

Statement for the mobility of VET students

We, as part takers of the *European Initiative for the mobility of apprentices*, organised in the European Parliament on 30 November 2022, are committed to ensure young people in Vocational Education and Training are provided with the right facilities to enrich their knowledge through a mobility experience in the European Union or in an Erasmus+ partner country.

The trends of the internationalisation of vocational pathways is well underway and it is of broad consensus that mobility experiences under the Erasmus+ programme considerably develop the competences of young people, as well as their soft skills, enhances their employability and reinforces the attractiveness of VET. It provides the Union with an undeniable advantage in terms of competitiveness by adapting skills to the job market and by accelerating the transformation of the economy in the face of ecological and digital transitions.

However, we note with regret that students in higher education commonly practice long-term mobility while vocational education and training students are still confined to stays of less than a month, when they even have mobility opportunities. At the verge of the European Year of Skills, the time has come to lift the well-identified barriers at the root of this injustice.

We therefore intend to develop our best efforts across the Union to initiate the following actions for the benefit of young people, employers and vocational education actors:

- Stand behind the European Parliament's call for a European VET Area, such as requested in the European Education Area Report, to achieve the full recognition of vocational education and training diplomas and periods of mobility across the Union;
- Support VET institutions whose educational projects allow their apprentices to spend a few weeks to several months in another Member State, short-term mobility being a springboard for the democratisation of long-term mobility;
- Identify foreign VET institutions across the Union involved in the promotion and development of long-term mobility for apprentices and who share the common objective of concluding partnerships;
- Promote the benefits of recruiting 'mobility referents' in VET institutions for laying partnerships with peer organisations and other stakeholders of the sector, for the further development of a European mobility network for VET students;
- Encourage Member States to promote the mobility of VET students among companies as a factor of competitiveness and to aim for more synergies between the different European statuses for apprentices;
- Work with employers to develop mentoring for apprentices during a period of reciprocal mobility, both for the benefit of those that are abroad for several months and those that are welcomed in return;
- Encourage innovative digital support, developing digital, linguistic, pedagogical and self-assessment tools, and seek for the better definition of graduation procedures facilitating the recognition of skills acquired during a period of mobility;
- Insists on the need to develop in 2023, Year of Skills, a European framework for soft skills, recognised by employers and educational institutions across the Union, and that could take the form of a diploma, based on micro certifications;

Our goal is social and political: enable all our youth to recognise themselves in a Europe that is concretely taking care of their future. One that establishes a European status for apprentices and a network of vocational education and training operators across EU Member States.

In this spirit, we support the creation of a Platform to connect VET institutions, VET students and businesses for the mobility of apprentices and encourage Euro App Mobility in the endeavour of their project to have one operational early 2023.

With the support of public authorities, both at European level and in our home countries, we are determined to trigger an irreversible movement to valorise vocational skills and deploy soft skills across Europe.

Signatories: