

**MOBILITY
SCOREBOARD**



MOVING TO LEARN

Prototyping the Mobility Scoreboard for Initial Vocational Education and Training

Cedefop

14 June 2016

Acknowledgments

The Mobility Scoreboard is being developed within Cedefop's Department for VET Systems and Institutions (DSI). The present document sets out a prototype version of the Scoreboard. The document was drafted by Guy Tchibozo, with input from Andreea Rusu and Maite Santos. It is based on country data provided by ReferNet and validated by countries' National Representatives. ReferNet and the National Representatives are not responsible for the selection of the country information finally presented in the document, the analysis of these data, and the policy suggestions drawn from analysis.

Cedefop benefited from advice by the Expert Group on a Mobility Scoreboard for IVET. The Expert Group is not responsible for the content of the document.

Cedefop has sole responsibility for selecting the country information presented in this document, carrying out the analysis and assessment, and formulating policy suggestions. The analyses, assessments and suggestions presented in the document are not supposed to reflect the views of governments.

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GLOSSARY

Countrywide coordination

There is countrywide coordination of a process when, for all existing actions related to the process, regulation and implementation of the process are arranged through / underpinned by

- Either top-down guidelines followed by all stakeholders/players; or
- Any form of cooperation and dialogue involving all stakeholders/players and leading to convergent practices and approaches.

Countrywide coordination may be partial/incomplete when it applies only to part of the actions or players related to the process.

Evaluation of an activity or policy action

Comparison between a target reference and a given situation in order to point out the differences between them and to identify and implement possible steps for improvement. Evaluation typically heads towards further improvement, as opposed to monitoring that may not involve the intention to translate the conclusions from state-of-play analysis into further readjustments / reforms of the activity or policy.

Improvement measure

Any step to bring an actual situation closer to a reference situation. In the context of this report, the reference situation is defined by the provisions of the 2011 Council Recommendation “*Youth on the move*”.

Information and guidance

The service provided to help people make well-informed choices in relation to working life. Information and guidance consists in helping people clarify their interests and values, identify their skills, reflect on their experience, understand the options available to them, formulate plans, and make career-oriented decisions¹. Information and guidance on international learning mobility in IVET is the part of information and guidance specifically targeted at providing IVET learners with insights on existing mobility opportunities and advice for mobility decisions.

¹ Cedefop, *Modernising vocational education and training – Fourth report on vocational education and training research in Europe: synthesis report*, Luxembourg: Publications Office, 2009, p. 172

International learning mobility

Physical mobility whereby a national boundary is crossed for the purpose of study or training in another country. In the context of IVET, this refers to both school-based and work-based learning. International mobility includes both mobility between EU Member States and mobility between an EU Member State and a non-EU country. This Scoreboard does not address international mobility in which there is not at least one EU country (or Iceland or Norway) involved.

Mechanism

A process through which a defined type of output is delivered, for example in the areas of providing information and guidance, funding stakeholders, or supporting partnerships. A mechanism is generally limited in scope and coverage. In its most complete form, a mechanism can turn into a system, which then covers all / most of possible cases and situations related to the type of output at play.

Policy initiatives and/or actions

An initiative or action is a step taken at a given point in time in order to achieve an identified objective. Policy initiatives or actions do not require *per se* any continuity or follow-up over time. Also, they neither require a very long preparation upstream nor a comprehensive overview of the context. In that sense, policy initiatives or actions are less sophisticated than fully-fledged strategies, which presuppose prior in-depth and comprehensive analysis of context and thoughtful preparation in terms of coordinating a consistent series of actions over time, securing appropriate means, and sequentially taking into account interactions between players.

Third countries

Countries other than the 28 EU Member States.

INTRODUCTION

On 28 June 2011, the Council of the European Union adopted the Recommendation “*Youth on the move*’ – *promoting the learning mobility of young people*”. The Recommendation focuses on young people in a learning context, and identifies ways in which Member States can promote learning mobility across the EU. The Recommendation identifies ten key thematic areas for action, i.e.:

- 1/ Information and guidance on opportunities for learning mobility
- 2/ Motivation to participate in international learning mobility activities
- 3/ Preparation for learning mobility, particularly with regard to foreign language skills and intercultural awareness
- 4/ Administrative and institutional issues relating to the learning period abroad
- 5/ Portability of grants and loans
- 6/ Quality of learning mobility
- 7/ Recognition of learning outcomes
- 8/ Disadvantaged learners
- 9/ Partnerships and funding
- 10/ Role of multipliers

To monitor policy progress in the field, the Recommendation encourages the European Commission to develop a methodological framework, referred to as a ‘Mobility Scoreboard’. In 2013, EACEA/Eurydice released a report on the feasibility of a Mobility Scoreboard for Higher Education². In 2015, Cedefop started working on the feasibility of a Mobility Scoreboard for initial vocational education and training (VET). The work was carried out in close cooperation with the European Commission (EMPL E3) and experts from the Member States through an Expert Group that was set up to that end.

This document presents the concept, tools, methodology and first results of the Mobility Scoreboard for initial VET. The information and results presented cover 26 out of the 28 EU Member States (data from Lithuania and Poland are missing) along with Iceland and Norway. The country information presented was validated by countries.

From a thematic standpoint, this prototype focuses on four of the ten thematic areas of the “*Youth on the move*” Recommendation, i.e.

² European Commission – Eurydice (2013), *Towards a Mobility Scoreboard: Conditions for Learning Abroad in Europe*,
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/162EN.pdf

Information and guidance, Administrative and institutional issues, Recognition of learning outcomes, and Partnerships and funding. An extended version covering all ten thematic areas will be available in 2017.

General concept

The Scoreboard is a tool for supporting the monitoring of countries' progress in their implementation of the "*Youth on the move*" Recommendation, and more generally the upgrading of IVET mobility policies. It is intended to (a) assist policy-makers and stakeholders in identifying examples of good practices in the field of IVET learning mobility; (b) outline the strengths and weaknesses of mobility structures and policies in place in the countries covered, thus highlighting the areas for further progress; and (c) both inspire and support reforms of national and EU IVET mobility policies. Therefore the Scoreboard is a tool for assisting policy-making. It is not a tool to judge or praise countries. It is also not an exhaustive knowledge base on mobility in IVET in Europe. Its focus is on the information that is necessary for making policy against the requirements of the "*Youth on the move*" Recommendation.

The Scoreboard is also not a tool for comparing countries' structures, policies and performance in IVET mobility. IVET and mobility in IVET may take very diverse forms from one country to another, which makes possibilities for comparison at detailed level very limited. What the Scoreboard aims to in terms of comparison is contrasting on a general level:

- The types of support offered – e.g. in information and guidance, or for recognition of learning outcomes, etc. –; and
- How this provision of support is governed – e.g. is it coordinated? Is it evaluated?

Finally, the Scoreboard is also not a statistical compendium on IVET mobility in Europe. Producing statistical information is basically the role of Eurostat.

Apart from its informative potential for the wide public and mobility researchers, the Scoreboard in its policy assisting role mainly addresses four categories of IVET mobility stakeholders, i.e.:

- Unions / Associations / Organisations of IVET students, whose mission is to protect the interests of their constituents. They are well placed to locate issues which mobile learners are faced with, and to request for

pertaining reforms, the design of which the Scoreboard can help them in;

- Organisers of mobility projects, i.e. IVET institutions, companies involved in mobility projects, Erasmus+ National Agencies, and staff (teachers, trainers, guidance counsellors) involved in IVET mobility. These stakeholders' mobility-related activities confront them with issues and put them in good position to formulate requests and suggestions for improvement of mobility policies, which the Scoreboard can also support them in;
- Policy-makers at country level, for whom the Scoreboard is intended to be of use while preparing reforms to improve national mobility policies;
- EU level policy-makers, for whom the Scoreboard is also intended to be of use while monitoring the implementation of EU mobility policies, in particular the *Youth on the move* Recommendation, and also Erasmus+ and the emerging Erasmus Pro initiative.

To play its role, the Scoreboard offers two categories of tools:

- Tools targeted at providing policy-makers, stakeholders and users with *EU level* overviews of countries' structures, policies and performance, i.e.
 - Maps and indicators of countries' performance (Chapters 1 to 4);
 - Overview tables of countries' overall performance (Chapter 6);
- Tools targeted at providing policy-makers, stakeholders and users with *country-specific* information and analyses, i.e.
 - Country scorecards (Chapter 5);
 - Country fiches (Chapter 7).

Structure of document

This document is organised into 8 chapters.

Chapters 1 to 4 present the *maps* and *indicators* relating to the selected thematic areas. Each of these four chapters is devoted to one single thematic area, i.e. **Chapter 1**: Information and guidance; **Chapter 2**: Administrative and institutional issues; **Chapter 3**: Recognition of learning outcomes; and **Chapter 4**: Partnerships and funding. Each chapter presents maps along with an indicator for the thematic area considered. Maps are intended to feature country situations with respect to different dimensions of the thematic area. The purpose of the

indicators is to outline the extent to which countries meet the requirements of the “*Youth on the move*” Recommendation as regards the thematic area considered.

