB) in Germany carried out two studies in 1998/99 and in 2005/06 which provide information concerning the language needs of German employees. Both studies are representative studies which surveyed German employees. Hall and Schade (2008) show that there is an increasing need for foreign languages. Among all employees the need increased from 10 per cent in 1998/99 to 16 per cent in 2005/06. For employees with VET, it increased from 6 per cent in 1998/99 to 9 per cent in 2005/06. Some 24 per cent of the employees with VET recognise a need for basic English skills, a further 13 per cent identify advanced English skills and 4 per cent see a need to be fluent in business English. The need for English skills is higher in companies with 500 or more employees and it is higher for employees in the service industry and trade sector.

The MoVE-iT-study (Brandsma and Bruin-Mosch 2006: 44) asked several stakeholders in 33 countries concerning mobility in IVET. In all countries (except Poland), participants see a high benefit from international mobility. The participants from Poland stressed that it depends on the particular international mobility placement. The following benefits were mentioned by the participants:

*Examples of benefits for the participants in transnational mobility are:*

- *Improved language competences;*
- *Improved self-confidence;*
- *Personal development;*
- *Enhancing/improving professional skills (in relation to their study);*
- *Get to know how to live and work in a foreign country;*
- *Improvement of practical knowledge;*
- *Improved ability to work autonomously;*
- *Key skills;*
- *Improved opportunities on both the domestic and the international labour market;*
- *International experience.*

(Brandsma and Bruin-Mosch 2006: 46)

A European survey study (WSF 2007) on the effects of Leonardo da Vinci mobility programmes obtained answers from over 8,000 mobile VET students from 28 European countries. The survey was carried out in 2007. The study shows that around 25 per cent of young employees and 75 per cent of VET students participate in the programme. Most of the participants were students in the service sector, and 12 per cent were students in the craft sector. Some 75 per cent of the participants consider the mobility experience to

be an important part of their VET. They are especially interested in improving their social, intercultural and language skills. Around 77 per cent of the students had some preparation before their mobility. Spain (41 per cent), Italy (32 per cent) and Portugal (43 per cent) are the countries with the lowest percentage of preparation. But all in all, only 55 per cent estimated their preparation as very good or good (WSF 2007: 22). The authors propose that it is helpful if some parts of the preparation are done by external providers.

The study shows that the participants are interested in obtaining more information concerning the content of their mobility placement. But all in all, they are very positive about the mobility experience: 87 per cent are (very) satisfied with their mobility placement. They value especially the opportunity to develop language skills (75 per cent), to travel abroad (64 per cent), to gain new experiences (72 per cent), to gain insight into different ways of living (68 per cent) and to have an intercultural exchange (65 per cent). The participants see the necessity to increase the level of contact between the mobile learners and local people (WSF 2007: 37ff.). In a very small case study (which was carried out in Lithuania in connection with writing the national report for the INtheMC project), students, teachers and managers in VET were questioned about their point of view on transnational mobility. It was emphasised that a huge proportion of the students in this study (85 per cent) 'think that international activities and mobility would be useful for their future career. It gives positive results for personal development, cultural awareness, acquiring extra professional skills and competences' (Zygmantaite and Zableckiene 2011: 10).

Effects could be especially seen in the improvement of personal, social and occupational skills: adaptability (73 per cent), interaction skills (72 per cent), knowledge about the host country (71 per cent), ability to deal with challenges (70 per cent), self-confidence (70 per cent) and intercultural competencies (66 per cent). Other studies confirm these results (Kristensen and Wordelmann 2008). Also the new Mobility Study in VET in Germany shows that mobile VET-students see especially benefits in improving personal, social, language and professional competences. Furthermore, they expect to have better chances in further application procedures (Friedrich/Körbel 2011). Effects concerning occupational skills increase with the duration of the mobility. The study proposes a two-phase model: a first mobility placement of three months, which improves personal and social skills; and a later second phase of six to twelve months, which is used for strengthening occupational skills (WSF 2007: 42ff.).

In Germany a study shows that the interest of students in VET differs between branches (Krewerth/Bökmann 2011): students in branches for which the Chambers of Commerce and Industry are responsible have a higher interest than students in craft. But in all branches the study shows that the interest of the students in VET for mobility is higher than it is realized. Based on a Regression-Model the study could only find one personal attribute which has influence on the interest of students in VET for temporary mobility: If they have a migration background students in VET have higher interest in mobility. The study could show that other personal attributes are depending on the branches and organisations in which the students are doing their vocational training.

Concerning the sustainability of mobility, the study shows that 86 per cent of the participants are interested in further mobility or in employability abroad. Around 83 per cent of the participants are interested in improving their language skills (WSF 2007: 65.). The study also shows that mobility mostly takes place in English-speaking countries. They interpret this as a sign that other language skills should be further supported in VET.

Concerning certification, the study refers to the need for the participants to obtain a meaningful letter of reference, which will be recognised within their VET.

But there are some obstacles that students have when encountering transnational mobility. Within the small Lithuanian study mentioned above, the main obstacles were language and, in connection with that, communication problems. There were conditions identified that have to be available before considering going abroad, namely:

- Adequate financing

- Placement arranged by the institution
- Certification of the placement is acknowledged as part of the official work practice (part of the study programme) (Zygmantaite and Zableckiene 2011: 10).

### 4.3 Vocational schools

The MoVE-iT-study (Brandsma and Bruin-Mosch 2006: 44) also questioned VET institutions concerning their benefits from transnational mobility. Nineteen countries see a high benefit, and six countries an intermediate benefit. Poland indicates that it depends on the quality of the specific mobility.

