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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Council Recommendation 'Europe on the Move' – learning mobility opportunities for everyone

Delegations will find attached the abovementioned Recommendation, adopted by the Council (Education, Youth, Culture and Sport) at its meeting on 13 May 2024.

Council Recommendation**‘Europe on the Move’ – learning mobility opportunities for everyone
(Text with EEA relevance)**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Articles 165 and 166 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

1. In the Rome Declaration of 25 March 2017, EU leaders pledged to work towards a Union where young people receive the best education and training and can study and find jobs across the continent.
2. Learning mobility has proven to be highly valuable for learners in gaining the competences¹ needed for personal, educational and professional development. Cross-border learning experiences increase intercultural understanding and help foster a common European identity. Organising learning mobility, both incoming and outgoing, is also a strong driver for education and training institutions and non-formal and informal learning providers to improve the quality of learning on offer.

¹ In line with the Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning (OJ C 189, 4.6.2018, p. 1), competences are defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

3. Learning mobility is important to help address skills shortages in the EU, in particular shortages of those skills necessary for the green and digital transitions and for the transition of learners to the labour market. Work-based learning, including periods spent in another country, benefits skills acquisition and employability.
4. Providing learning mobility opportunities for everyone is essential for achieving the European Education Area and reaching the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027. The Commission Communication of 30 September 2020 on achieving the European Education Area by 2025² announced an update of the learning mobility framework³ and the development of a policy framework for the learning mobility of teachers, to enable more learners and teachers to benefit from mobility. This Recommendation updates the Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 — ‘Youth on the move’ — promoting the learning mobility of young people to strengthen its provisions, expand learning mobility opportunities – from young people to learners of any age, educators and staff – and address new learning patterns, including blended learning.
5. One of the strategic priorities of the Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030)⁴ was to make lifelong learning and mobility a reality for all. The Council Resolution on The European Education Area: Looking to 2025 and beyond⁵ emphasised that identifying and removing the remaining obstacles to learning and teaching mobility while encouraging inclusive, sustainable and balanced mobility is key to the full achievement of the European Education Area.

² COM(2020) 625 final.

³ As set out in the Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 — ‘Youth on the move’ — promoting the learning mobility of young people, OJ C 199, 7.7.2011, p. 1.

⁴ OJ C 66, 26.2.2021, p. 1.

⁵ OJ C 185, 26.5.2023, p. 35.

6. Data collected by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) reveal that countries need to step up their efforts to improve their performance in terms of providing comprehensive support for the mobility of vocational education and training (VET) learners, in particular apprentices. Analysis of the national implementation plans⁶ for the Council Recommendation of 24 November 2020 on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience⁷ shows that only about half of all Member States prioritised measures to enhance mobility in VET.
7. Analysis⁸ of the implementation of the Council Recommendation of 15 March 2018 on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships⁹, as well as Cedefop evidence¹⁰, suggests that apprentice mobility is still underdeveloped and more needs to be done to enable apprentices to participate in mobility exchanges.
8. The Council conclusions on enhancing teachers' and trainers' mobility, in particular European mobility, during their initial and in-service education and training¹¹ called for the promotion and expansion of mobility so that it becomes a common feature of teachers' and trainers' training and career.

⁶ Cedefop, *Working together towards attractive, inclusive, innovative, agile and flexible VET*, Cedefop briefing note, 2023.

⁷ OJ C 417, 2.12.2020, p. 1.

⁸ Putting into practice the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships – implementation of the Council Recommendation by Member States, SWD(2021) 230 final.

⁹ OJ C 153, 2.5.2018, p. 1.

¹⁰ Cedefop, *Enablers and disablers of cross-border long-term apprentice mobility: evidence from country- and project-level investigations*, Cedefop reference series no 120, Publications Office, Luxembourg, 2021.

¹¹ OJ C 167, 21.4.2022, p. 2.

9. Analysis of the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy¹² shows that greater efforts are needed to ensure that all young people and youth workers are able to access mobility opportunities effectively, including volunteering in the civil society sector. Further work is also needed on effective systems for the validation of competences gained through non-formal and informal learning mobility, in synergy with the Council Recommendation of 5 April 2022 on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union¹³.
10. A lack of foreign language competences remains an obstacle to embarking on learning mobility experiences, studying and working abroad, and fully discovering Europe's cultural diversity. At the same time, enhancing foreign language teaching and learning, as well as offering courses taught in a foreign language, may encourage learners from other countries to engage in learning mobility. In this respect, it is important to take advantage of digital technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI).

¹² Commission staff working document accompanying the Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2021), SWD(2021) 286 final.

¹³ OJ C 157, 11.4.2022, p. 1.

11. The Council conclusions on further steps to make automatic mutual recognition in education and training a reality¹⁴, which were based on the report on the implementation of the Council Recommendation on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education and training qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad¹⁵, stated that the lack of automatic mutual recognition of qualifications and of the outcomes of learning periods abroad¹⁶ continues to hamper learning mobility in the EU. In the field of higher education, national authorities have made considerable improvements in terms of their understanding of the concept of automatic mutual recognition. However, the absence of consistent national approaches, as well as a lack of transparency, are significant factors that deter students from participating in mobility activities.
12. Promoting learning mobility with third countries can make European education and training systems more attractive to the rest of the world and attract talent to their education and training institutions. International cooperation on education and training, including learning mobility, is essential for achieving the EU's geopolitical priorities, in particular the Global Gateway, and for delivering the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.
13. Promoting access to learning mobility for people with fewer opportunities is particularly important, and this objective of inclusion is at the core of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes. It is crucial to reinforce this objective within these programmes and extend it, where possible, to other learning mobility schemes throughout the EU.

¹⁴ OJ C 185, 26.5.2023, p. 44.

¹⁵ COM(2023) 91 final.

¹⁶ The definitions of 'automatic mutual recognition of a qualification' and 'automatic mutual recognition of the outcomes of a learning period abroad', both at higher education level and at upper secondary education and training level, are set out in the annex to the Council Recommendation of 26 November 2018 on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education and training qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad (OJ C 444, 10.12.2018, p. 1) and are fully applicable to this Recommendation.

14. The European Universities initiative has a target of 50 % mobility among participating institutions, while European criteria for the award of a joint European degree label are currently being tested and could also encourage mobility to be embedded in curricula. The increased Erasmus+ budget for 2021-2027 underpins the EU's objective of encouraging more students to participate in learning mobility at least once during their studies, with a wider variety of mobility formats, including blended intensive programmes and short-term blended mobility. It is therefore important to increase the 20 % learning mobility target which was originally established in the context of the Bologna Process in 2009. The tools that have been developed since then, together with the measures proposed by this Recommendation, create the necessary framework conditions for at least 23 % of higher education graduates to participate in learning mobility.
15. Learning patterns have evolved in the last decade, including as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, boosting virtual and blended learning. The expansion of learning mobility opportunities to learners, educators and staff in all sectors of education and training, as well as youth and sport sectors in formal, non-formal and informal settings, has also prompted the development of flexible learning mobility formats.
16. Balanced mobility for researchers, in particular early career researchers, should be further supported to increase their personal and professional development to the benefit of the competitiveness of Europe's research and innovation system.

17. This Recommendation aims to contribute to the achievement of the European Education Area by 2025. The vision for quality in education and training includes promoting the dual freedom for learners, educators and staff, in particular people with fewer opportunities, to be mobile, and for institutions to freely associate with one another in Europe and beyond. Inclusive and equitable education and training systems should support cohesive societies, lay the foundations for active citizenship and improve employability. This Recommendation invites the Member States to set enabling conditions for learning mobility, and remove obstacles and provide incentives that are tailored to the specific needs of learners, educators and staff in different sectors.
18. This Recommendation also aims to facilitate greater cooperation with key third countries as envisaged in the Talent Partnerships initiative, promoting the EU as an attractive destination for talented people from third countries to learn, train and study.

19. This Recommendation recalls the existing synergies and complementarities between the EU programmes that address learning mobility, such as Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, and other funding instruments at EU, international, national and regional level, such as the EU's Cohesion Policy funds, in particular the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund Plus, with its Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve (ALMA) initiative.
20. This Recommendation also aims to boost learning mobility for teachers and apprentices through dedicated policy frameworks, as detailed in the Annexes. Schools are facing teacher shortages, and learning mobility should increase the attractiveness of the profession. Teachers who have experienced mobility may become role models for learners and can help to promote transnational and international cooperation. The Council conclusions on enhancing teachers' and trainers' mobility, in particular European mobility, during their initial and in-service education and training stress the positive impact of learning mobility abroad on the professional development of teachers, as well as on education and training systems, while identifying obstacles to mobility. Apprentices also face a set of specific barriers related to the special features of work-based learning. Their mobility should help to address skills gaps, support the green and digital transitions and increase employability, in particular among young people.

RECOGNISES THAT:

21. For the purposes of this Recommendation, the concept of ‘learning mobility’ as defined in Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing Erasmus+: the Union Programme for education and training, youth and sport and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013¹⁷, namely moving physically to a country other than the learner’s country of residence, in order to undertake study, training or non-formal or informal learning, is used as a starting point. ‘Learning mobility’ within the meaning of this Recommendation covers all types of long-term and short-term learning mobility, including individual and group mobility, blended mobility (including its virtual components), credit mobility and degree mobility. It covers learners, educators and staff in all sectors of lifelong learning, including early childhood education and care, school education, higher education, VET, adult learning as well as young people¹⁸, youth workers and staff in sport¹⁹, within as well as outside of the scope of the Erasmus+ programme. This Recommendation covers both intra-EU and international learning mobility from the EU.

¹⁷ OJ L 189, 28.5.2021, p. 1.

¹⁸ Using as a starting point the variety of youth mobility opportunities offered by Erasmus+ youth and the European Solidarity Corps, learning mobility of the youth sector refers to the learning mobility of young people, youth workers and volunteers in non-formal and informal learning contexts. For the purposes of this Recommendation, learning mobility in the youth sector also includes other national mobility programmes.

¹⁹ Under key action 1 of the Erasmus+ sport actions, learning mobility in the sector of sport is defined as the mobility of the staff of sport organisations, primarily in grassroots sports, who are provided with the opportunity to improve their competences and qualifications and acquire new skills by spending a period of time abroad, thus contributing to the capacity-building and development of sport organisations. This action supports the professional development of coaches and other staff (both paid staff and volunteers) in grassroots sport. For the purposes of this Recommendation, learning mobility in the sport sector also includes other national mobility programmes.

22. The mobility of learners, educators and staff, which has been reinforced since the launch of the European Education Area, has a positive impact on education and training. However, degree mobility in higher education, as well as mobility in VET, can pose challenges for some education and training systems which receive substantial inflows of learners or apprentices, or for those countries threatened by ‘brain drain’, which results in many talented people choosing to study or start an apprenticeship abroad and then remaining there.
23. For the learning mobility target²⁰ in higher education, the mobility actions covered include: outgoing degree mobility; outgoing credit mobility of a minimum of three months or 15 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits (including both traineeships and study mobility); and shorter outgoing mobility consisting of less than three months and at least three ECTS credits. These mobility actions can be either fully physical or blended, i.e. consisting of both a virtual and physical component. The target is calculated at graduate level for graduates participating in learning mobility at least once during their studies. In light of the abovementioned elements, this Recommendation invites the Commission to put forward by 2026 a proposal for an updated methodology to measure the share of graduates with a learning mobility experience abroad in higher education.

²⁰ The indicator will be based on mobility data sourced from the UNESCO-OECD-Eurostat (UOE) administrative data collection.

24. To respond to the calls²¹ for a more ambitious target than the current 8 % target for learning mobility abroad for VET students, this Recommendation proposes increasing the participation target for VET learners, including apprentices, to at least 12 % by 2030. The target for VET²² builds on the indicator defined in the Council Recommendation of 24 November 2020 on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience. It is measured as the share of mobile learners in a calendar year, as a proportion of a cohort of VET graduates in the same year. It includes participants in flexible mobility opportunities, such as under Erasmus+ (for example short-term mobility, group mobility, blended mobility, mobility linked to participation in skills competitions), or other mobility programmes.

²¹ Including the European Parliament resolution of 17 December 2020 on the Council Recommendation on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (2020/2767(RSP)).

²² The indicator will be based on mobility data sourced from Erasmus+ data and VET graduate data sourced from the UOE data collection. Where available and only if the data provided is comparable to Erasmus+ data, data from national authorities' mobility programmes, including on the duration of mobility, could also be used to complement the data from Erasmus+. Where data from national authorities is included, this should be indicated in a transparent manner.

25. The Council reaffirms its strong commitment to inclusive learning mobility and states its political ambition to set a target in this respect. In order to be in a position to do so, a methodology is needed to measure the share of people with fewer opportunities among all learners benefiting from learning mobility abroad. The Council therefore reiterates its call to the Commission to conduct work on proposals, based on and with the expert opinion of the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks, for possible indicators or EU-level targets in the areas of inclusion and equity²³. To underscore the Council's commitment, Member States are recommended to aspire to collectively reach a share of at least 20 % of people with fewer opportunities among all learners benefiting from learning mobility abroad by 2027. To estimate this, the data currently available under the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes could be used. These data by no means cover all types of learning mobility abroad, but could be used as the closest proxy currently available. Additionally, this Recommendation invites the Commission to put forward by 2026 a proposal for a methodology for data collection to measure the share of people with fewer opportunities among all learners benefiting from learning mobility abroad in education, training and youth and sport sectors, duly taking into account possible sensitivities concerning such data and without imposing additional administrative burdens on Member States. On the basis of this proposal, the Council may agree on a EU-level target to be reached by 2030.
26. This Recommendation does not pre-empt future negotiations on Union funding instruments under the next Multiannual Financial Framework.

²³ Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030) (OJ C 66, 26.2.2021, p. 1).

27. In view of Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and in line with the Communication from the Commission of 3 May 2022 entitled ‘Putting people first, securing sustainable and inclusive growth, unlocking the potential of the EU’s outermost regions’²⁴, the Recommendation should take into account the specific situation of the outermost regions referred to in that Article, with a view to promoting learning mobility to and from these regions.
28. For the purposes of this Recommendation and in line with the implementation guidelines for the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy²⁵, barriers to learning mobility include disabilities, health problems, barriers linked to education and training systems, cultural differences, social barriers (including socio-psychological and family-related barriers), economic barriers, barriers linked to discrimination and geographical barriers.

²⁴ COM(2022) 198 final.

²⁵ Implementation guidelines – Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy.

HAS ADOPTED THIS RECOMMENDATION AND RECOMMENDS THAT MEMBER STATES

In accordance with the characteristics of national school education, VET, higher education and adult education systems, and youth and sport sectors, and with due regard for the academic freedom of higher education institutions and the autonomy of education and training institutions:

1. Promote the seamless movement of all learners, educators and staff within the European Education Area with a view to supporting the development of key competences, in particular the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are essential for the green and digital transitions, building trust and understanding between education and training systems and youth and sport sectors, and promoting active citizenship.
2. Work towards learning mobility schemes that are inclusive, environmentally sustainable, benefit from the use of digital technologies and promote common EU values²⁶.

²⁶ As expressed in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

3. Enhance efforts towards making mobility a reality for all and strive to achieve EU-level targets by 2030 through the following:
- a) in higher education, the share of graduates with a learning mobility experience abroad should be at least 23 %;
 - b) in VET, the share of vocational learners benefiting from a learning mobility experience abroad should be at least 12 %.

The abovementioned targets represent a reference level of overall EU performance and are to be calculated at EU level. Member States are invited to individually contribute to achieving those targets taking into account their different starting points and respecting national differences.

The abovementioned EU-level targets could be reviewed by the Council as appropriate in light of:

- a Commission proposal on an updated methodology for data collection for higher education;
- the upcoming review of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training.

4. Commit to an inclusive approach to learning mobility in all education and training and youth and sport sectors by making learning mobility opportunities more accessible to people with fewer opportunities²⁷ through the following:
- a) aspiring to collectively reach a share of at least 20 % for people with fewer opportunities among all learners benefiting from learning mobility abroad²⁸ by 2027;
 - b) considering agreeing on an EU-level target to be reached by 2030 on the basis of a proposal put forward by the Commission by 2026 for a methodology for data collection to measure the share of people with fewer opportunities among all learners benefiting from learning mobility abroad in education and training and youth and sport sectors.

²⁷ In line with Regulation (EU) 2021/817, ‘people with fewer opportunities’ means people who, for economic, social, cultural, geographical or health reasons, due to their migrant background, or for reasons such as disability or educational difficulties or for any other reason, including a reason that could give rise to discrimination under Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, face obstacles that prevent them from having effective access to learning mobility opportunities.

²⁸ In the current absence of an EU-wide indicator for inclusive learning mobility, the share of people with fewer opportunities among all learners benefiting from learning mobility abroad could be estimated using mobility data sourced from the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes. These data by no means cover all types of learning mobility abroad, but could be used as the closest proxy currently available.

5. Ensure cooperation with stakeholders in the area of learning mobility with a view to implementing this Recommendation.
6. Provide systemic learning mobility opportunities by:
 - a) considering making learning mobility abroad an integral part of school education, VET and apprenticeships, higher education, and adult education and training systems by striving to include the opportunity for learning mobility periods abroad through flexible mobility windows, elective courses and other opportunities;
 - b) supporting education institutions and training providers in the development and delivery of an increasing number of cross-border joint activities, including joint programmes leading to joint degrees, by making the best use of European initiatives, in particular European Universities alliances, Centres of Vocational Excellence, National VET Teams, Alliances for Innovation and Erasmus+ Teacher Academies, and building on the experiences of European Universities alliances, which have a target of 50 % mobility among students with physical, virtual and blended mobility options;

- c) promoting and embedding incoming and outgoing learning mobility in non-formal and informal learning, youth work and volunteering settings as valuable and viable mobility options for all learners, educators and staff, including through awareness-raising, outreach measures and other support to providers of non-formal and informal learning, local and regional authorities, and youth work and civil society organisations;
- d) supporting the application of quality criteria for the preparation, implementation and follow-up of learning mobility activities, including by building on quality standards developed within the Erasmus+ programme, the European Solidarity Corps programme and other learning mobility schemes, and by focusing on the accessibility and inclusiveness of such activities;
- e) fostering cooperation among the bodies that manage and implement funding instruments at EU, international, national and regional level to ensure coordinated activities that support and promote learning mobility, while avoiding overlaps and maximising the impact of resources.

7. Enhance language learning by:
- a) strengthening language learning at all stages of education and training, as well as in the youth and sport sectors, where possible, to boost learning mobility options and opportunities;
 - b) supporting access to language education and learning, including for adult learners, to improve multilingual competences and enable citizens to take full advantage of learning mobility and increase their employment opportunities.
8. Support engagement in learning mobility activities by:
- a) building a lifelong learning mobility culture at all learning stages of education and training and across non-formal and informal learning, youth work, volunteering and sport settings. Actions to be taken in this regard may include:
 - i) developing a variety of mobility formats and activities;
 - ii) supporting both sending and hosting organisations that have an internationalisation strategy;
 - iii) increasing the attractiveness of education and training institutions, as well as of non-formal and informal learning settings in youth and sport, in terms of hosting and sending mobile learners;
 - iv) encouraging alumni networks to develop and promote learning experiences.

- b) fostering cooperation between regional and local authorities, education and training providers, the youth and sport sectors, civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations and private bodies to promote and support outgoing learning mobility, including for people with fewer opportunities, and creating a welcoming environment for incoming learning mobility participants from abroad;
- c) encouraging authorities and organisations that manage mobility schemes, both in sending and hosting roles, to reduce the administrative burden for organisations and participants and provide clear guidance throughout the application process;
- d) supporting flexible learning mobility formats that can diversify the pool of participants and serve as a stepping stone to longer mobility periods, including group mobility activities, short-term mobility, blended intensive programmes and any other learning experiences that may lead to micro-credentials, in line with the European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability;
- e) valuing the work of educators, staff and youth workers who prepare and implement learning mobility projects and activities by incorporating them into their profession, and recognising the added value of staff mobility.

9. Provide information on learning mobility opportunities by:
- a) putting in place, where appropriate, learning mobility promoters – coordinators, contact points, ambassadors or dedicated learning mobility information centres – at national, regional or local level to share their expertise with education and training providers, the youth and sport sectors, civil society organisations and private bodies, to support engagement in learning mobility activities and to network at national and intra-EU level;
 - b) offering learners targeted information on learning mobility opportunities throughout the lifelong learning cycle, including in schools, youth and work settings, among VET and adult-learning providers, youth work and volunteering providers, higher education institutions and employers, by cooperating with learning mobility promoters and incorporating information on learning mobility opportunities into study and career guidance;
 - c) promoting the benefits of a mobility period abroad and providing advice, tips and mentoring, in particular to learners with fewer opportunities, including by making best use of the Erasmus+ App;

- d) encouraging hosting organisations to ensure a smooth reception for incoming learners, including by making information and relevant material readily available;
- e) providing information on mobility opportunities by optimising the use and functioning of the Euroguidance and Eurodesk networks;
- f) providing information on the living and working conditions in host countries by making use of the information available on the EURES portal on living and working conditions in all Member States and EFTA countries and the relevant section of the EU Learning Corner, including by linking that information to national learning mobility portals.

10. Support transparency and recognition of learning outcomes by:

- a) putting the necessary steps in place to achieve automatic mutual recognition of higher education qualifications and of the outcomes of learning periods abroad at higher education level and making substantial progress towards automatic mutual recognition of upper secondary education and training qualifications giving access to higher education and of the outcomes of learning periods abroad in upper secondary education and training, including VET, as well as virtual and blended learning, by providing guidance and training for education and training providers and ensuring consistency in decision-making on recognition;
- b) making full use of the schemes and tools available that can support recognition of learning outcomes, including by facilitating consistent national approaches to automatic mutual recognition and ensuring that the external quality assurance system is implemented by independent quality assurance agencies registered with EQAR;
- c) encouraging education and training institutions to keep a record of decisions on the recognition of learning outcomes, taking into account data protection rules, to ensure consistency and transparency of decision-making over time and between the different organisational structures of institutions, with the aim of ensuring an understanding of the concept and definition of automatic mutual recognition;
- d) taking steps towards the recognition of competences acquired through learning mobility in non-formal and informal learning, youth work and volunteering settings by promoting cooperation on validation arrangements among the relevant bodies across education and training sectors, non-formal learning providers and civil society organisations, so that non-formal and informal learning outcomes can be more easily used in formal education and training and in the labour market;

- e) supporting education and training providers and organisers of youth learning mobility activities, youth work and volunteering in the systemic use of EU frameworks and instruments, including Europass, the multilingual classification of European skills, competences and occupations, European Digital Credentials for Learning, the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, Europass Mobility, Youthpass and/or national frameworks, to aid the identification, documentation, assessment and, where appropriate, certification of competences developed through learning mobility;
- f) considering taking steps towards the ratification of the UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education to improve the fair and transparent recognition of third-country qualifications, as well as partial studies and prior learning; making information on the processes for the recognition of third-country qualifications publicly available;
- g) using policy cooperation, in particular the Global Policy Dialogue of the Bologna Process and cooperation among recognition authorities and quality assurance agencies, to develop capacities in third countries' higher education institutions and align quality assurance processes in order to maximise the learning outcomes of the mobility experiences of third-country students and ensure full recognition of mobility periods as counting towards the students' degrees in their home countries.

11. Support the transition to the labour market and work mobility by:

- a) facilitating the transition from learning mobility to work mobility by helping mobile learners, educators and staff, as well as youth workers, access jobseeker support from public employment services and from EURES;
- b) through the Erasmus+ programme, helping learners, including recent graduates, to undertake traineeships abroad to develop their entrepreneurial, innovative, creative and intercultural skills;
- c) encouraging relevant organisations to host trainees from abroad, including through awareness-building and accessible information.

12. Make learning mobility more inclusive and accessible by:

- a) developing dedicated measures to support the mobility of people with fewer opportunities in education and training systems, as well as in the youth and sport sectors;
- b) removing barriers for and addressing the needs of people with fewer opportunities from the early stages of designing learning activities;

- c) providing support to make learning mobility accessible to people with fewer opportunities, as well as support for organisations hosting them, for example by providing appropriate funding at national or regional level and by fostering synergies among different EU, international, national and regional funding instruments;
- d) providing accessible, up-to-date and timely information on available learning mobility funding, the timing of payments and other support available to learners;
- e) assisting mobile learners by addressing student housing shortages in collaboration with relevant national, regional and local authorities;
- f) ensuring, in accordance with EU and national legislation, the appropriate protection of mobile learning participants, including apprentices, trainees, young researchers, youth workers and volunteers, in particular minors, with regard to insurance, labour standards, health and safety requirements, tax, social security (including access to healthcare) and, where relevant, the possibility of accumulating pension entitlements.

13. Make learning mobility more environmentally sustainable by:
- a) where appropriate, making use of more sustainable means of transport from and to learning mobility destinations and during mobility periods, as well as providing for guidance on sustainable travel;
 - b) helping education and training providers, the youth and sport sectors, and civil society organisations that organise learning mobility activities to integrate sustainability practices into their daily activities through training, guidelines and the exchange of good practices;
 - c) supporting education and training providers and the youth and sport sectors at organisational level in efforts towards cutting greenhouse gas emissions from travelling in the context of learning mobility.
14. Make use of digital technologies to facilitate learning mobility by:
- a) encouraging the development and use of interoperable IT systems based on common European standards; these systems should allow learners, educators and staff to manage and register learning mobility experiences, in full compliance with applicable data protection legislation, and should enable organisations to provide information on mobility opportunities, manage mobility, support automatic mutual recognition and reduce the administrative burden, by making use of the features of the European Student Card initiative and the tools offered by the Europass platform, including the digitalisation of learning credentials through the European Digital Credentials for Learning infrastructure;

- b) contributing to initiatives that support the mobility of researchers and provide relevant information and support services, including EURAXESS²⁹ and the upcoming ERA Talent Platform³⁰;
- c) providing support to education and training providers, the youth and sport sectors and civil society organisations enabling them to set up and utilise new digital tools when necessary and/or use existing digital tools to complement physical mobility;
- d) supporting the development of high-quality blended mobility formats by adapting existing national frameworks to further facilitate complementary innovative mobility formats that make use of digital technologies.
- e) exploring how AI can help overcome barriers to learning mobility.

15. Promote EU values through learning mobility by:

- a) encouraging all learners, educators and staff to participate in the life of host communities, including through volunteering activities, during their learning mobility period abroad;
- b) enriching learning mobility experiences with training in intercultural awareness, civic engagement, digital and media literacy, knowledge of the EU and its values, and fundamental rights;
- c) providing incoming learners, educators and staff with information relevant to the local context and creating a welcoming culture through mentors and administrative support;

²⁹ EURAXESS – Researchers in Motion is a one-stop shop for researchers and innovators seeking to advance their careers and personal development by moving to other countries.

³⁰ The ERA Talents action, supported by the Horizon Europe programme, aims to boost the interoperability of careers and the employability of research and innovation talents across sectors.

- d) ensuring that mobile learners, educators and staff enjoy the highest degree of academic freedom; encouraging education and training institutions to develop a culture of quality, including through quality assurance among other means, in which full adherence to principles of academic integrity is ensured during mobility periods.

16. Promote the EU as a learning destination by:

- a) cooperating closely to increase the attractiveness of the EU, utilising the existing range of national and regional initiatives, such as the Study in Europe project in higher education;
- b) facilitating learning mobility with other parts of the world, in particular with countries with an enlargement perspective, through closer cooperation between their relevant authorities and education and training institutions and those in the EU; in this regard, Talent Partnerships may provide a framework for stronger cooperation partnerships with key third countries in line with mutually agreed objectives; such cooperation can help ensure that learning mobility indirectly helps address skills gaps in third countries and the EU, for example by targeting skills gaps in sectors affected by the green and digital transitions and improving the employability of learners;
- c) supporting the timely issuance of long-stay visas and residence permits for third-country nationals who are selected for a learning opportunity in a Member State, in accordance with Directive (EU) 2016/801³¹, or of short-stay visas, in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 810/2009³², depending on the intended duration of stay in the EU.

³¹ Directive (EU) 2016/801 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing (OJ L 132, 21.5.2016, p. 21).

³² Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 establishing a Community Code on Visas (Visa Code) (OJ L 243, 15.9.2009, p. 1).

17. Support the implementation of this Recommendation by:

- a) encouraging strategic discussions at European, national and regional level and among Member States on possible internationalisation and/or mobility strategies or approaches, the sharing of good practices and participation in peer-learning activities, in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders;
- b) informing the Commission by the end of 2026 of existing or planned internationalisation and/or mobility strategies or approaches that could support the implementation of this Recommendation in higher education, VET, school education, adult education and the youth and sport sectors, addressing both outgoing and incoming learning mobility.

INVITES THE COMMISSION TO:

18. Develop by 2026, in close collaboration with the Member States, and based on and with the expert opinion of the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks, a proposal for a methodology for data collection (as referred to in recommendations 3 and 4) to measure:
- in higher education, the share of graduates with a learning mobility experience abroad;
 - the share of people with fewer opportunities among all learners benefiting from learning mobility abroad in education and training and youth and sport sectors.

Duly take into account possible sensitivities concerning data related to inclusive learning mobility and avoid imposing any additional administrative burdens on Member States. Report frequently on the progress made to the Council (through its relevant preparatory body, the Education Committee).

19. Support the sharing of good practices, participation in peer-learning activities, and the strategic discussions at European, national and regional level and among Member States referred to in recommendation 17.

20. Further support the implementation of this Recommendation by building on the cooperation among the working groups of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training, and in cooperation with the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks (SGIB).
21. Map the areas of intervention of the existing funding instruments at EU, international, national and regional level to raise awareness of their potential actions and good practices in support of learning mobility and foster an effective synergetic approach across the relevant stakeholders.
22. Work with the Member States, including through the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks, and relevant stakeholders on further improving data quality and availability and developing EU-level methodologies for data collection and analysis – including surveys, for example the European graduate tracking survey – on learning mobility in all education and training sectors and in the youth and sport sectors, which can also account for inclusiveness and territorial diversity, in full compliance with EU data protection legislation and without creating any additional burdens for Member States.

23. Revamp the Mobility Scoreboard, in close cooperation with experts from the Member States, to follow up on the implementation of this Recommendation and expand it to cover all education and training sectors, as well as the youth and sport sectors.
24. Encourage and support youth participation in the design and implementation of learning mobility strategies and programmes at national, regional, local and European level.
25. Further develop, promote and provide support through the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes for the use of EU tools that support the implementation of learning periods abroad, such as the Euroguidance and Eurodesk networks, the European Student Card initiative, Online Language Support, the European School Education Platform, the European Youth Portal, General Online Training, Youthpass and Europass.
26. Further develop, optimise, promote and provide support through the Erasmus+ programme for the use of EU tools that support the transparency and validation of outcomes of learning periods abroad and credentials, in particular Youthpass and the Europass platform/Europass Mobility, including by improving semantic interoperability via the European Learning Model and the European Digital Credentials for Learning.
27. Further develop and provide support for higher education institutions and alliances of higher education institutions, such as the ‘European Universities’, to allow them to provide joint programmes and award joint degrees, in accordance with EU and Bologna tools.

28. Further develop and provide support for the European Universities alliances, including through the Erasmus+ programme and policy support, allowing them to realise their full potential and act as role models for the higher education sector by fostering seamless and embedded mobility on European inter-university campuses, promoting the use of micro-credentials and examining the options and necessary steps – in close cooperation with Member States, higher education institutions, student organisations and relevant stakeholders – towards a possible joint degree label based on a common set of co-created European criteria.
29. Further develop and provide support for voluntary EU initiatives that can increase mobility in the field of education and training, such as the Erasmus+ Teacher Academies and the Centres of Vocational Excellence.
30. Provide further support from the Erasmus+ programme by encouraging cooperation and mutual learning among Member States to ensure the automatic mutual recognition of qualifications and outcomes of learning periods abroad carried out in education and training sectors at all levels, including for virtual and blended learning.
31. Continue to support Member States as they move towards a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages, in particular through peer-learning activities, the promotion of initiatives and events such as the European Day of Languages, and cooperation with stakeholders and international organisations, such as the Council of Europe and its European Centre for Modern Languages and the OECD, in order to develop innovative tools for language learning, including digital and AI tools.

32. Promote the building of synergies and complementarities between the EU programmes that address learning mobility, such as Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, and other funding instruments at EU, international, national and regional level such as Cohesion Policy funds, in particular the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund Plus, with its Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve (ALMA) initiative, to maximise the impact of actions that promote learning mobility opportunities in all Member States, including by supporting the implementation of tools and strategies to increase participation by people with fewer opportunities.
33. Support Member States, upon their request, in their efforts to reform and enhance internationalisation and/or mobility strategies or approaches at national level and across multiple countries using EU tools, such as the Technical Support Instrument and Erasmus+ opportunities.
34. Produce by 2025 a study on opportunities, challenges and impacts of balanced mobility (including credit and degree mobility) in the EU, taking into account the various consequences of the brain circulation phenomenon.

Done at Brussels,

For the Council

A policy framework for teacher mobility

The 2020 Commission Communication on achieving the European Education Area by 2025³³ states that the Commission ‘will work together with Member States and stakeholders on a policy framework for increasing the number and quality of learning mobility of teachers in Europe based on their actual mobility needs’.

The Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030)³⁴ includes specific actions to tackle the priority area of teachers and trainers. These actions include exploring the possibility of developing a policy framework for teacher mobility.

³³ COM(2020) 625 final.
³⁴ OJ C 66, 26.2.2021, p. 1.

The rationale behind such a framework is that there are specific challenges for teachers, which are also analysed in Commission staff working document SWD(2023) 719 final.