Chapter 5 presents *Country scorecards*. For each country, a scorecard is set up. The scorecard captures in a snapshot the country’s performance, overall, per indicator, and per criterion. It allows for identifying at a glance the main strengths and weaknesses of the country with respect to the requirements of the Recommendation.

Chapter 6 presents *Overview tables of countries’ performance*. The overview tables show the country scorecards for all countries all at once, along with the average performance of the set of countries monitored. Performance is presented on overall average, per indicator and per criterion. The tables allow for identifying in a snapshot (a) country categories in terms of degree of implementation of the Recommendation (all analysed thematic areas taken together); and (b) the main areas of strength and weakness for each country and for the set of countries on average.

Chapter 7 presents *Country fiches*. The country fiches are targeted at providing and supporting country-specific information, analyses and policy suggestions. Each country fiche first describes the country situation in terms of mobility-related structures and policies in each of the analysed thematic areas. For each thematic area, the descriptive part is followed by an analysis of the country’s strengths and weaknesses in terms of the implementation of the Recommendation. Finally, at the end of each fiche, steps for future improvements towards the full implementation of the Recommendation are suggested.

Chapter 8 presents the methodology of the Scoreboard.

CHAPTER 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

1.1. Council Recommendation

The Council Recommendation indicates that Member States should:

"(a) improve the quality of information and guidance on national, regional and local mobility opportunities and grant availability, targeting specific groups of learners, both within and outside the Union. Member States should make use of new, creative and interactive ways to disseminate information, communicate and exchange with young people and all other stakeholders;

(b) make information easily accessible to all young people regarding learning mobility, for example through centralised web portals and other web services, support centres (such as 'European offices'), information and counselling services. The use of Internet-based services can also be helpful. It is recommended to use the Euroguidance network in this context;

(c) cooperate with the Commission to further develop and update the PLOTEUS portal on learning opportunities, namely by increasing the number of national information resources that citizens can directly access through the multilingual PLOTEUS interface;

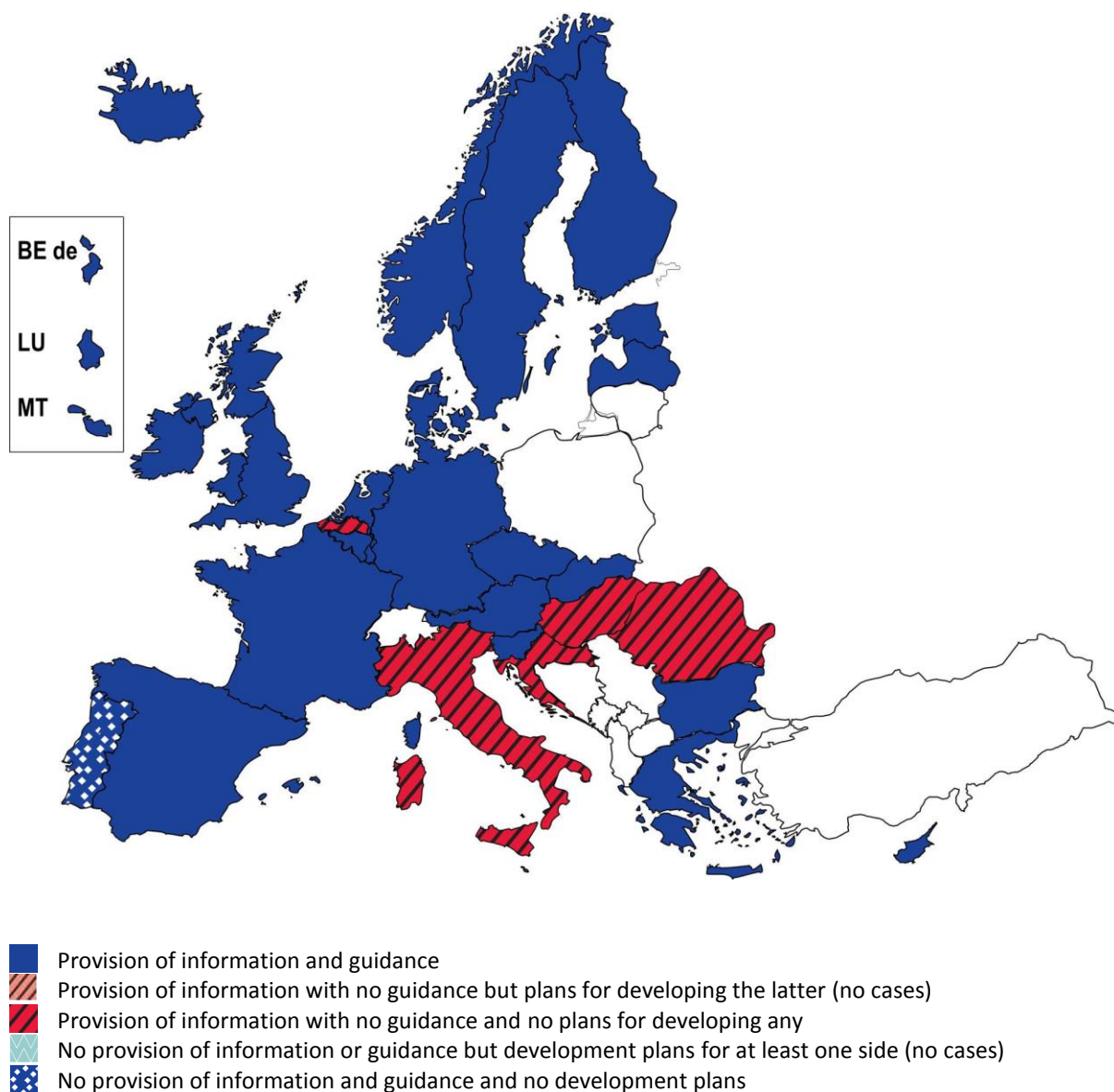
(d) encourage the relevant national and regional agencies to ensure that their work is integrated with that of stakeholders in learning mobility to ensure a clear, coherent and simple flow of information."

1.2. Maps

The maps presented here focus on three major aspects of Information and guidance, i.e. whether countries (a) provide information and guidance to IVET learners on mobility opportunities; (b) have coordination mechanisms for this provision; and (c) are taking steps to improve their

information and guidance provision.

Map 1.2.1 – Provision of information and guidance on international mobility for IVET learners



This map focuses on whether countries provide IVET learners with “information and guidance” or at least “information” for their international learning mobility. Information aims to raise learners’ awareness of existing opportunities, how to access them (including from an administrative standpoint), and how to undertake leaving and learning abroad. It is most often delivered to a target group through publications, websites, meetings, events and fairs. Guidance rather tends to focus on the individual and deals with helping people clarify their interests and

values, identify their own skills, reflect on their experience, formulate plans, and finally make career-oriented mobility decision. Guidance would rather be delivered through face-to-face (or sometimes phone) interviews.

In general, countries provide information, but not necessarily guidance. Those countries which provide guidance also provide information. Countries that do not provide guidance are distinguished depending on whether they have (or not) plans to develop it.

22 countries plus two regions of Belgium provide IVET learners with information and guidance for international mobility. Four countries (Croatia, Hungary, Italy and Romania) as well as Belgium-NL do not provide guidance and have no plans to develop it. Of the 28 countries reviewed, only Portugal lacks mechanisms to provide IVET learners with “information and guidance” or even “information” on international learning mobility.

Section 1.1.1 of each country fiche gives details on the country’s approach to providing information and guidance on international mobility in IVET.