*Examples of benefits mentioned are:*

- *Students that participate will better meet the educational standards;*
- *Chances to exploit foreign know-how and experience;*
- *Greater openness of the school towards the professional environment, including the international labour market;*
- *Exchange of ideas and experiences in different European programmes;*
- *An increase of the personal competences of young people;*
- *Encouragement of personal and professional development;*
- *Improvement of the recruitment for those study areas in which foreign placements are offered;*
- *Adaptation of curricula to the needs of the global labour market;*
- *Internationalisation (school and curriculum);*
- *Increased awareness of the management of the importance of international cooperation;*
- *Enrichment of training programmes;*
- *Improved professional skills of IVET students.*

(Brandsma/Bruin-Mosch 2006: 46)

A Finnish study (Mahlamäki and Susimetsä 2009: 15ff.) identified four different types of internationalisation within VET institutions: (1) 'Educational institutes with home-based internationalisation', which includes international subjects and language studies in the curriculum; (2) 'Educational institutes that have internationalised at the rate of their local working life partners', which means that international subjects and international students (e.g. migrants) form a central part in the curriculum; (3) 'Educational institutes strongly involved in international networking processes', which have broad international networks and work in different international projects; and (4) 'International educational institutes', in which international activities follow international strategies.

### 4.4 VET companies

The MoVE-iT-study (Brandsma and Bruin-Mosch 2006: 45) questioned both employers receiving VET participants and employers hiring employees with international mobility experiences in 33 European countries. The employers from the various countries estimated the benefits very differently. They evaluated the following benefits for receiving institutions:

*Benefits that this group [of] employers might have are:*

- *Use of qualified workforce;*
- *Acquisition of valuable multi-cultural experiences with a potentially further internationalising labour force;*
- *Value added to the daily work;*
- *Get an international touch into the company;*
- *New impulses, ideas and knowledge of markets;*
- *Improved language attainment level of staff;*
- *Increased EU-dimension and international cooperation within the firm;*
- *Possibility of students bringing in new approaches and new (working) methods;*
- *Enhancement of the profile of the employer.*

(Brandsma and Bruin-Mosch 2006: 46)

Benefits for employers who hire employees with international mobility experiences are the following:

- *Potential benefits mentioned for this group of employers concerned:*
- *Bringing in international experience;*
- *Better skilled workers with practical experience;*
- *Better language competencies of staff;*
- *More diverse professional skills;*
- *Being better able to meet the wishes of international customers;*
- *Experienced and competent workers.*

(Brandsma and Bruin-Mosch 2006: 46)

A German study based on 21 expert interviews within five companies of the automotive sector shows the following learning purposes for mobility in VET: besides subject-specific aspects (according to the training regulations and internal topics of the companies), the employers see intercultural competencies and the personal development of the students as the main target (Reglin and Schöpf 2007: 34).

At a conference of the German national agency on the topic 'Learning units of international occupational competency' (Lerneinheiten internationaler Berufskompetenz), several companies were invited to share their experiences concerning in-company mobility programmes. A colleague who organises an additional qualification to develop European competencies for students in handcraft (the dual system) recounts the following experiences (Oehme 2008): vocational schools initially have a lot of doubts; while students are at first very interested in doing this additional qualification, but only around half of them take it up. The vocational companies must be informed very intensively and they welcome the additional qualification after they have had their first positive experience. A colleague from the biggest German train company (Deutsche Bahn) sees the following obstacles (Jaspers 2008): language skills of the candidates, selection of candidates, finding adequate candidates and ensuring quality standards. Further problems include the agreements by the vocational schools and the question of finding adequate partners.

A new study shows, that within the dual system only 7% of German companies are sending their students regularly abroad. The study did also an only-survey which asked students about their mobility. Interestingly 69% of the mobile students within the dual system were employed in companies with a size of maximum 499 employees. Students in SMEs often use mobility offers of vocational schools as well as from chambers.

A case study which analysed the situation in five companies (Heimann 2011) shows that companies have almost no written concept for work placements abroad. Furthermore the study could not find statements, goals or a theoretical argumentation for work placements abroad. The degree of institutionalisation of work placements is very different. The highest degree of institutionalisation shows a program with preparation, wrap-up and guidance during the work placement abroad. All in all the study shows the educational aspects are not considered enough within the programs.

## 5 Best practice and obstacles

### 5.1 General recommendations

The Cologne Institute for Economic Research (Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft Köln) developed, on the basis of a study (Lenske and Werner 2000), a model of international occupational skills. Schöpf (2009) estimates this model to be one of the most cited in the German context. The model was accepted widely by a study which surveyed 7,000 companies in Germany. It identifies the following aspects within additional international qualifications:

- (1) **International basic qualifications:** language skills (reading, writing, speaking, subject-specific terms), international subject-specific knowledge (knowledge about foreign markets, international business rules, international laws, international regulations, international agreements, e.g. General Agreement on Trade in Services)
- (2) **International key qualifications:** intercultural knowledge (knowledge about culture, history, politics, social attitudes), international dispositions (openness, tolerance, flexibility, empathy and adaptability).

In Germany, there exists the concept of an international occupational qualification, which can be described by four dimensions (Borch et al. 2003: 83ff.): (1) international occupational skills, which mean firstly excellent occupational skills as well as knowledge about international aspects of the occupation; (2) language skills, which refer to other relevant languages besides English; (3) intercultural competencies, which refer to adapting to the situation abroad, cultural curiosity and excellent business skills; and (4) networking competency, which refers to the IT competencies concerning the internet as well as to successful working in networks personally and via IT-based ways of communication.

Kristensen (2004: 104ff.) formulated the following four aspects as central to support the learning process during international mobility: (1) A **placement agreement** should include a clear agreement between the two institutions and the student about the nature and the goals of the international mobility. (2) **Preparation** should focus on proper preparation, motivation and selection. The author proposes five aspects: linguistic preparation, cultural preparation, vocational preparation, practical preparation and psychological/mental preparation. (3) For **mentoring, monitoring and tutoring**, Kristensen (2004: 110) formulates the following tasks: 'a) acting as a contact person in the company; b) discussing any problems the trainee may have and putting them into perspective; c) initiating the participant into the community (or communities) of practice at the workplace; d) ensuring integration into work processes; e) mediating the contact with colleagues and ensuring the legitimacy of the trainee; f) helping sort out any problems at the workplace; g) monitoring progress and carrying out evaluation talks at regular intervals. (4) The **follow-up or debriefing phase** should support the reflection about the experiences abroad.

