



Council of the
European Union

096605/EU XXVII.GP
Eingelangt am 06/04/22

Brussels, 6 April 2022
(OR. en, fr)

7923/22

EDUC 122
JEUN 43
EMPL 130
SOC 213

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
No. prev. doc.:	6989/22
Subject:	Council conclusions on enhancing teachers' and trainers' mobility, in particular European mobility, during their initial and in-service education and training

Delegations will find in the annex the abovementioned Council conclusions, approved by the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council at its meeting on 4 and 5 April 2022.

Council conclusions on enhancing teachers' and trainers' mobility, in particular European mobility, during their initial and in-service education and training

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

IN THE CONTEXT OF

1. The Council conclusions on European teachers and trainers¹ for the future, which invite Member States to motivate education and training institutions to embed teachers' and trainers' mobility² in their learning, development and internationalisation strategies.

¹ In line with the definition set out in the Council conclusions on European teachers and trainers for the future (OJ C 193, 9.6.2020, p. 11), for the purposes of the current conclusions, a teacher is a person who is acknowledged as having the status of a teacher (or equivalent) according to national legislation and practice, while a trainer is anyone who fulfils one or more activities linked to the (theoretical or practical) training function, either in an institution for education or training or at the workplace. They encompass teachers in general education and higher education, teachers and trainers in initial and continuing VET, as well as early childhood education and care professionals and adult educators. The education background and career structures of teachers and trainers vary considerably between different fields of education and training. As such, the relevance of some elements of these conclusions is dependent on the structure of national systems and individual education and training sectors.

² For the purposes of these conclusions, 'mobility' corresponds to the concept of 'learning mobility' as defined by 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 1288/2013, namely moving physically to a country other than the country of residence, in order to undertake study, training or non-formal or informal learning. It may be combined with 'virtual learning' which means the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences through the use of information and communication technology tools that allow participants to have a meaningful transnational or international learning experience.

2. The Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030), which establishes as its second strategic priority “making lifelong learning and mobility a reality for all”, including for teachers and teacher trainers and as its third strategic priority “enhancing competences and motivation in the education profession”.
3. The Porto Social Commitment of 7 May 2021, which builds on the European Pillar of Social Rights proclaimed at the 2017 Gothenburg Social Summit and calls for investment in skills, lifelong learning and training responding to the economy’s and society’s needs, in order to achieve the target, by 2030, of at least 60% of Europeans participating annually in training.
4. The Council conclusions on equity and inclusion in education and training in order to promote educational success for all, which invite Member States to address teacher shortages in particular in special needs education and in multicultural and multilingual settings. Mobility can have a positive impact on teacher shortages by making the profession more attractive.

RECALLING the political background set out in the Annex,

IN THE LIGHT OF

5. The 2021 Eurydice report: “Teachers in Europe: Careers, Development and Well-being”, in particular the following main findings:
 - a) Transnational mobility contributes to the development of a wide range of competences among teachers. “However, only a minority of teachers in Europe have been abroad for professional purposes. In 2018, 40.9 % of teachers in the EU had been mobile at least once as a student, as a teacher, or both”³. There are substantial differences in the rate of participation between European countries, but also between subjects taught, as mobility too often remains the prerogative of language teachers. Trends in teacher mobility within the Erasmus+ programme also show that a majority of teachers participate in courses abroad, while job shadowing in a school and teaching assignments are used less despite their stronger impact⁴.
 - b) Transnational mobility as part of initial teacher education is important. In addition to the benefit for the prospective teacher, such mobility also increases participation in mobility at later career stages. However, mobility of prospective teachers during their studies is not widespread. In 2018, only about one fifth of lower secondary teachers (20.9 %) in the EU reported that they had gone abroad during their studies. Teachers’ and trainers’ mobility is promoted and sponsored at EU level and may also be supported by funding schemes at national level.

³ Eurydice, “Teachers in Europe: Careers, Development and Well-being”, 2021, p. 21.