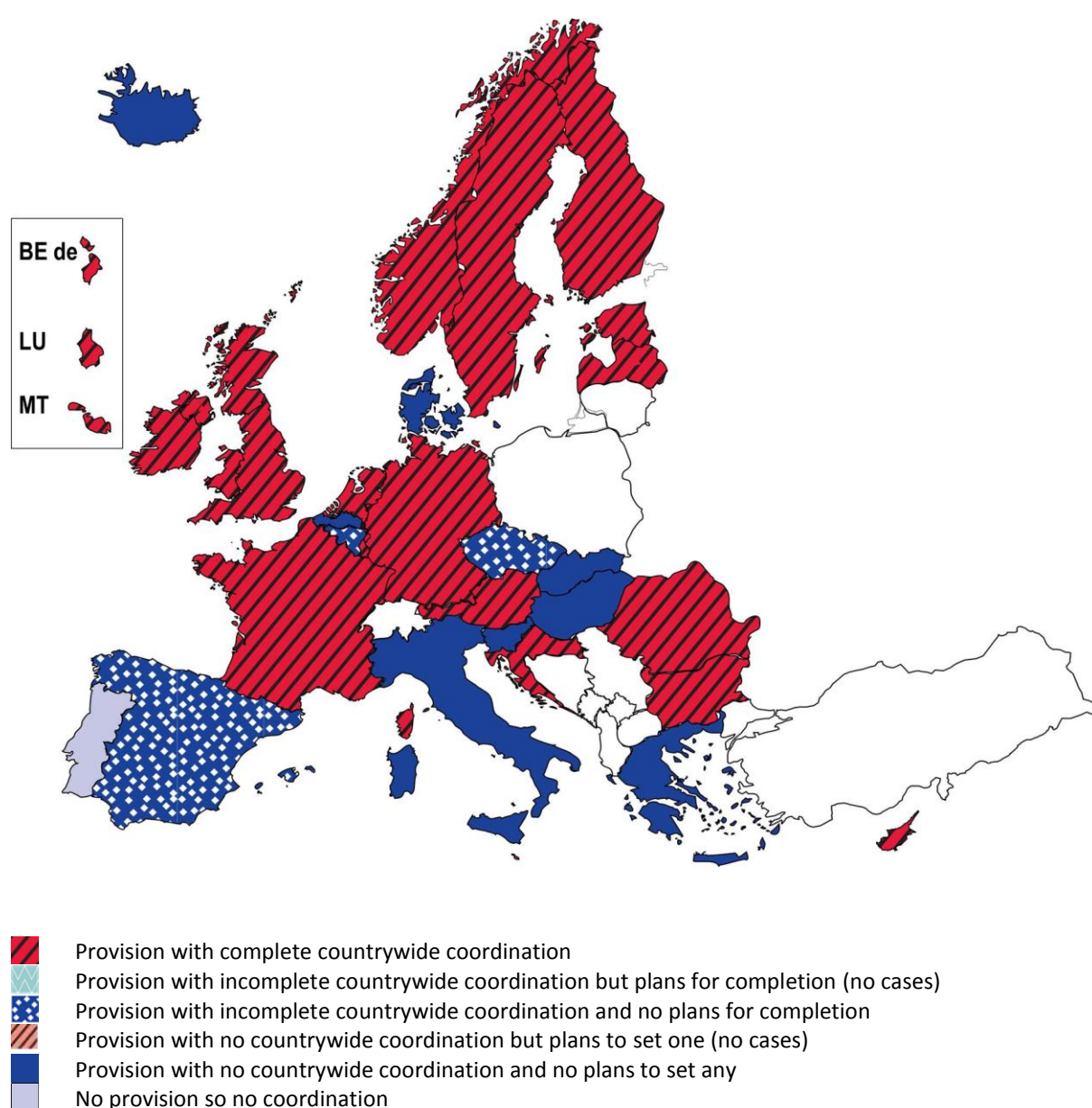
Map 1.2.2 – Countrywide coordination of the provision of information and/or guidance on international mobility for IVET learners

This map presents countries’ situations in terms of whether their provision of information / information and guidance is countrywide coordinated or not. Coordination does not mean centralisation: it can be ensured through cooperation and dialogue between independent players. Coordination usually leads to avoiding overlaps as well as coverage gaps. Broadly speaking, coordination is of major importance because it opens ways to convergence, consistency, synergies and finally effectiveness of policies and practices. Coordination of policies and practices is therefore a key factor for success in the achievement of IVET international learning mobility.

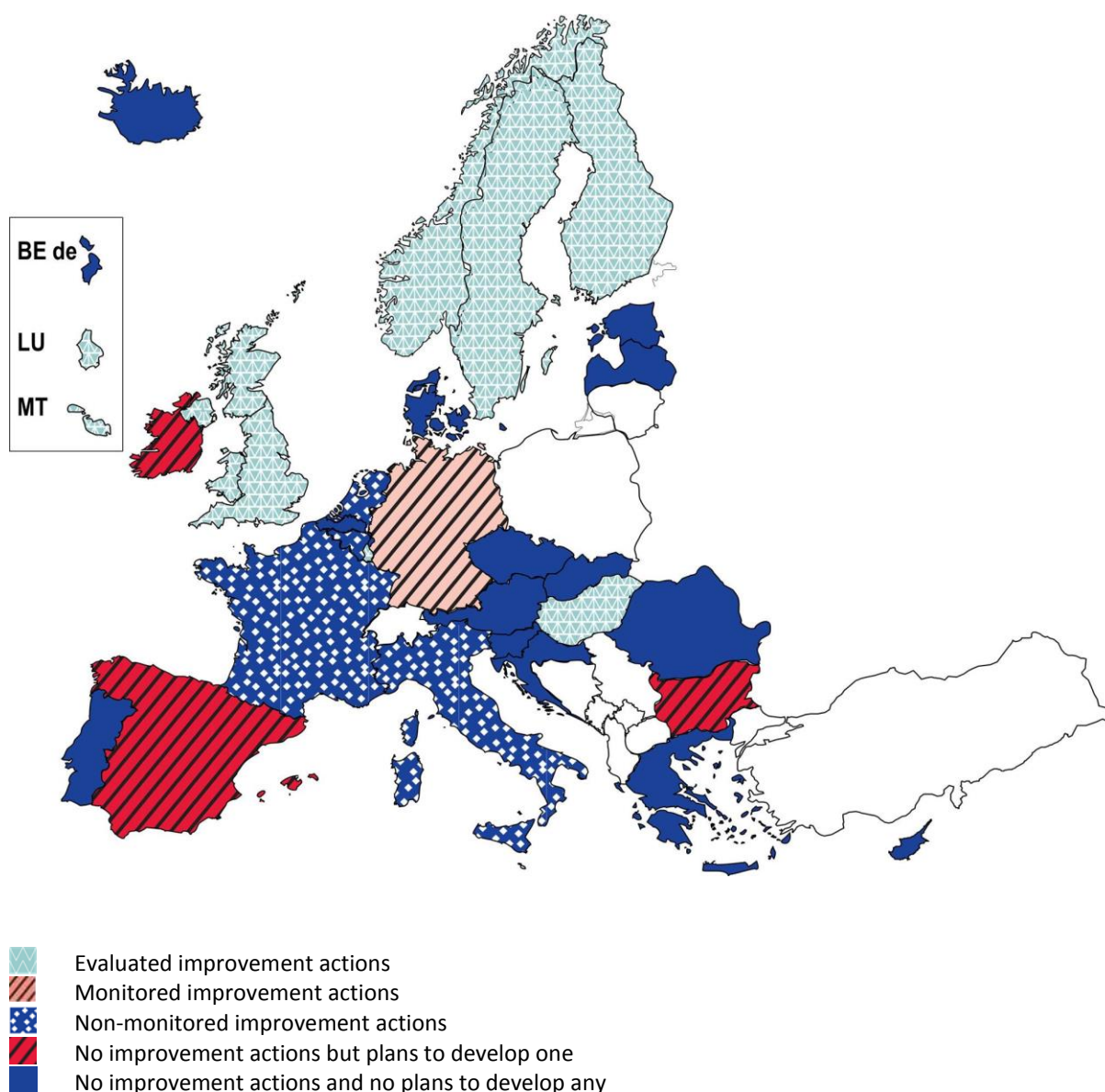
Situations of countries in terms of coordination are varied. Depending on the country, coordination can be complete (there is a countrywide regulatory or cooperation framework within which all players in the area of information and guidance operate), or incomplete (only part of players and/or actions are framed), or simply lacking. Countries may also have development/completion plans when coordination is incomplete or lacking.

In the group of 28 countries represented on the map, 17 (plus Belgium-DE) have complete countrywide coordination of their provision of information or information and guidance; coordination is incomplete with no development plan in two countries (Czech Republic and Spain) as well as Belgium-FR; coordination is lacking with no development plan in seven countries (i.e. Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Slovakia and Slovenia) and Belgium-NL. Portugal has no provision, so no coordination thereof.

Section 1.1.2 of each country fiche gives details on the country's approach to coordinating countrywide the provision of information / information and guidance on international mobility in IVET.



Map 1.2.3 – Actions to improve the provision of information and guidance on international mobility for IVET learners



This map focuses on whether countries have taken (or not) actions to improve their provision of information / information and guidance on international learning mobility to IVET learners. Improvement actions can take several forms, e.g. reshuffling in a more appropriate way the services in charge of information and guidance for IVET learners' mobility (Norway); reinforcing the competences of staff in charge of information and guidance provision (Germany); developing a complementary

information channel where necessary (Germany); updating information activities according to users' needs (Hungary); among others.

Countries' situations are varied. Some countries have improvement actions that are evaluated, i.e. improvement actions that are subject to monitoring activities (audits, feedback from users, reports, etc.) which themselves translate into recommendations that are implemented to shape the next generation of actions. In some other countries, improvement actions are simply monitored, without any orientation towards future reforms. Countries may also take initiatives for improvement but without any monitoring. Finally, countries may lack improvement actions, and be (or not) in the course of preparing some.