Wordelmann (2009: 19ff.) proposes several instruments to ensure quality in mobility abroad. In the following we will only note the most interesting for the INtheMC project. Concerning the **quality of the input and the structure**, Wordelmann refers to the quality criteria of the Leonardo da Vinci programme. These criteria refer to (1) preparation concerning the language and the culture; (2) clear goals, content and duration of the mobility placement; (3) pedagogical organisation, supervision and mentoring of the participants during the mobility placement; and (4) recognition and certification of the knowledge and skills which were acquired during the mobility placement. Further, he refers to the European quality charter for mobility, which refers to ten principles for mobility.

*These principles are:*

- **information and guidance:** every candidate should have access to clear and reliable sources of information and guidance on mobility and the conditions in which it can be taken up, including details of the Charter itself and the roles of sending and hosting organisations;



- **learning plan:** a plan is drawn up and signed by the sending and hosting organisations and participants before every stay for education or training purposes. It must describe the objectives and expected outcomes, the means of achieving them, and evaluation, and must also take account of reintegration issues;
- **personalisation:** mobility must fit in with personal learning pathways, skills and motivation of participants, and should develop or supplement them;
- **general preparation:** before departure, participants should receive general preparation tailored to their specific needs and covering linguistic, pedagogical, legal, cultural or financial aspects;
- **linguistic aspects:** language skills make for more effective learning, intercultural communication and a better understanding of the host country's culture. Arrangements should therefore include a pre-departure assessment of language skills, the possibility of attending courses in the language of the host country and/or language learning and linguistic support and advice in the host country;
- **logistical support:** this could include providing participants with information and assistance concerning travel arrangements, insurance, the portability of government grants and loans, residence or work permits, social security and any other practical aspects;
- **mentoring:** the hosting organisation should provide mentoring to advise and help participants throughout their stay, also to ensure their integration;
- **recognition:** if periods of study or training abroad are an integral part of a formal study or training programme, the learning plan must mention this, and participants should be provided with assistance regarding recognition and certification. For other types of mobility, and particularly those in the context of non-formal education and training, certification by an appropriate document, such as the Europass, is necessary;
- **reintegration and evaluation:** on returning to their country of origin, participants should receive guidance on how to make use of the competences acquired during their stay and, following a long stay, any necessary help with reintegration. Evaluation of the experience acquired should make it possible to assess whether the aims of the learning plan have been achieved;
- **commitments and responsibilities:** the responsibilities arising from these quality criteria must be agreed and, in particular, confirmed in writing by all sides (sending and hosting organisations and participants).  
(European Parliament 2006)

Concerning the **quality of the process and procedure**, Wordelmann proposes the instruments of supervision, monitoring, formative evaluation and external guidance. To reach **good quality concerning the output and the results**, learning agreements<sup>8</sup> are proposed, which should refer to the following aspects: 'Knowledge, skills and competency to be acquired', 'Detailed programme of the training period', 'Tasks of the trainee', 'Monitoring and mentoring of the participant' and 'Evaluation and validation of the training placement'. To ensure the **quality concerning impact and outcome**, he proposes summative evaluation as well as effect analyses.

The German National Agency (NA beim BiBB 2008: 24ff.) provides a checklist of what organisers of mobility should have to look for (see Table 6).

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<sup>8</sup> [www.na-bibb.de/uploads/lebenslanges\\_lernen/jahrestagung07\\_lemvereinbarung.pdf](http://www.na-bibb.de/uploads/lebenslanges_lernen/jahrestagung07_lemvereinbarung.pdf)

Table 6: Checklist for staying abroad: What has to be done and when

<p><b>First planning period (one year in advance)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ target country is defined</li> <li>○ partners/enterprises abroad are defined</li> <li>○ the time and content framework is defined</li> <li>○ budget is calculated and if possible co-financing is organised</li> <li>○ information concerning application modalities and project types is collected</li> </ul>
<p><b>Second planning period (3–6 months in advance)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the qualification of the participants is noted</li> <li>○ the chamber is informed, for a stay abroad over four weeks the training programme for this period is coordinated</li> <li>○ stays abroad which are longer need to be included in the training contract</li> <li>○ exemption from compulsory training is clarified and the forwarding of learning matters is organised (e.g. via mail by classmates)</li> <li>○ contracts are prepared between foreign partners/enterprises and participants and may be included in the training contract</li> <li>○ partners in the home country are identified in case the project is together with other enterprises or facilities e.g. chambers</li> <li>○ accommodation is organised</li> </ul>
<p><b>Final planning period (3 months – 4 weeks in advance)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ participants attend occupational language training, intercultural as well as international professional competencies are also provided</li> <li>○ immigration and working regulations are defined</li> <li>○ contracts are made between foreign partners/enterprises and participants</li> <li>○ insurance is finalised</li> <li>○ ways of communication are defined</li> </ul>
<p><b>Execution period</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the Europass Mobility for documenting the stay abroad is ordered</li> <li>○ aims and contents of the stay abroad are defined with everybody who is involved</li> <li>○ work plan is defined for the participants</li> <li>○ participants will be professionally supervised during their stay</li> <li>○ there has to be a contact person in the facility abroad</li> </ul>
<p><b>Coming back (up to 6 weeks afterwards)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ project is evaluated with a contact person at home</li> <li>○ stay abroad is evaluated with the participants</li> <li>○ the Europass Mobility is certified</li> <li>○ final report is finished</li> <li>○ budget is done</li> </ul>

Source: NA beim BiBB 2008: 24ff. (translated by authors)

Based on a document analysis from 60 Finnish educational providers, Mahlamäki and Susimetsä (2009: 28ff.) recommend educational providers the following strategies for realising internationalisation:

- **Strategy documents and practical work:** They should include practical goals, supervision structures, resources for practical activities, principles of how the international team works, development meetings, and a schedule for reaching the goals. The editors stressed that international work should not be too personalised.
- **The focus of the strategy documents:** Besides growth, internationalisation strategies should also focus on quality issues and content of activities and consider the strength of the organisation. Where are the risks? How can they be dealt with? Furthermore, the regional situation of the educational provider should be kept in mind when formulating international strategies.
- **More effective home-based internationalisation:** Internationalisation can also be developed by exchange students, immigrants and international activities. Furthermore, international subjects could be included in the curriculum as introductory seminars into different cultures or information about job opportunities in the international market.
- **Equality of students in exchange:** All students should be supported when interested in transnational mobility no matter how much the teachers are interested. When deciding which students can take part in a mobility programme, several criteria should be taken into account. A variety of different activities (e.g. group on-the-job learning) will also help to enhance the equality of the students. Learning and developing needs have to be kept in mind in this decision. And finally the required language skill should relate to the learning field.
- **Improvement of the quality and feedback systems:** The experiences that students have when spending time abroad are very radical in a positive way. This cannot be communicated in a questionnaire or a final report that will only be read by the coordinators.
- **Resources for international activities:** The resources responsible for international activities should be improved by creating an international affairs team consisting of international affairs personnel and teachers'. This includes several levels of the mobility organisation by bringing the work in the classroom together with actual students' exchange.
- **Pedagogical development:** The international education should be supported by everybody who is involved – students, students with a migration background, teachers and coordinators. It has to be a part of their regular studies and needs to be pedagogically planned.
- **Recognition of internationality and internationalisation skills and knowledge:** Providers need to find ways to display and recognise the internationality and internationalisation skills and knowledge gained by students participating in transnational mobility. Therefore they should use the already existing work like the EQF or ECVET.
- **Optimal size of the education provider:** It is not always the case that a large organisation provides benefits in the field of internationalisation.

## 5.2 Obstacles to organising VET mobility

The MoVE-iT-study (Brandsma and Bruin-Mosch 2006: 49ff.) further asked stakeholders in 33 European countries concerning the obstacles to organising VET mobility. Although many differences were mentioned, they identified some common obstacles:

- High scoring obstacles (mentioned 15 times or more as highly/intermediate relevant)*
- *VET institutions meet too much bureaucracy in handling procedures*
  - *VET institutions do not have a strategy or policy on transnational mobility*
  - *Lack of networks for exchange of knowledge and experiences with mobility*
  - *VET institutions lack capacity on managing transnational projects*
  - *Employers do not see the benefits of transnational mobility*

- *IVET participants lack the finances for a placement abroad*
- *Mobility is not a priority of national VET policy*
- *Lack of promotion or support of transnational mobility by branch organisations*
- *IVET participants do not have enough language skills*
- *Lack of interest and stimulation of transnational mobility by social partners*
- *Little emphasis on language learning in IVET*
- *Employers do not know how to handle a transnational placement.*
- *Lack of recognition of qualifications obtained in another country*
- *IVET participants are restricted by obligations at home (jobs, family, friends)*
- *Lack of quality placements.*

*Medium scoring (mentioned 9–14 times as highly/intermediate relevant)*

- *A placement does not fit in the home school curriculum*
- *Lack of information about finding work placements, financing and handling procedures*
- *Lack of cooperation between ministries*
- *IVET participants lack the courage for placements abroad*
- *A general lack of interest among IVET participants*
- *Problems of legal nature (permits, visa, social security rights)*

(Brandsma and Bruin-Mosch 2006: 53)

### **5.3 Best practice examples**

The partners within the INtheMC project were asked to name best practice examples from the field of transnational mobility in VET. They described those examples briefly within the national report that every partner submitted. In the following section those best practice examples from the national reports are presented.

#### **Lithuania**

##### ***Embedding ICT, communication, foreign language and work-related skills into vocational teaching at Marijampole VET centre (Lithuania)***

*This example demonstrates a capacity-building approach for teachers in two vocational areas. Driving instructors (teachers of theory and practical driving) and tailoring teachers at Marijampolė VET centre and other Lithuanian vocational training institutions were encouraged to embed ICT, communication, interpersonal, foreign language and work-related skills into their vocational teaching.*

*The project ‘Fashion – language without words’ (developing professional competencies of tailoring teachers using the experience of Western Europe) was implemented between September 2007 and August 2008. The project ‘Stop the War on the Roads’ was implemented between September 2008 and August 2009.*

*The mobility projects in the VET sector (VETPRO) aimed to use the experience of Western Europe for developing professional competencies of Lithuanian driving instructors/teachers and tailoring teachers. Good practices of foreign colleagues helped Lithuanian teachers to renew their own methods, look at their profession from different angles and inspired them to strengthen the personal responsibility of their students.*

*The ‘Stop the War on the Road’ project, which was designed for driving instructors and driving theory teachers, also aimed to try to solve the very real problem in Lithuania from the ‘inside’, starting with the first level. Responsibility on the roads is the main feature that has to be instilled in future drivers’ minds.*

*During these projects, experience and pedagogical methods, acquired at schools and other institutions of European countries during the visits, were generalised in each partner school of Lithuania. The partners were encouraged to communicate via email and thus use ICT in their everyday life.*

*In addition, vocational teachers want to be more confident in their own life skills and mobility projects help them to develop these skills. As part of these two projects,*

vocational teachers visited professional training institutions in France, Italy, Denmark, Spain, Czech Republic and Norway.

Target groups were vocational teachers of fashion/tailoring and vocational teachers who teach driving. All teachers' qualifications and life skills are very different.

#### **Actual activity**

The tailoring teachers had prepared material on how to embed life skills into vocational teaching, using the knowledge of their visits to Italy, Denmark and France. Now other vocational teachers can use it in training students.

The driving teachers had also prepared material as above, using the knowledge of their visits to Spain, Czech Republic and Norway which can be used by other driving teachers. In order to participate in a VETPRO mobility project, teachers had to undergo selection. The criteria for participants were as follows:

- Initial foreign (mostly English) language skills
- ICT skills
- Motivation and teamwork skills

It appears that at least half of vocational teachers could not communicate in any [other] EU language and they did not even have their own email address, which is a must for a participant in Leonardo da Vinci mobility projects. During the preparation stage, teachers attended English language courses to be able to communicate on a daily basis. They had a course in ICT to be able to use email and internet.