This framework outlines a set of actions that may be implemented at school, local, regional and system level in order to address obstacles to the mobility of teachers identified in EU Member States. Its ambition is to serve as inspiration for stakeholders willing to develop their own strategies for teacher mobility in line with their systems and to function as a toolbox of ideas to increase teacher mobility. It complements and expands on the actions specified in the Council conclusions on enhancing teachers' and trainers' mobility, in particular European mobility, during their initial and in-service education and training³⁵, and on promoting the value of teacher mobility in schools and communities. The Council conclusions highlight the positive impact of learning mobility abroad on the professional development of teachers and on education and training systems, while identifying obstacles to mobility. This Annex addresses the need to overcome these obstacles so as to make teacher mobility, in accordance with the needs of national education and training systems, a viable path both in initial teacher education and during teachers' continuous professional development.

³⁵ OJ C 167, 21.4.2022, p. 2.

The underlying idea is that learning mobility should be an integral part of teachers' initial education and professional development: it can increase the attractiveness of the profession and is important to the further development of schools and education and training systems on the path towards the European Education Area.

The Commission will support Member States as they put in place the necessary arrangements and measures outlined in this document, in particular through the exchange of best practices and peer learning. These measures will build on the good practices developed under the Erasmus+ programme, such as the Erasmus+ Teacher Academies, which aim to offer support for teachers at the beginning of their careers and to strengthen their professional development.

In accordance with their Member State's national system, stakeholders at school, regional, local and system level could achieve the general objectives outlined above by:

1. Making mobility opportunities available in the context of the initial education and continuous professional development of teachers
 - a) Initial education
 - considering embedding inclusive and gender-balanced mobility opportunities in initial teacher education as a recommended part of the curricula;
 - recognising learning mobility as an integral part of initial teacher education, and in particular recognising teaching assignments abroad as being equivalent to in-school training in a national education or training institution where appropriate;
 - where possible, earmarking time slots ('mobility windows') in the academic year of any initial teacher education so that student teachers can easily participate in mobility periods without it affecting their studies;
 - including modules or elements in initial teacher education that are dedicated to providing the skills and competences needed to spend learning mobility periods abroad.

- b) Continuous professional development
 - recognising the outcomes of a teacher's mobility period abroad as a legitimate and valuable part of their professional activities;
 - where possible, identifying and embedding mobility windows in the school year, when sending and hosting teachers and future teachers is appropriate and easy to implement and replacement teachers are provided where needed;
 - concluding bilateral agreements at national or, where applicable, regional level to facilitate, in particular, the recognition and comparability of skills and competences acquired (e.g. through a common quality framework and by making use of standardised skills terminology available at European level);
 - where possible and in line with national competences, supporting schools with appropriate resources and flexible procedures when teachers participating in mobility must be temporarily replaced.

2. Improving cooperation at local level by developing and implementing a strategic approach to teacher mobility

- a) Embedding teacher mobility in the overall development of schools
 - encouraging policymakers, school leaders, teacher educators and relevant stakeholders to set out how learning mobility, including mobility of teachers, irrespective of their teaching expertise or gender, can be integrated into schools' development strategies;
 - considering defining objectives over short-, medium- and long-term periods for learning mobility to become part of the overall strategy for school development, including the sending and hosting of teachers (including teachers in training and other school staff) and projects for cooperation with organisations abroad (including online cooperation);

- applying a progressive strategy for implementing these objectives, starting with the use of digital tools and platforms, bilateral cooperation and cooperation with cross-border regions;
- where possible, promoting cooperation between schools in the same area or region to facilitate replacement of teachers who are participating in learning mobility programmes;
- taking advantage of the local system of organisations involved in education and training to find partners abroad;
- establishing networks of participating institutions between Member States to develop a system for teacher mobility based on local, regional and national educational authorities' registers, school consortia, the eTwinning community and other existing networks;
- strengthening the mobility of teachers by improving their language competences, increasing the use of innovative methods for teaching and learning languages and bringing multilingualism into the classroom.

- b) Allocating the necessary resources
- considering allocating dedicated staff (mobility coordinators) to prepare and implement mobility projects and activities, including mentoring mobile teachers, supporting hosting and sending institutions and dealing with logistical and administrative procedures regarding, for example, accommodation, income taxation and social security at the most appropriate level (schools and local education and training authorities);
 - considering pooling resources at the level of local education and training authorities to cope with the administrative workload entailed by preparing and managing mobility projects, in particular to enable schools with the fewest means to participate in learning mobility activities;
 - improving the capacity of education and training institutions to host and benefit from the mobility activities of both practising and prospective teachers, taking full advantage of cooperation with Erasmus+ Teacher Academies;
 - recognising the work of staff who make mobility opportunities possible on the ground;
 - supporting schools active in mobility projects by providing them with additional resources;
 - fostering synergies with other local, national and EU funds, particularly the European Social Fund Plus and the European Regional Development Fund, in addition to Erasmus+.

3. Promoting the benefits of learning mobility and supporting it with the necessary training
- raising awareness among decision makers at all levels of the education and training system (in particular school leaders and other managers at local and regional level) about the benefits of cross-border learning mobility for education staff and their impact on the development of organisations, including helping pupils to develop foreign language competences;
 - providing school leaders with training on school development (including through job shadowing abroad), supported by learning mobility abroad;
 - creating incentives for and valuing the work of school leaders who involve their schools and staff in mobility projects;
 - valuing and promoting the positive effects of such experiences for teachers, learners and the development of schools and school education at local, regional and national level.
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A policy framework for apprentice mobility

Apprenticeships³⁶ have been a central feature of European VET policies since 2010, starting with the Bruges Communiqué and reiterated in 2020 with the Osnabrück Declaration and the Council Recommendation of 24 November 2020 on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience³⁷. Specific policy priorities have since evolved and now include making cross-border mobility for learning purposes a reality for apprentices as well. Apprentice mobility offers clear benefits to young people and adult learners in terms of their training and employability, to companies, as the skills of their workforce are broadened, and to society as a whole. Some of the skills and competences that cross-border mobility can offer (e.g. language competences, intercultural skills, organisational skills and other transferable skills, or specific skills in a technical area not available in the sending company/institution) cannot be learnt at home. Yet due to a set of specific barriers, such as the complexity of the legal obligations related to the administrative status of apprentices, their age, different national apprenticeship schemes and curricula, and the risk of productivity loss faced by employers, apprentices have limited access to learning mobility experiences. This Annex proposes a set of actions at national level that may facilitate the mobility of apprentices at system, individual and company level. Its ambition is to serve as inspiration for stakeholders willing to expand apprenticeship mobility, and to function as a toolbox for increasing apprenticeship mobility. It builds on the provisions of the Council Recommendation of 15 March 2018 on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships.