In the group of 28 countries represented on the map, 11 have improvement actions for their provision of information / information and guidance. These actions are evaluated in Finland, Hungary, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The improvement actions are monitored in Germany. They are not monitored in France, Italy, the Netherlands and Belgium-FR. Bulgaria, Ireland and Spain lack improvement actions but have development plans. The remaining 13 countries (as well as Belgium-DE and Belgium-NL) lack improvement actions and plans to develop any.

Sections 1.1.4 and 1.1.5 of each country fiche give details on the country's approach to improving the provision of information and guidance on international mobility in IVET.

1.3. Indicator for the area

The 2011 Council Recommendation "*Youth on the move*" assigns to countries the objective of putting in place and improving provision of information and guidance on international learning mobility for IVET learners.

The indicator for monitoring the provision of information and guidance, and how it is improved, is based on three reference criteria:

- (a) A mechanism to provide IVET learners with information and guidance on international learning mobility is in place;
- (b) The provision of information / information and guidance to IVET

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learners for their international mobility is coordinated countrywide³ thus ensuring consistent and convergent policies and practices; and

- (c) Evaluated actions to improve the provision of information / information and guidance to IVET learners for their international mobility are in place.

Table 1B.1 presents the indicator in terms of criteria and benchmarks.

Table 1B.1. Indicator 1 – Information and guidance: criteria and benchmarks			
	Criterion 1.1 – A mechanism to provide IVET learners with information and guidance on international learning mobility is in place	Criterion 1.2 – The provision of information / information and guidance to IVET learners for their international mobility is coordinated countrywide	Criterion 1.3 – Evaluated actions to improve the provision of information / information and guidance to IVET learners for their international mobility are in place
5	Mechanisms to provide IVET learners with both information and guidance for their international learning mobility are in place	Complete countrywide coordination of the existing provision of information / information and guidance to IVET learners for their international mobility is in place	Actions to improve the existing provision of information / information and guidance are in place and subject to regular evaluation which translates in implemented recommendations oriented towards reforms
4	Mechanisms to provide IVET learners with information but no guidance for their international learning mobility are in place. Preliminary preparation (initial debate, consultation, design, planning, etc.) to develop guidance has begun.	Incomplete coordination of the existing provision of information / information and guidance is in place (elements of coordination exist, but no complete countrywide coordination of all players and/or actions). However, plans to develop complete coordination are being prepared.	Actions to improve the existing provision of information / information and guidance are in place and subject to monitoring that does not systematically translate in implemented recommendations oriented towards reforms
3	Mechanisms to provide IVET learners with information but no guidance for their international learning mobility are in place. No plans for developing guidance are	Incomplete coordination of the existing provision of information / information and guidance is in place (elements of coordination exist, but no complete countrywide coordination of all	Actions to improve the existing provision of information / information and guidance are in place but are not monitored

³ There is countrywide coordination of a process when, for all existing actions related to the process, both regulation and implementation of the process are arranged through / underpinned by

- Either top-down guidelines followed by all stakeholders/players; or
- Any form of cooperation and dialogue involving all stakeholders/players and leading to convergent practices and approaches.

Countrywide coordination may be partial / incomplete when it applies only to part of the actions or players related to the process.

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	being prepared.	players and/or actions). No plans to make the coordination complete are being prepared.	
2	No mechanisms to provide IVET learners with information / information and guidance for their international learning mobility is in place, but preliminary preparation (initial debate, consultation, design, planning, etc.) to set one has begun	No countrywide coordination of the existing provision of information / information and guidance is in place, but preliminary preparation (initial debate, consultation, design, planning, etc.) to set one has begun	There are no actions to improve the existing provision of information / information and guidance, but preliminary preparation (initial debate, consultation, design, planning, etc.) to develop one has begun
1	No mechanisms to provide IVET learners with information / information and guidance for their international learning mobility is in place, and there is no plan to initiate any	No countrywide coordination of the existing provision of information / information and guidance is in place, and there is no plan to set any	There are no actions to improve the existing provision of information / information and guidance, and no plan to initiate any

Calculation of indicator's average score per country leads to the *Country categorisation* presented in Table 1B.2 below.

Table 1B.2. Indicator 1 – Information and guidance: Country categorisation by level of performance			
		Countries per category	
Degree of closeness / distance to full implementation of Recommendation		Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom	Average EU 26
		Austria, Belgium-DE, Belgium-FR, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Spain	Average EU 26+IS+NO
		Belgium-All, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia	
		Belgium-NL	
		Portugal	

CHAPTER 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES RELATING TO THE LEARNING PERIOD ABROAD

2.1. Council Recommendation

The Council Recommendation indicates that Member States should:

“(a) resolve, where possible, administrative issues that create difficulties in obtaining visas and residency permits for non-European Union residents who wish to pursue a learning opportunity in a Member State;

(b) reduce, where possible, administrative burdens in order to promote learning mobility to and from the Union. Greater cooperation and partnerships with third countries, agreements between the relevant authorities across Member States and bilateral agreements between institutions would facilitate learning mobility between the Union and other parts of the world;

(c) consider issues resulting from different legal rules across the Union with regard to minors taking part in learning mobility schemes;

(d) define clear systems for encouraging apprentices in initial vocational education to engage in learning mobility. To foster the learning mobility of apprentices and also of young researchers, Member States should, in accordance with their national legislation, ensure appropriate access to protection in terms of insurance, labour standards, health and safety requirements and tax, social security and pension arrangements;

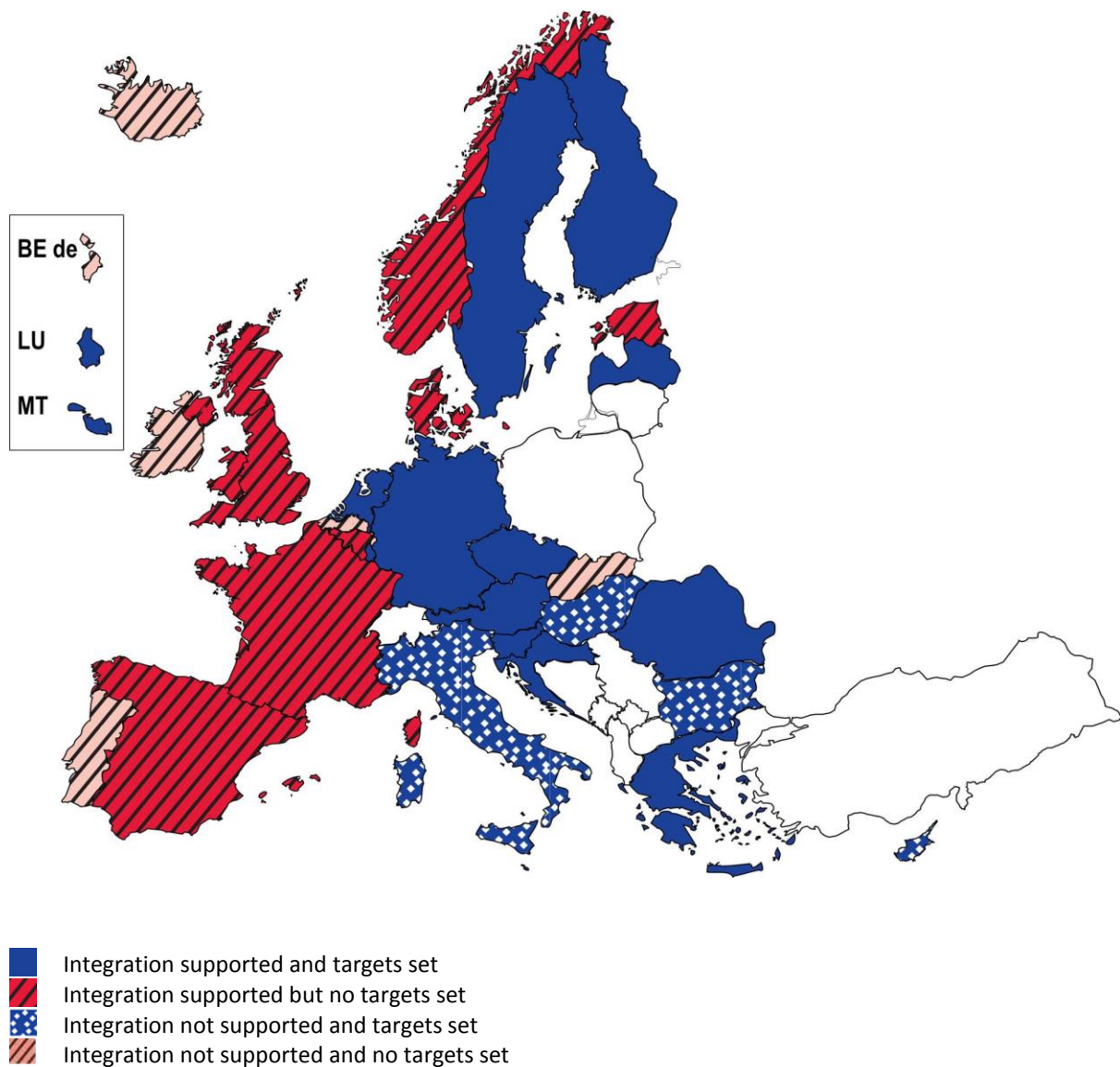
(e) actively encourage jointly developed and delivered education and training programmes with institutions in other countries;

(f) integrate opportunities for learning mobility into the curriculum or training programme, where appropriate. In addition, provide opportunities also for short mobility periods, which may help to encourage more young people to be mobile.”