Participation in the project was a direct motivation for them to start these two courses, because in their everyday life, if they can do without ICT and foreign languages, they find it too hard to find time.

#### **Effects**

- The contents of tailoring and driving courses were refreshed with new methods; they were implemented not only in Marijampolė VET centre but also in other Lithuanian schools in which teachers took part in the project.
- The projects developed the initiative and creativity of tailoring and driving instructors/teachers.
- The participants in the project established a network of colleagues for sharing good practices and methods, which helped to strengthen the feeling of citizenship and responsibility of the future drivers/students.
- Vocational teachers learned how to use internet and created their own email addresses; they filled in their final reports on the internet.
- The project also encouraged learning foreign languages, enhanced views, developed intercultural and international competencies.
- Driving and tailoring teachers embed ICT, communication, interpersonal, foreign language and work-related skills into vocational teaching.

(Zygmantaite and Zableckiene 2011: 8ff.)

#### **Netherlands**

Although Landstede uses many different ways to perform mobility, the best practice that we want to share is 'preparing for mobility by undergoing mobility'. In this case we mean completely prepared and guided mobility in a student group.

Students, once looking at mobility, could be split in three groups:

- students that will go on mobility anyway
- students that will never go on mobility
- students that are doubting to go on mobility (never been in an airplane; outside their hometown; away alone; they are afraid of speaking another language;...

We believe that the last category can be influenced. Thus by letting them subscribe for a completely arranged group mobility. This can be a non-granted excursion with a class

(three or four days) or a granted mobility with eight to ten students and a teacher (minimum three weeks).

Results: Students and teacher once returned give an impact on general mobility in your organisation, by giving presentations to classmates, other student groups. The mobility students also conclude that they now have less barriers to go on individual mobility.

A recent example is taking place while this chapter is written: eight ICT students are in Florence for a three-week mobility, guided by a teacher. Everything is arranged for them: the door-to-door travel, hostel, meals and, last but not least, the programme! This consists of lessons at Italian schools, visits to international operating ICT companies, class and a practical assignment in European web design together with UK students and intercultural competencies.

(Bastiaannet and Kroese 2011: 19)

## **Poland**

2nd case study – Polish–Lithuanian Youth Exchange Fund– was established on 1 June 2007, on the strength of the agreement between the Government of The Republic of Poland and the Government of The Republic of Lithuania under the honorary auspices of the Prime Ministers of the respective countries. The Fund supports financially (proposal contents) and content-wise (system of training courses; counseling) the 18 realization of the projects supplied by young people. The organization subsidizes the exchanges, seminars, and training courses. Thanks to the accomplishment of joint projects, young Lithuanians and Poles discover shared origins, overcome national stereotypes, and create the atmosphere of friendly cooperation and strengthening bonds between both nations.

The main goals of Polish–Lithuanian Youth Exchange Fund constitute:

- building mutual international relationships;
- inspiring young people and people working with the young to start joint activities that allow mutual rapprochement;
- discovering common roots;
- eliminating prejudices and stereotypes in perceiving shared history of the two countries as well as in current relations;
- creating organizational and legal frames for effective support of youth exchange.

As a result, the Fund significantly contributes to the mobility of young people and the development of their international competency in the process of dynamic internationalization. The activities of the Fund include training courses, information meetings, and seminars that introduce the participants to the issues connected with non-formal and intercultural education, and learn how to manage a youth project.

The activities of the Fund are financed from the resources that in Poland are administered by the body responsible for the issues connected with education and upbringing, the Ministry of Education, and in Lithuania, by the Ministry of Social Protection and Work. The amount of the resources for the activities of the Fund is defined every year in the agreement between National Managing Institutions and Ministries.

Since 2007, four proposal contests have been organized, within which on Polish side 134 projects have been partially funded. The projects have been carried out for the beneficiaries in four age groups: 13–14; 15–17; 18–25; and 26–30.

Between 2007 and 2010, in the exchange-of-good-practice category, 24 projects were carried out for young people between 15 and 17 years old, and 21 projects for the young between 18 and 25. In the field of internationalization, 22 projects were carried out for people between 15 and 17 years old, and 21 projects for people between 18 and 25. Although the majority of the beneficiaries constitute students from generally-oriented teaching institutions, some of the enterprises have vocational senior high schools as partners.

Detailed information is available in the history files at [www.plf.org.pl/projekty-i-partnerzy](http://www.plf.org.pl/projekty-i-partnerzy) (accessed 18.01.2011).

(Blachnio 2011: 17ff.)

## **Spain**

In the 2009–2010 school year HETEL – Heziketa Teknikoko Elkartea ([www.hetel.org](http://www.hetel.org)) – made it possible for around 200 pupils from its schools in Araba, Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa to participate in work experience programmes with companies of other European countries. This initiative is carried out within the framework of the European mobility programmes: Erasmus (for High Degree vocational training students) and Leonardo (for Middle Degree vocational training students). In the last ten years the number of HETEL students that participate in On-the-Job Training (OJT) programmes in other countries has multiplied by ten and the number of countries has also increased every year.

Last school year, students from HETEL schools went to 12 different countries. HETEL has been participating in these mobility programmes for 12 years. They offer students the opportunity of gaining work experience in companies in other countries for three months with the support of the Basque Government, the Provincial Governments and with the collaboration of CONFEBASK, IKASLAN and BBK. The grants for these programmes contribute to the development of the students' language skills and help adapt their training to the needs of companies in an increasingly globalised market. In addition, they provide an unforgettable experience for the students, who develop additional skills and improve their professional profile and their opportunities of accessing the job market. To date, the job placement figures of these students when they return home has been very high.

Some of these Erasmus interns prolong their stay. Several get a working contract at the company where they have done their internship and stay for a few additional months or even a year. That is, for example, the case of Isabel Gallego, a Laboratory Analysis and Control student at Jesús Obrero, who, after concluding a three-month internship, signed a contract with the company SAL – Scientific Analysis Laboratories in Glasgow, Scotland – to work for a few more months.