³⁶ According to the Council Recommendation of 15 March 2018 on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (OJ C 153, 2.5.2018, p. 1), apprenticeships are understood as formal vocational education and training schemes that:

- a) combine learning in education or training institutions with substantial work-based learning in companies and other workplaces;
- b) lead to nationally recognised qualifications;
- c) are based on an agreement defining the rights and obligations of the apprentice, the employer and, where appropriate, the vocational education and training institution; and
- d) involve the apprentice being paid or otherwise compensated for the work-based component.

³⁷ OJ C 417, 2.12.2020, p. 1.

Member States are recommended to consider putting a set of actions in place to support the mobility of apprentices in VET based on the following principles:

1. System-level aspects for facilitating apprentice mobility
 - a) Including mobility of apprentices in a national internationalisation strategy for education and training where applicable and in sectoral (economic) strategies where appropriate. Such strategies can take an incremental approach that builds on short-duration mobility and mobility in cross-border regions or selected sectors, or that promotes short-duration collective or rotation mobility schemes.
 - b) Fostering internationalisation by building on the know-how of the Centres of Vocational Excellence that connect reference VET providers across Member States, encourage cooperation with a broad range of stakeholders and strive to develop high-quality curricula and qualifications focused on sectoral skills needs and societal challenges. Centres of Vocational Excellence work on a range of activities, which include incorporating mobility of learners into curricula as well as improving learners' opportunities for mobility abroad and the quality of such mobility programmes. They serve as drivers of excellence and innovation and promote a proactive role for VET in local and regional economic development.

- c) Assigning dedicated staff (e.g. ambassadors, focal points, mobility coordinators) at local, regional and national level to facilitate and raise awareness of the mobility of apprentices as regards the various national and regional schemes. These dedicated staff could help prepare and implement mobility projects and activities, including by mentoring apprentices, supporting hosting and sending institutions and dealing with logistical and administrative procedures.
- d) Promoting apprenticeship mobility, including by encouraging the creation of new networks or strengthening existing ones between employers, VET providers, public employment services and social partners, and taking advantage of existing initiatives such as the European Alliance for Apprenticeships.
- e) Considering curricular arrangements to facilitate mobility for apprentices without endangering the completion of their studies and to recognise learning outcomes acquired abroad (for example by including a dedicated mobility module in curricula or by introducing distance learning where needed and where possible).

- f) Ensuring easy access to information on legal and administrative requirements for apprenticeship mobility relating to compensation and the legal status of apprentices engaged in mobility.
- g) Reducing the administrative burden of the application process and speeding up the visa and residence permit procedures for incoming third-country national apprentices, where applicable and in line with Directive (EU) 2016/801³⁸.
- h) Encouraging bilateral agreements on apprentice mobility with other Member States and, where feasible, third countries (or regions, if applicable) to reduce any remaining barriers to the recognition and comparability of skills and competences acquired (e.g. through a common quality framework that targets the specific national issues linked to the mobility of apprentices and the apprenticeship systems in the two countries).
- i) Where possible, involving social partners at all stages of the design, implementation and following up of apprentice mobility strategies and schemes.

³⁸ Directive (EU) 2016/801 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing (OJ L 132, 21.5.2016, p. 21).

2. Support for apprentices

- a) Implementing mobility in an inclusive way, providing specific support for people with fewer opportunities.
- b) Complementing Erasmus+ grants with additional funding to cover the costs of apprentice mobility.
- c) Promoting pedagogical arrangements and tools to support the mobility of apprentices, for example through distance learning to overcome differences in the dual structure of learning and training.
- d) Providing more support and outreach to apprentices, including language preparation support (developing specific language-learning materials for certain occupations in the language(s) of host countries).
- e) Devising accompanying measures for apprentices going abroad, such as a mentoring/buddy system for the preparatory phase, virtual mobility in the preparatory phase (to complement physical mobility) and when abroad, and support for apprentices upon their return as they reintegrate into their working environment and use their newly acquired skills and competences.
- f) Promoting opportunities for apprentices in VET schools, including Erasmus+ opportunities and international mobility schemes, via a dedicated network of advisers and social media.
- g) Promoting opportunities for apprentices offered on the EURES online portal to assist mobile learners in their transition to the labour market.

3. Support for companies

- a) Considering providing financial incentives to employers, to compensate them for the period when apprentices are abroad, and to apprentices, to encourage them to return to their sending employer (for example a bonus on programme completion or wage subsidy if hired after graduation).
- b) Considering giving targeted assistance to employers, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises, for example by supporting the establishment of intermediary networks between receiving and sending countries, preferably on a sectoral basis, to assist companies with organisational issues and legal requirements.
- c) Promoting cross-border collaborations between government services implementing vocational training and apprenticeships or public employment services (PES) and employers by: exploring measures that offer vocational training opportunities abroad for apprentices in sectors affected by the twin transition; supporting cross-border collaborations between these government services or PES and employers' associations to address skills shortages in green and digital occupations through apprenticeship programmes; and considering cross-border regional partnerships between these government services or PES as a starting point.
- d) Promoting Erasmus+ opportunities and the European Alliance for Apprenticeships among companies, highlighting the benefits of hosting and sending apprentices on mobility programmes.