⁴ The statistical annex to the Erasmus+ annual report 2019 shows that in KA 101 projects (staff mobility in school education) contracted in 2019, courses and training events represented about 40 600 of forecasted participants (about 75% of the mobility activities), while job shadowing was 13 209 participants (about 24% of mobility activities) and teaching assignments 389 participants (less than 1% of mobility activities).

6. The main obstacles to the mobility of teachers and trainers, which include financial and recognition issues.
- a) Regarding prospective teachers and trainers, it is worth noting that the value of mobility schemes is sometimes diminished by a number of obstacles to their academic recognition. Teacher education curricula do not always enable periods of mobility abroad. In addition, trainers are not always involved in periods of mobility along their education pathway. Teaching and training assistantships in other European countries, where possible, may not be recognised as being an integral part of initial teacher and trainer education, especially as being equivalent to in-school training in a national education and training institution.
 - b) For practising teachers and trainers, obstacles include family responsibilities and difficulties in arranging substitute teachers and trainers.
 - c) Moreover, lack of language competences is a cross-cutting issue.
 - d) In addition to this, there is a significant degree of regulation at national level within the teaching profession and there are differences in the structuring of school years between Member States. While this is a sign of the diversity and richness of the national education and training systems in the EU, this may also hinder the organisation of in-school training such as job shadowing, teaching assistantship or teaching assignment.

7. The lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic, which has shown the need to include the acquisition and use of digital skills and competences in teaching and learning in the initial and in-service education and training of teachers and trainers. Blended forms of activity combining physical mobility with virtual learning or online exchange promote the conditions for such development and enable the exchange of good practices.

RECOGNISES THAT

8. Teachers and trainers are the cornerstone of the European Education Area (EEA) and play a crucial role in our society. Teachers and trainers embody the ideal of facilitating the acquisition of knowledge and values and promoting active citizenship for all learners. In order to foster inclusion, equity, high quality education and training, pedagogical innovation and better learner achievement, teachers and trainers must be highly qualified and motivated professionals and supported by the school management.
9. Exchanges of views and experiences among peers and close cooperation between teachers and trainers, as well as work study and/or work experience abroad contribute significantly to the professional development of teachers and trainers at all levels of education and training.

10. Mobility is one of the key elements for both practising and prospective teachers and trainers. It helps to address the common challenges faced by Member States with regard to the teaching profession. In particular, the mobility of prospective or practising teachers and trainers is expected to:
- a) contribute to the personal and academic development of teachers and trainers, at the same time fostering their self-confidence;
 - b) improve teachers' and trainers' professional practice and pedagogical knowledge, skills and competences, adaptability, employability, and career development;
 - c) help teachers and trainers to develop the capacity to influence and improve practices in their own education and training institutions, as well as in the wider education and training system;
 - d) contribute to the attractiveness of the teaching profession.
11. In addition to its positive effects on the motivation, knowledge, skills and competences as well as the professional pathways of teachers and trainers, mobility of teachers and trainers, especially European mobility, is also beneficial to national education and training systems and could improve them since:
- a) it reinforces teachers' and trainers' capacity to innovate and to reflect on practices with a view to better meeting the needs of learners;

- b) it helps develop teachers' and trainers' sense of belonging to a European teaching and learning community through the bonds that are forged during and after mobility experiences, it encourages learners' mobility and more generally, it contributes to the development of a European dimension in the activities and projects of their education and training institutions, as well as international strategies, hence it has an impact on the whole education and training system.
 - c) mobility is a powerful learning experience, potentially very impactful for prospective as well as practising teachers and trainers. They should be aware of the mobility opportunities that are available and be encouraged to participate in mobility during their initial and in-service education and training.
 - d) it supports the development of teachers' and trainers' networks across Europe.
12. Teachers' and trainers' mobility in Europe is a key element in building trust, enhancing cooperation and promoting mutual understanding amongst Member States in relation to each other's education and training systems. It is also key to fostering common European values, as well as promoting multilingualism and multiculturalism.