2.2. Maps

The maps presented here feature country situations with respect to a varied range of administrative and institutional obstacles to the international mobility of IVET learners. Focus is on policy intentions (integrating mobility experiences into curricula, setting policy targets for mobility) as well as concrete measures implemented (e.g. reducing administrative burdens) to promote mobility.

Map 2.2.1 – Intention to integrate mobility experiences in curricula and setting of policy targets



This map distinguishes countries depending on whether they provide (or not) support to the international mobility of IVET learners through (a) supporting the integration of international learning mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes; and/or (b) setting targets (whether quantitative or qualitative) at national level for international learning mobility in IVET.

Supporting integration of mobility experiences in curricula may take several forms, e.g. allowing for it as a standard practice, valorising it, encouraging it, advertising it, or even requiring it. The support may be expressed through a variety of channels which all represent a country's policy intention, e.g. policy-makers' speeches and discourse, written official non-regulatory documents (Development plans, National strategies, White papers, policy orientation documents), regulations, official curricula of IVET programmes, assignment of a mission to a public institution, etc. Support clearly contrasts with situation where integration is prohibited or allowed in very restricted limits only.

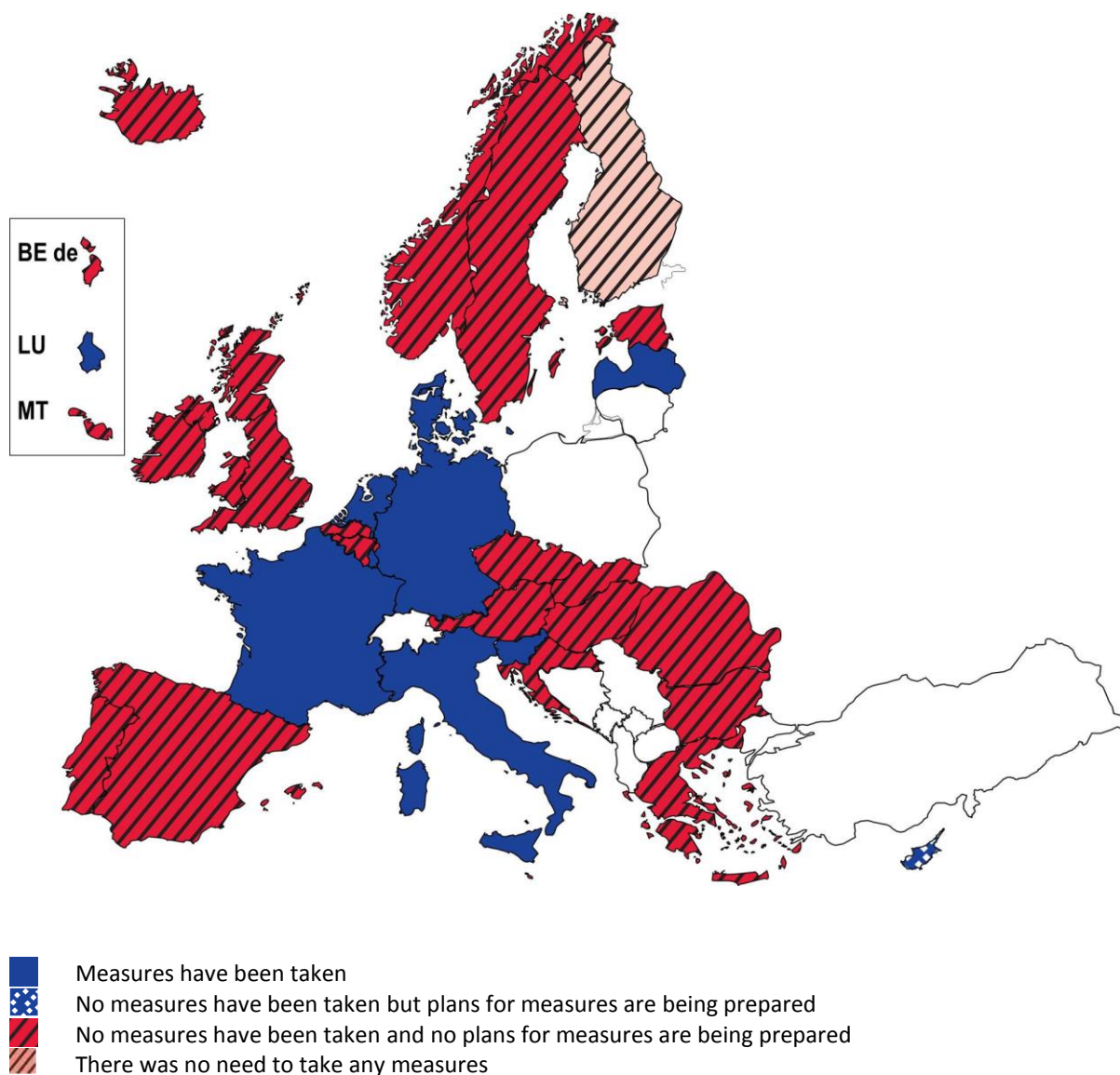
National targets may be quantitative (e.g. implementing the EU 6% benchmark) or qualitative (e.g. like in the Czech Republic, better focusing on reducing inequalities in education and facilitating access to participants with disadvantaged backgrounds).

The map synthesises the variety of situations into four categories, i.e. whether countries support integration or have set targets, or both, or none.

In the group of 28 countries represented, 13 both support integration of mobility in curricula and have set targets for mobility in IVET. Six countries (Denmark, Estonia, France, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom) as well as Belgium-FR support integration but have not set targets. In contrast, four countries (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Hungary and Italy) have set targets but do not support integration. Finally, four countries (Iceland, Ireland, Portugal, Slovakia) along with Belgium-DE and Belgium-NL have not set targets and do not support integration.

Section 2.1.1 of each country fiche gives details on the country's approach to integrating mobility in IVET curricula and setting mobility targets in IVET.

Map 2.2.2 – Measures taken to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits, or to assist applicants



This map features countries' situations depending on whether measures have been taken (or not) to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries. Possible measures are of two types: either alleviating the regulatory requirements for entry on the territory; or providing assistance to learners and their sending/receiving institutions to help them cope more easily with the standard regulatory requirements. Type 1 measures were taken in Latvia (simplified procedure). Type 2 measures were carried out in Denmark (setting up

one-stop shops); Germany (dedicated information and application website combined with a personal telephone hotline for personal advice); Italy (approaching the national authorities in charge of visa and permit delivery to raise their understanding of the specific work-based study situation of IVET learners as opposed to standard applicants from third countries); or Slovenia (priority treatment by the competent authorities).

The map distinguishes categories depending on whether measures were necessary or not and, if they were, whether they were taken or not. When necessary measures were not taken, it is considered whether some are in preparation. Measures are considered not necessary if fully-fledged investigations / research / studies / users or stakeholders surveys targeted at checking the need for such measures on the ground have been carried out and came to the conclusion that no such needs exist.

With the exception of Finland, there is no evidence that measures were not necessary in the 28 countries represented. Measures were taken in eight countries (Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Slovenia). Cyprus has development plans. The remaining 18 countries lack measures and development plans.

Section 2.1.2 of each country fiche gives details on the country's approach to smoothing the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries.