(Menica and Megaw 2011: 20)

## **Scotland UK**

The Executive's Fresh Talent Initiative, announced in February 2003, sets out to counter the effects of population decline through greater retention of people and in-migration. In order to attract Fresh Talent to Scotland, James Watt College positively promotes the supportive environment offered by further education to potential international students and their parents.

Given its nature as a further education college, the College often attracts young international students (under 18) to foundation and vocational programmes. The College works in partnership with Inverclyde District Council to provide social and curricular activities for young international students and local school pupils to:

- encourage young international students to get to know their peer group in the local community;
- create positive impressions of Scotland as a welcoming country;
- provide opportunities for young people in the area to have a positive cross-cultural experience; and
- foster an acceptance of new and different cultures and promote cultural awareness in the local community.

This is achieved by:

- a programme of shared experiences for students and school pupils focusing on celebrating significant cultural festivals from Scotland and from the student's country;
- providing shared sporting and social opportunities for students and Inverclyde school pupils;
- sharing cultural experiences with the community through dissemination via the media; and
- encouraging 'buddying' between international students and Inverclyde school pupils who are themselves studying at the College through a school/college partnership.

(McGregor 2011: 22)

For more information go to: [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/10/02110410/7](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/10/02110410/7)

## **Germany**

*The centre for stonemasons at Koenigslutter is an educational institution of the chamber of crafts Braunschweig. Apprentices from different Laender get their training there. Since 2003 the centre has organised an exchange programme for apprentices with Carrara, Italy within a Leonardo da Vinci project (BIBB 2007: 3).*

*The apprentices visit Carrara for 13 weeks. The aim of the project is that employees from small and medium-sized craft enterprises profit from contacts with the European labour market. These contacts are benefiting apprentices, trainers and factory owners as well as the quality of the VET. The resulting synergistic effects increase the value of VET for the stonemasons. Furthermore, knowledge transfer is guaranteed. In Carrara the apprentices are provided with knowledge and skills that cannot be provided in Germany (BIBB 2007: 3).*

*The target groups of the project are apprentices at the end of the second or the third year of their VET. At the beginning of the exchange programme they participate in an intensive language course. Throughout the duration of the programme they receive subject-related language assistance.*

*The exchange programme abroad is verified by Europass and is fully accredited to the VET time (BIBB 2007: 3).*

(Rueffin 2011: 11)

For more information go to: [www.steinmetzzentrum.de](http://www.steinmetzzentrum.de)



## **6 How to improve internationalisation and educational mobility in order to obtain desired outcomes in VET (from Aleksandra Blachnio)**

### **6.1 Understanding mobility**

The matter of mobility has been the focus of our attention for years. Axel Borsch-Supan explained its importance by showing that 'mobility is an important equilibrating factor in a changing economy. Therefore, any factor that induces mobility also alleviates the symptoms of disequilibrium, and any factor that inhibits mobility also impedes economic adjustments' (Borsch-Supan 1987: 1). Within the last decade, our knowledge has broadened considerably. The progressive integration of the European educational system and the increasing awareness of the need for international exchange in training and employment have made internationalisation and mobility a relevant issue and a major concern. This is because recent data on European population prove that youth mobility, in particular, has not achieved a satisfactory level yet. This is likely to be due to differences in economic capacities and levels of education in different regions of Europe. In some countries there are still language barriers and mental obstacles (the lack of self-confidence, misinformation and stereotypes referring to other nationalities and cultures).

### **6.2 The developmental background**

As a child enters puberty and eventually starts moving towards independence from his/her parents, he/she is faced with a new world of opportunities. However, this developmental period is very difficult. Parents often try to control their teenagers and limit as much as possible a youngster's natural desire to make his/her own decisions. This leads to continuous parent-child disputes, demonstrations of disrespect, and rebellion against parental authority. But this is not the only challenge of adolescence. There are numerous physical (rapid physical growth, sexual maturation), emotional and mental (integration of identity) changes experienced by teenagers; these processes can put a whole family into a state of prolonged distress. Observations prove that teenagers often 'encounter academic failure, social isolation, depression and low self-esteem' (Barkley and Robin 2005: 208).

No matter how many developmental challenges a young person is faced with, he/she is supposed to reach a state of mature identity. In the course of accomplishing this, the more diverse experiences he/she has the better. That is why the period of adolescence is particularly important for efforts to increase internationalisation and educational mobility. A teenager can profit from staying abroad on his/her own at a young age; it can have a positive impact on his/her personality. Learning about another culture, experiencing different lifestyles and starting new friendships constitute positive values in a person's individual development. Internationalisation and mobility actions can help teenagers to figure out who they are and who they want to become. Additionally, young people gain confidence about what counts most in life and what they want to do with their lives (further education goals and possible career paths).

### **6.3 Enhancing educational mobility at home**

The parents who take into consideration any mobility action in order to improve their children's educational paths usually focus on one or two issues, but never on the whole problem. That is why a more detailed debate is a valuable experience. It may not be obvious from a parent's point of view, but teenagers can gain a lot from mobility. The following issues are worth mentioning:

1. Achievement – Mobility should be considered as an example of an achievement-related activity that may help a child to receive a better education in comparison to his/her peers; moreover, a mobility experience increases a youngster's chance of being employed and succeeding at work in the future.
2. Interpersonal relationships – A mobility experience can help an adolescent to become more mature in social relationships, especially to learn how to be more self-directed and less dependent on the others (he/she learns to solve problems

independently and not to do what other people tell him/her to do); being abroad also gives an enriching opportunity to learn how to ask for help.

3. Independence and/or maturity – Being abroad and on his/her own is an experience that makes a young person more mature, more responsible and more grown-up; it also boosts self-organisation, increases self-discipline and enables concentration on fulfilling tasks and using problem-solving strategies.
4. Self-awareness – A mobility experience can change the teenagers' attitude towards themselves and the world. They may become more serious persons and, what is perhaps even more important, they may become more open-minded and full of more positive thoughts. Moreover, trying new things abroad may help them develop a more prospective attitude and learn how to be a good people. They become more aware of the consequences of stereotypes and personal attitudes/actions. As a result, it may help them develop new strategies of learning and functioning: strategies that involve greater consciousness and self-control.