AGREES THAT:

13. An ambitious EEA should be based on highly competent and motivated teachers and trainers. European mobility should be seen as beneficial to teacher and trainer education and training so as to broaden access to the diversity of quality teaching approaches and to meet the needs of learners. The European dimension has the potential to bring added value to the professional training and/or practice of the respective teachers or trainers within the framework of the national education systems.

14. Particular attention should be paid to prospective teachers and trainers and their access to mobility, in particular European mobility, as part of their initial education and training in accordance with national education and training systems. This also paves the way for mobility at later stages of their careers.
15. In order to make the EEA a reality by 2025 and to make mobility opportunities available to all teachers and trainers, existing barriers need to be removed, where appropriate and in accordance with the national education systems and policies.
16. Teachers' and trainers' mobility will especially benefit from support from:
 - a) European funding programmes such as Erasmus+;
 - b) the future European School Education Platform, which will include eTwinning and the School Education Gateway, EPAL as well as any initiatives that promote education and training institution partnerships in the EU;
 - c) Erasmus+ Teacher Academies, to be evaluated in view of further developments after 2025;
 - d) the European Universities initiative, where relevant.

17. Mobility for teachers and trainers should continue to be promoted and expanded in order to become common practice. The extent of teacher and trainer mobility in initial and in-service education and training could be monitored at Member State and EU level. The Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks should be mandated to examine appropriate forms of data collection to measure teacher and trainer mobility. Their findings should be taken into account with regard to the planned review of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond⁵.

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH NATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY, TO:

18. Foster opportunities for European mobility of teachers and trainers, for example by removing existing barriers where appropriate, offering organisational and financial support when possible, sharing solutions with regard to arranging substitute teachers and trainers, and promoting mobility programmes.
19. Foster opportunities for and encourage the mobility of school leaders, for the benefits it will bring to their own careers, to their education and training institutions, but also as a means of supporting and promoting the mobility of teachers and trainers.

⁵ As underlined in the Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030), the Commission will publish a full report on the EEA in 2025. “On the basis of this evaluation, the Council shall review the strategic framework — including EU-level targets, governance structure, and working methods” (OJ C 66, 26.2.2021, p. 10).

20. Integrate mobility in teacher and trainer education and training systems, where appropriate, for both initial and in-service education and training. Promote participation in Erasmus+ activities, e.g. the Erasmus+ Teacher Academies and European Universities. Bilateral cooperation experiences can be a starting point and provide inspiration for further development.
21. Facilitate, where appropriate, the formal recognition of outcomes of mobility periods, particularly of teaching and training periods abroad, in initial teacher and trainer education, for professional development or for career progression.
22. Explore ways to foster quality foreign language learning in initial as well as in-service teacher and trainer education and training systems, where appropriate, for the purpose of increasing their participation in mobility programmes, for the development of competences that are needed for work with foreign resources and materials.
23. In order to allow teachers and trainers who so wish to be mobile, identify and promote, where appropriate and with due regard to the autonomy of institutions, mobility windows for both practising and prospective teachers and trainers, that is, recommended periods in school years and/or initial teacher and trainer education curricula designed to enable participation in mobility. This may include identifying suitable periods for education and training institutions to host in-school training activities for both practising and prospective teachers and education pathway activities for trainers.

24. Promote, where appropriate, the use of training modules that are relevant and focused on Europe, within initial and in-service teacher and trainer education and training, which could include programmes such as Jean Monnet actions also in relation to primary and secondary education.
25. Foster, where appropriate, capacity building by promoting different forms of local and regional cooperation, such as Erasmus+ consortia, led by regional school/institution authorities that ensure that mobility projects have a broader impact and support the physical or online participation of teachers and trainers from smaller or remote education and training institutions in professional development opportunities abroad.
26. Support, where appropriate, education and training institutions in improving their capacity to host and benefit from the mobility activities of both practising and prospective teachers and trainers.
27. Promote the use of digital tools and platforms, including eTwinning and EPALe, to complement and prepare physical mobility, enhance digital skills and competences and promote further transnational cooperation.
28. Encourage evidence-informed in-service professional development opportunities for teachers and trainers, which could benefit from mobility activities, and promote studies related to EU Member States' efforts in relation to teacher mobility, while seeking other aspects of synergy with research.