Map 2.2.3 – Measures taken to reduce the administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility, or to assist applicants

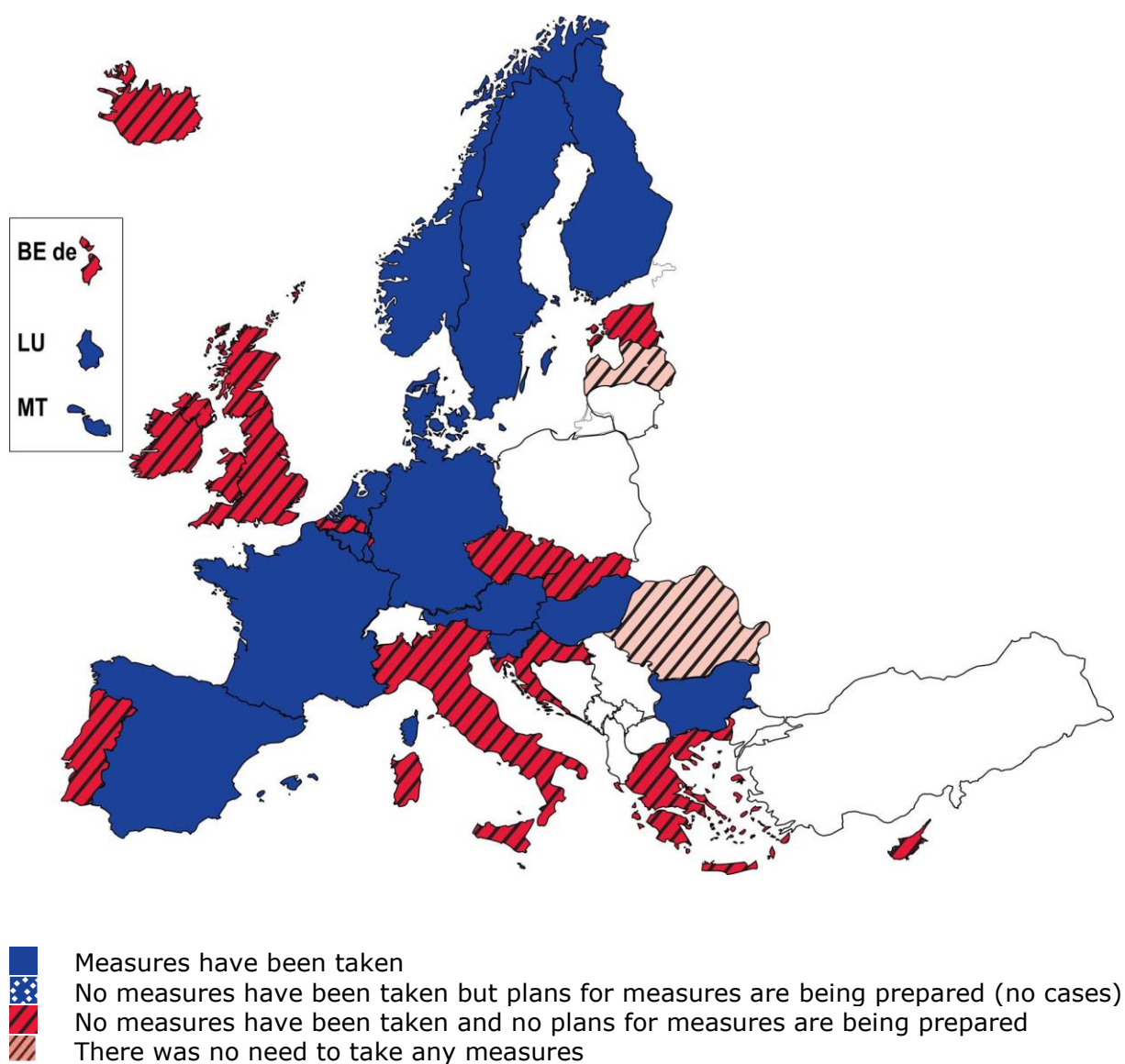
Arranging mobility may induce administrative burdens, e.g. related to submitting applications, securing funding, organising stay. Depending on the mobility scheme, administrative burdens are borne either by the learners or their sending/receiving institutions (or both). Administrative burdens can be reduced through a variety of measures, e.g. providing administrative support (Austria, Finland); setting up one-stop shops (Denmark, Malta); providing information, guidance and mentoring (Finland); setting up simplified administrative procedures (France); holding coordination meetings bringing together all stakeholders in order to agree on how to streamline the information and assistance to foreign learners (the Netherlands).

The map distinguishes categories depending on whether measures were necessary or not and, if they were, whether they were taken or not (if not, specifying whether plans for measures are being prepared).

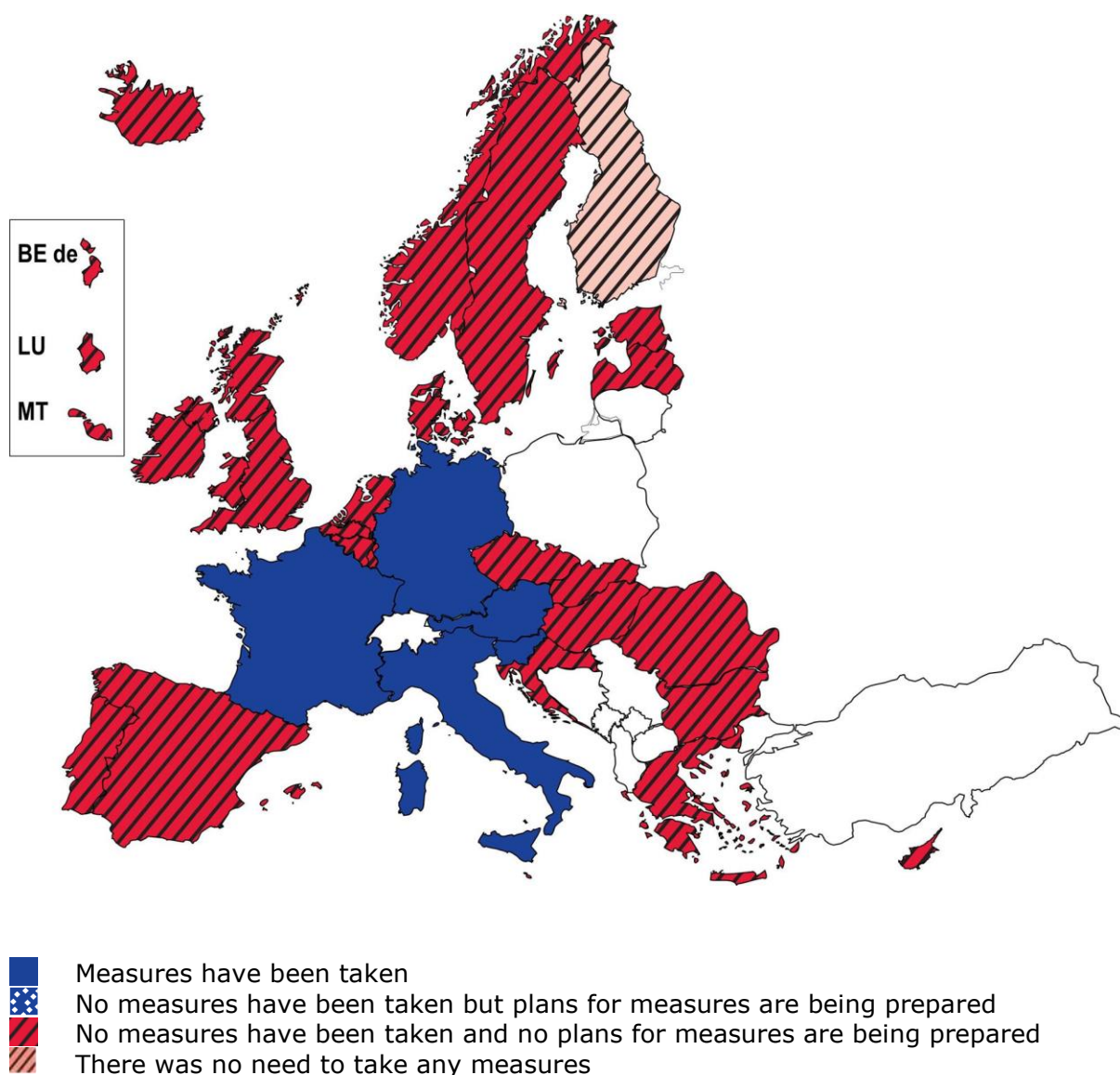
Measures are considered not necessary if fully-fledged investigations / research / studies / users or stakeholders surveys targeted at checking the need for such measures on the ground have been carried out and came to the conclusion that no such needs exist.

Among the 28 countries represented, 14 (as well as Belgium-FR) have taken measures to reduce administrative burdens. 11 countries and also Belgium-DE and Belgium-NL lack measures and development plans whereas there is no evidence that action was not necessary. Measures appeared to be un-needed in Latvia and Romania.

Section 2.1.3 of each country fiche gives details on the country's approach to reducing the administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility.



Map 2.2.4 – Measures taken to remove the legal obstacles that may hinder the mobility of minor learners, or to assist applicants



This map features country situations depending on whether measures have been taken to remove the obstacles that may hinder the mobility of IVET learners aged less than 18. Examples of such obstacles may be the requirements that the parental consent is written by both parents and is notarised or legalised; prior approval of the list of travellers is delivered by country authorities; sending institutions are registered on a special list of those entitled to send minors abroad; the supervisors have to know the language of the destination country and those of the countries crossed.