In spite of how maturing a mobility experience can be, some parents may still remain sceptical about it. In order to help them understand the nature of the phenomenon better, some of its further advantages are worth mentioning. The most meaningful are:

1. Material issues – The experience of moving to a different style of life gives teenagers a chance to appreciate their everyday material possessions and living situation. What is more, because mobility costs, it encourages young people to talk with their parents about moving, teaches them to negotiate, and convinces them to work to save their own money.
2. Flexibility and improved adaptation to the world and its challenges – Educational mobility is also an important life lesson when teenagers take responsibility for themselves and learn about real costs of adaptation while learning/living abroad. This is an enriching experience that is invaluable for their future career development. Nevertheless, teenagers need to prepare to deal with all potential difficulties and unpredictable situations as well. Parents should be aware of these, but they should not exaggerate these negative aspects. Despite all difficulties, these new situations are supervised by teachers and cooperative schools, so there are always professionals ready to help the teenagers staying abroad, hence a mobility experience is a safe maturation lesson.

Parents learning about educational mobility – its advantages and disadvantages – should strive for balance. It means taking into consideration both positive and negative aspects of a mobility action. They should not be afraid of talking about their concerns, but then they should open their minds to explanations and as a result create a more coherent image of the problem. If the presented arguments are still not satisfactory, it is strongly suggested to seek out the pupils in a community who used to be a part of a mobile experience (and are most informed and familiar with all the pros and cons of mobility) to see if they can be of any help in order to cut through myths and misinformation about mobility.

#### **6.4 The school context of mobility**

Numerous reports on the subject prove that teachers have already gained vast knowledge on mobility and 'globalisation skills'. These issues are among the most recent matters and are consistent with the current educational policy of the EU. The data gathered from interviews with Polish teachers<sup>9</sup> prove that the advantages of mobility and internationalisation in the teaching/learning process are well-recognised; these are the most common advantages of international mobility of VET students underlined by teachers:

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<sup>9</sup> The above-mentioned information was gathered by the group of students (Maria Treder, Karol Piasecki, Jakub Kaluba, Aleksandra Szalkowska, Mateusz Zan, Piotr Garbowski and Aleksandra Łączna) and the author for the Polish national report (Blachnio 2011) for the INtheMC project (2010-1-NL1-LEO05-02659).

- improvement in communication skills and mastering the technical/professional language;
- broadening intercultural knowledge – students learn about similarities and differences between respective countries and exchange opinions and experiences with their foreign peers;
- gaining new educational experience abroad;
- stimulating students for taking up interdependent initiatives;
- active and creative methods of spending one's spare time in connection with working on a given project;
- improving professional skills;
- participating in practical training of different/better quality;
- stimulating the need to act for the environment and taking the attitude of responsibility for current and future condition of the natural environment;
- presenting global problems connected with functioning of the world economy;
- creating the attitude of openness and tolerance;
- destroying prejudices and stereotypes;
- obtaining the ability to communicate and cooperate with other people, achieving compromise;
- international exchange of experiences;
- preparing young people for active participation in the social life of the European community (Błachnio 2011).

In contrast to these relatively popular views, official reports as well as everyday observations show that mobility actions are still more frequently praised than actually employed. Very few students take an active part in mobility programmes. Even fewer teachers are involved in regular mobility activities. This phenomenon can be explained at least by some of the determinants mentioned below:

1. Economic and administrative limitations – These are rather common problems, but because the core of this chapter is of a different nature they will not be discussed here in detail.
2. Students' passive attitude and even lack of interest – Although pedagogy prefers the subjective standards of student–teacher cooperation, school practice shows that they are rather rarely accomplished. Typical management and the common teaching/learning process still engage more teachers than pupils themselves. Educational choices, responsibility and evaluation are teachers' own contributions to students' educational path. Understandably, many young people adopt passive and reactive attitudes towards school and learning. They do not seek any extra duties and do not reveal any personal initiative. In turn, the lack of students' involvement deprives teachers of motivation to do any extra work.
3. Parents' misinformation about mobility and internationalisation – Adults are usually convinced about their children's skills and they expect teachers and school to prepare their offspring for future employment and guarantee them professional success. At the same time, not all of them are willing to make any extra contribution to their children's educational development. Educational mobility, especially, is still stereotypically perceived as too expensive and unnecessary. This attitude is still difficult to change, and not many teachers have developed a proper methodology to succeed in overcoming parental prejudices.
4. Lack of transfer of experiences among teachers/students who have been involved and who have succeeded in mobility activities – Even if there are many teachers who have been successfully involved in mobility programmes, and numerous experienced students, the access to their 'best practices' is usually very limited. This has a negative impact both on the experienced and

inexperienced teachers. The first group feels unappreciated; instead of becoming reliable guides for the others they are left on their own as long as they manage to act in isolation. The second group lacks the encouragement to start mobility projects. Moreover, limited transfer of knowledge and experience diminishes the possibility of the enhancement of the existing practices.

### **6.5 The psychological determinants of mobility**

Psychological definition of mobility is difficult to provide; the words of Stuart C. Carr seem to explain its complexity and relatedness in the most unambiguous way: 'It is also about human hopes and dreams, terrors and torments. Global mobility covers a full range of the human condition, from its most courageous and admirable to its most deprived and depraved. Global mobility is not just "about" human behaviour, it is human behaviour – warts and all' (Carr 2010: 2).

In general, the likelihood of mobility depends on an array of pull and push factors that encourage or discourage an individual to experience it. One of the commonly discussed aspects of mobility is the fact that it evolves the need for achievement. The first research was conducted by David McClelland (1961; see Carr 2010); it proved the significance of links between air kilometres travelled per capita and the need for achievement. Comprehensive studies prove positive correlation between these two categories that is further strengthened by the situation in the labour market. The observations prove that 'in a society where more and more people acquire higher levels of educational attainment (and education becomes a less discriminating factor), employers are likely to consider a wider range of criteria than just educational credentials when recruiting people for jobs' (Iannelli 2011: 252). Among those credentials, mobility experience and globalisation skills are recognised as highly useful and appreciated.