INVITES THE COMMISSION, IN LINE WITH THE TREATIES AND WITH FULL RESPECT FOR SUBSIDIARITY, TO:

29. Promote opportunities for teachers' and trainers' mobility through the Erasmus+ programme, including by offering the necessary support to the Erasmus+ Teacher Academies action, to be evaluated in view of further developments after 2025.
30. Map the existing tools to encourage mobility for teachers and trainers, and promote these tools by using, for example, platforms such as the future European School Education Platform, (which will include eTwinning and the current School Education Gateway), and EPALE.
31. In cooperation with Member States, explore the possibility of developing a policy framework at European level for increasing the number and quality of learning mobility opportunities for both prospective and practising teachers and trainers in Europe based on their actual mobility needs. A framework of this kind could for example support addressing obstacles to mobility, give Member States support to promote mobility and a European dimension of teaching within initial and in-service teacher education and training, further develop learning mobility opportunities, and provide information about funding and mobility opportunities.

32. Address mobility in the work exploring the possible development, on a voluntary basis, of European guidance for the development of national career frameworks and lifelong guidance, thus supporting the career progression of teachers and trainers.
 33. Continue promoting the automatic mutual recognition of qualifications, and in particular of mobility periods abroad in teacher and trainer education and training⁶.
 34. Cooperate with the Member States on analysing the feasibility and added value of mobility windows in study programmes for prospective teachers and trainers.
 35. Report back to the Education Committee for further decisions on the results of the work of the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks on monitoring the mobility of teachers and trainers, with a view to promoting and expanding the potential for mobility.
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⁶ In line with 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).

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

European Council

- Presidency Conclusions – Lisbon, 23 and 24 March 2000

Council of the European Union

- Council conclusions of 26 November 2009 on the professional development of teachers and school leaders (OJ C 302, 12.12.2009, p. 6)
- Council conclusions on early childhood education and care: providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow (OJ C 175, 15.6.2011, p. 8)
- Council conclusions of 20 May 2014 on effective teacher education (OJ C 183, 14.6.2014, p. 22)
- Council Conclusions on school development and excellent teaching (OJ C 421, 8.12.2017, p. 2)
- Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching (OJ C 195, 7.6.2018, p. 1)
- Council conclusions on moving towards a vision of a European Education Area (OJ C 195, 7.6.2018, p. 7)

- 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)
- Council Recommendation of 22 May 2019 on High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems (OJ C 189, 5.6.2019, p. 4)
- Council Recommendation of 22 May 2019 on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages (OJ C 189, 5.6.2019, p. 15)
- Council Resolution on further developing the European Education Area to support future-oriented education and training systems (OJ C 389, 18.11.2019, p. 1)
- Council conclusions on European teachers and trainers for the future (OJ C 193, 9.6.2020, p. 11)
- Council Recommendation of 24 November 2020 on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (OJ C 417, 2.12.2020, p. 1)
- 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)
- Council conclusions on equity and inclusion in education and training in order to promote educational success for all (OJ C 221, 10.6.2021, p. 3)

- Council conclusions on the European Universities initiative – Bridging higher education, research, innovation and society: Paving the way for a new dimension in European higher education (OJ C 221, 10.6.2021, p. 14)
- Council Resolution on a new European agenda for adult learning 2021-2030 (OJ C 504, 14.12.2021, p. 9)

European Commission

- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on achieving the European Education Area by 2025 (COM(2020) 625 final)
- *Education and training monitor 2021: education and well-being*, Publications Office, 2021.