Measures to remove the obstacles to minor IVET learners' mobility can take several forms, e.g. alleviating the legal and administrative requirements, simplifying the form of the parental consent, making the form available online, or funding the travel and stay of accompanying adults.

The map distinguishes categories depending on whether measures were necessary or not and, if they were, whether they were taken or not (if not, specifying whether plans for measures are being prepared). Measures are considered not necessary if fully-fledged investigations / research / studies / users or stakeholders surveys targeted at checking the need for such measures on the ground have been carried out and came to the conclusion that no such needs exist.

With the exception of Finland, there is no evidence that measures were not necessary in the 28 countries represented. However only five countries (Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Slovenia) took steps. None of the remaining 22 countries have taken measures or are preparing development plans.

Section 2.1.4 of each country fiche gives details on the country's approach to removing the obstacles to minor IVET learners' international mobility.

2.3. Indicator for the area

The 2011 Council Recommendation "*Youth on the move*" assigns to countries the objective of reducing the administrative and institutional obstacles that can hinder the international learning mobility of IVET learners.

The indicator for monitoring this field of action is based on the following five key dimensions:

- (b) The country has a clear policy intention to integrate international learning mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes;
- (a) Countrywide targets for international learning mobility in IVET have been set;
- (c) Where necessary⁴, measures have been taken to ensure the delivery

⁴ Measures are considered un-necessary where fully-fledged investigations / research / studies / users or stakeholders surveys targeted at checking the need for such measures

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of visas and residency permits without difficulties to IVET learners from third countries, or assist learners (and/or their institutions) in their application process;

- (d) Where necessary⁵, measures have been taken to alleviate the administrative burdens that may hinder the international mobility of IVET learners, or assist learners (and/or their institutions) in their application process;
- (e) Where necessary⁶, measures have been taken to remove the legal obstacles that may prevent the international learning mobility of IVET learners aged below 18, or assist learners (and/or their institutions) in their mobility process.

These five dimensions have been grouped into two criteria. Table 2B.1 presents the indicator in terms of criteria and benchmarks.

Table 2B.1. Indicator 2 – Administrative and institutional issues: criteria and benchmarks		
	Criterion 2.1 – The country has policy intention to integrate international mobility in IVET curricula, and countrywide targets for international mobility in IVET have been set	Criterion 2.2 – Where necessary, the country has taken measures to ensure the delivery of visas and residency permits without difficulties to IVET learners from third countries; alleviate the administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility; and remove the legal barriers to the mobility of minors
5	The country has policy intention to integrate international mobility in IVET curricula, and countrywide targets for international mobility in IVET have been set	The country has taken measures that cover the three dimensions (i.e. facilitating the access to visas and residency permits, alleviating the administrative burdens, and easing the mobility of minors), <u>OR</u> all dimensions where measures were necessary
4	<u>EITHER</u> the country has policy intention to integrate international mobility in IVET curricula <u>OR</u> countrywide targets for international mobility in IVET have been set, and preliminary preparation (initial debate, consultation, design, planning, etc.) to develop the missing	Measures were necessary ▪ in all three dimensions but the country has taken measures in only two of them; <u>OR</u> ▪ in two dimensions, but measures were taken in one only; <u>OR</u> ▪ in one dimension but no measure was taken

on the ground have been carried out and came to the conclusion that no such needs exist.

⁵ Measures are considered un-necessary where fully-fledged investigations / research / studies / users or stakeholders surveys targeted at checking the need for such measures on the ground have been carried out and came to the conclusion that no such needs exist.

⁶ Measures are considered un-necessary where fully-fledged investigations / research / studies / users or stakeholders surveys targeted at checking the need for such measures on the ground have been carried out and came to the conclusion that no such needs exist.

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	dimension has begun	
3	<u>EITHER</u> the country has policy intention to integrate international mobility in IVET curricula <u>OR</u> countrywide targets for international mobility in IVET have been set, but there is no plan to develop the missing dimension	Measures were necessary in all three dimensions but the country has taken measures in only one dimension
2	<u>NEITHER</u> has the country policy intention to integrate international mobility in IVET curricula <u>NOR</u> have countrywide targets for international mobility in IVET been set, but preliminary preparation (initial debate, consultation, design, planning, etc.) to develop at least one of the missing dimension has begun	Measures were necessary in two or all of the three dimensions but the country has not taken any measures in any of the dimensions. However, preliminary preparation (initial debate, consultation, design, planning, etc.) to develop at least one measure has begun
1	<u>NEITHER</u> has the country policy intention to integrate international mobility in IVET curricula <u>NOR</u> have countrywide targets for international mobility in IVET been set, and there is no plan to develop any of the missing dimensions	Measures were necessary in two or all of the three dimensions but the country has not taken any measures in any of the dimensions, and no measure is in preparation

Calculation of indicator's average score per country leads to the *Country categorisation* presented in Table 2B.2 below.

Table 2B.2. Indicator 2 – Administrative and institutional issues: Country categorisation by level of performance			
		Countries per category	
Degree of closeness / distance to full implementation of Recommendation		Austria, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Slovenia	Average EU 26
		Denmark, France, Italy, Malta, Sweden	Average EU 26+IS+NO
		Belgium-FR, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Norway, Romania, Spain	
		Belgium-All, Estonia, Ireland, United Kingdom	
		Belgium-DE, Belgium-NL, Iceland, Portugal, Slovakia	

CHAPTER 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES ACQUIRED ABROAD

3.1. Council Recommendation

The Council Recommendation indicates that Member States should:

“(a) promote the implementation and use of Union instruments which facilitate the transfer and validation of the learning outcomes of mobility experiences between Member States. Those instruments should also be better publicised, especially among employers;

(b) improve procedures and guidelines for the validation and recognition of both informal and non-formal learning in order to facilitate more mobility, for example in voluntary activities and youth work;

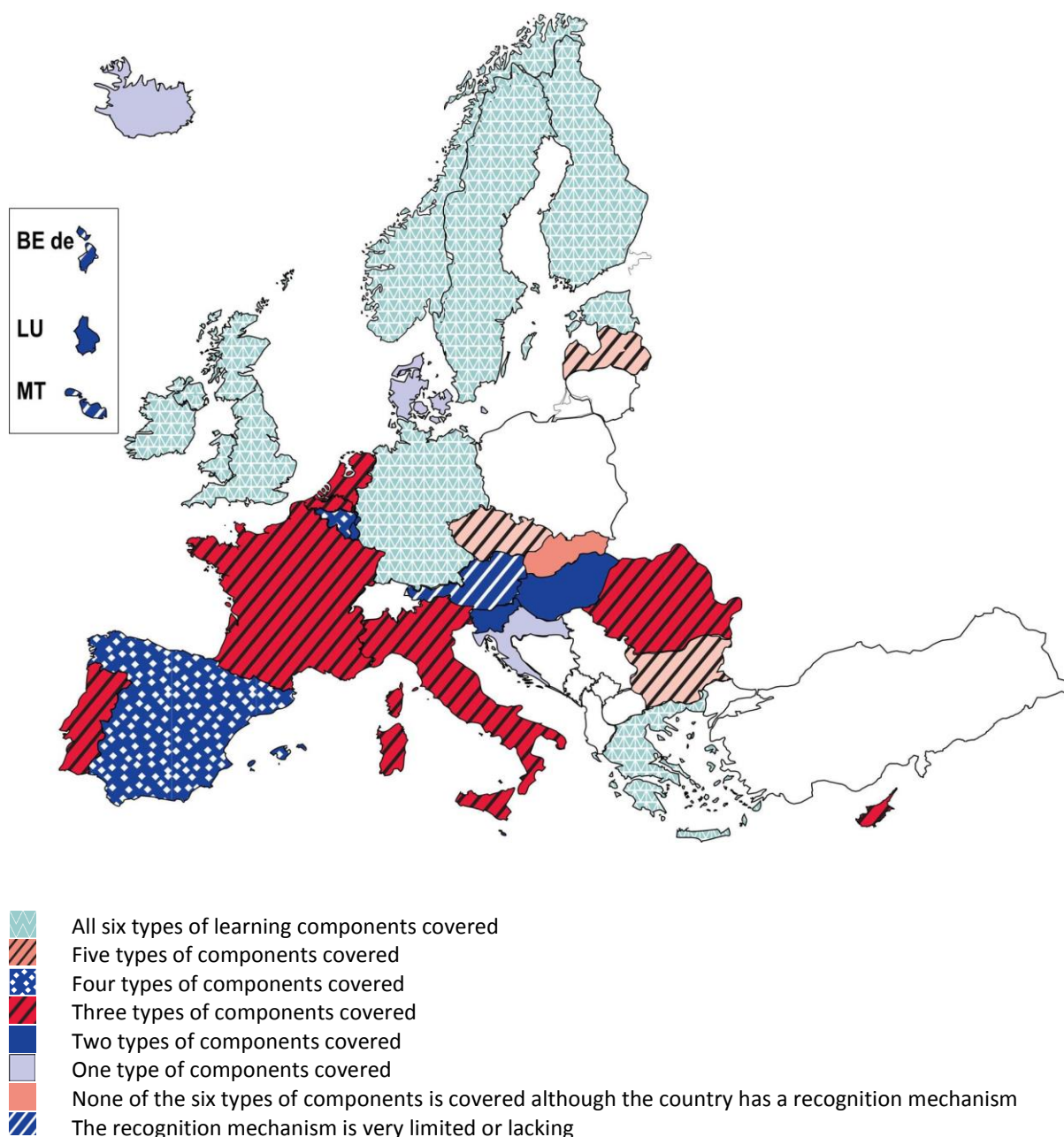
(c) address the issue of validation and recognition of knowledge, skills and competences, such as foreign language skills, acquired during mobility periods abroad;

(d) support, and enhance the visibility of, contact points where individuals can obtain information on how their qualifications can be recognised and certified after their return from abroad”

3.2. Maps

The maps presented here feature country situations in relation to a variety of aspects regarding the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad: easiness of access to recognition, scope of recognition, coordination of approach to recognition, time frame, visibility of contact points, and use of EU tools.