Curiosity and openness are also important because young people can be mobile simply in order to see the world. At a young age people usually are not strongly attracted to their place of residence. On the contrary, they look for a new and different environment and they are keen to try something fresh. Irrespective of how flexible and ready to experience something previously unknown they are, all young people ought to learn how to adapt to cultural differences, especially how to adjust to the local norms and practices.

Teenagers who are future-oriented may also be more willing to take part in mobility activities. This is because they are cognitively capable of foreseeing positive consequences of mobility for their future professional careers. This is especially important for people who live in a region with higher unemployment rates (see Machin, Pelkonen and Salvanes 2008).

Confidence and perceived safety are major determinants of levels of personal mobility and independence. The less self-confident a person is, and the lower the level of his/her perceived safety is, the more their reluctance to take any mobility actions becomes visible. Among individual constraints of mobility, an inadequate level of control over daily needs often associated with poor mobility takes rather a high position. Moreover, people with higher uncertainty avoidance are also less interested in new experiences.

The technical skills are not meaningless either. The role of new technologies in improving the levels of mobility and independence among pupils is likely to become increasingly important. The internet is not only a great source of information but also a considerable platform for the exchange of experiences and emotional and social support.

### **6.6 The desired outcomes of mobility and internationalisation**

In general, positive outcomes of mobility that can be indicated and discussed are highly individualised. Since a typical research project usually focuses on 'cold' statistics, there is not much written on individual experiences resulting from mobility. To make a justified generalisation it can be presumed that the most common advantages of educational mobility for students are:

- flexibility;
- self-reliance and improved adaptation to a multicultural environment;

- adequate intercultural insight;
- training in intercultural dialogue;
- development of individualised strategies to fight against stereotypes and prejudices;
- loss of in-groups and out-groups categorisations.

## 7 Conclusions and proposals for an international approach

Participation rates in transnational mobility in VET are still very low across Europe but they are increasing steadily. To keep them climbing, it is necessary to increase the links between the topic of mobility and educational policies and enterprises. For this reason the European educational policy is providing instruments to simplify this process. These instruments need to be promoted more; this could be a good guide for the countries. In this respect a lot of work has already been done but the implementation of these instruments still needs to be done.

To support the whole process of implementing transnational mobility across Europe, a better framework for monitoring should be developed. When it comes to monitoring mobility there has to be a tool which goes beyond counting numbers. As one can see in this report, several aspects have to be kept in mind. Therefore a monitoring system for mobility needs to be developed with everybody involved, such as students, teachers and managers. This will lead to a better comparability between the different European countries. The outcomes of this comparison can help to detect obstacles, but also to identify good examples from practice. All of this is an important contribution for a better and more effective way of promoting the benefits of transnational mobility not only in VET. Once the universal benefits of mobility are clear, the activity among stakeholders will rise. Therefore employers especially need to be aware of the values of mobility. Cooperation between the education sector and employers is absolutely necessary in this case (Brandsma and Bruin-Mosch 2006: 68ff.).

When participating in mobility, new skills need to be gained (see section 4.2 'Students and trainees'). Those cannot be taught with traditional learning methods, therefore a new didactical method concentrating on these skills should be developed (Kristensen 2004: 114).

The most important mental and behavioural patterns, once established, are difficult to change after young people graduate from secondary schools. If we take into consideration the fact that it is increasingly common for people from various backgrounds to work abroad for a shorter or longer period of time, we come to the conclusion that both educational mobility and internationalisation should remain key targets for VET. To make matters more meaningful, the increased need for young people to be involved in mobility activities and intercultural experiences can be summarised with Richard A. Voorhees' words: 'The pathways to learning no longer lead automatically to traditional institutions of higher education. Instead they lead most directly to learning opportunities in which competencies are defined explicitly and delivery options are multiple' (2001: 5), hence curricula should be developed in a mode that would allow young generations to prepare for openness towards mobility activities and intercultural dialogue. These expectations seem to be essential conditions for individual and social success in fulfilling one's potential as well as supporting the cultural-economic progress and integration taking place in the modern world.

The main obstacles people encounter when deciding whether to participate in mobility or not are difficulties with foreign languages as well as financial problems. For this reason language courses should be improved. As most VET students are interested in mobility in an English-speaking country, it is advisable to implement further language courses such as English or other languages in the students' curricula (WSF 2007: 85). Concerning the financial problems, detailed information about the different possibilities of funding need to be promoted within the educational sector, especially the VET sector.

When planning some professional time abroad, several aspects need to be kept in mind (see section 5.1). First of all, one should have access to information and guidance, which means under what conditions mobility is taking place. Furthermore, the time in mobility should be integrated into a personal learning plan where possible learning outcomes should be mentioned and the possibility of reintegrating them into the whole learning pathway. For this reason it is also important to think beforehand about the recognition and approval of the skills and abilities that will be gained while abroad. But also a general preparation is necessary dealing with language, cultural and financial aspects. Linguistic aspects are very important when it comes to mobility: before going abroad, language

skills should be assessed and, if necessary, preparatory courses should be attended. There are a lot of logistical matters that need to be addressed, such as insurances, visas or work permits, etc. The hosting organisation should provide a contact person: someone to get in touch with when planning the stay (European Parliament 2006).

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## Abbreviations

BiBB	Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (The Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, Germany)
ECVET	European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training
EESF	Education Exchange Support Foundation (Lithuania)
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
EU	European Union
HETEL	Heziketa Teknikoko Elkarte (association of private VET centres in the Basque Country)
ICT	information and communication technology
INtheMC	Internationalisation and Mobility in the students Curricula
IVET	initial vocational education and training
SAL	Scientific Analysis Laboratories (Scotland)
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
TOI	Transfer of Innovation
VET	vocational education and training



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