Map 3.2.1 – Scope of recognition of learning acquired abroad by IVET learners



This map reflects countries' openness to recognition in terms of the range of learning components that can be taken into account. Countries are distinguished here depending on the variety of learning components that their approach to recognition covers. The components considered are courses, credit points, units, modules, programmes, qualifications / diplomas / degrees. Depending on the country, all six types of components are covered, or only part of them, or none of them.

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In the group of 28 countries represented, eight recognise the six types of learning outcomes (Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom). Three countries recognise five types of components (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Latvia). Spain and Belgium-FR recognise four types of components. Six countries and Belgium-NL recognise three types of components (Cyprus, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Romania). Three countries (Hungary, Luxembourg, Slovenia) recognise two types of components. Another three countries (Croatia, Denmark and Iceland) recognise only one of the six types of components. Slovakia has a recognition mechanism but does not recognise any of the six types reviewed here⁷. In Austria, Malta and Belgium-DE, recognition mechanisms are lacking or with very limited coverage.

Table 3A.1 provides the details of the learning components for which recognition is possible in each country. Overall, these learning components appear to be equally popular across these 28 reviewed countries: each component is in use in 14 to 18 countries.

Table 3A.1. Learning components for which recognition is possible in countries						
Country	Learning components					
	Courses	Credit points	Units	Modules	Programmes	Qualifications Diplomas Degrees
Austria	<i>Very restrictive arrangements for recognition – Only recognition of semesters is possible</i>					
Belgium-DE	<i>No possibility of recognition</i>					
Belgium-FR			X	X	X	X
Belgium-NL	X			X	X	
Bulgaria	X	X		X	X	X
Croatia			X			
Cyprus	X			X	X	
Czech Republic	X		X	X	X	X
Denmark			X			
Estonia	X	X	X	X	X	X
Finland	X	X	X	X	X	X
France		X	X			X
Germany	X	X	X	X	X	X
Greece	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hungary			X			X
Iceland		X				
Ireland	X	X	X	X	X	X
Italy		X	X			X
Latvia	X	X		X	X	X
Luxembourg				X	X	

⁷ Slovakia country fiche explains: "learning outcomes are identified and agreed between sending and receiving institutions, regardless of any reference to courses, credit points, units, modules, programmes or qualifications".

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Country	Learning components					
	Courses	Credit points	Units	Modules	Programmes	Qualifications Diplomas Degrees
Malta	<i>No possibility of recognition</i>					
Netherlands	X				X	X
Norway	X	X	X	X	X	X
Portugal	X				X	X
Romania	X		X	X		
Slovakia	<i>None of these components is recognised although the country has a recognition mechanism</i>					
Slovenia			X	X		
Spain	X	X		X		X
Sweden	X	X	X	X	X	X
United Kingdom	X	X	X	X	X	X
Total	17	14	17	18	17	18

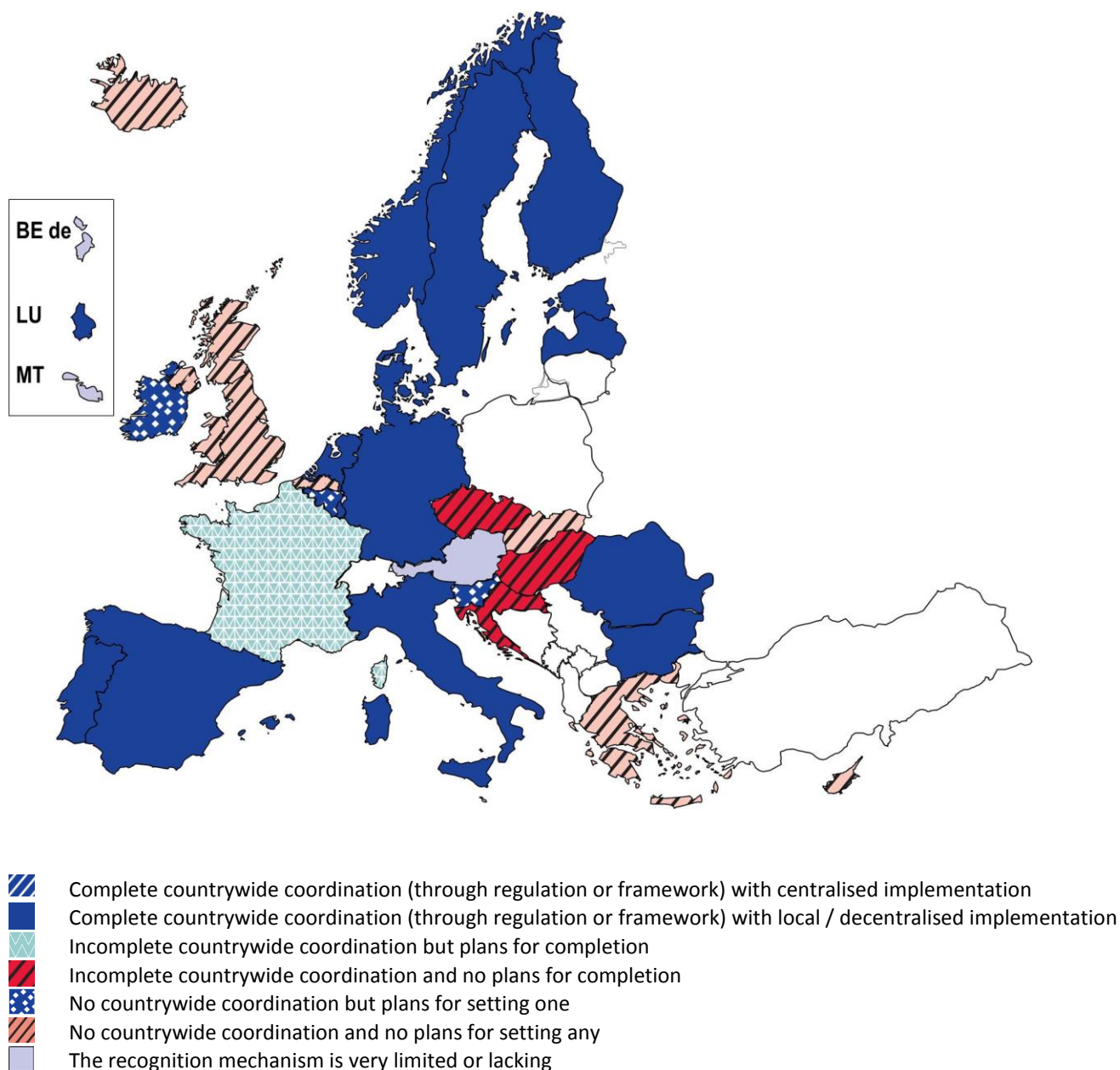
Section 3.1.2 of each country fiche gives more details on the country's approach to the scope of recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET learners.

Map 3.2.2 – Countrywide coordination of the approach to recognition

This map distinguishes countries depending on whether their approach to the recognition of learning acquired abroad by IVET learners is coordinated countrywide or not. Coordination means that players operate within a common countrywide framework set by regulations or agreements between players. Coordination does not require that implementation is centralised: there may be countrywide coordination with either centralised or local/decentralised implementation. Broadly speaking, coordination is of major importance because it opens ways to convergence, consistency, synergies and finally effectiveness of policies and practices. Coordination of policies and practices is therefore a key factor for success in the achievement of IVET international learning mobility.

Situations of countries in terms of coordination are varied. Depending on the country, coordination can be complete (the whole recognition process and all players are covered), or incomplete (only part of players and/or recognition-related actions are framed), or simply lacking. Countries may also have development plans when coordination is incomplete or lacking.

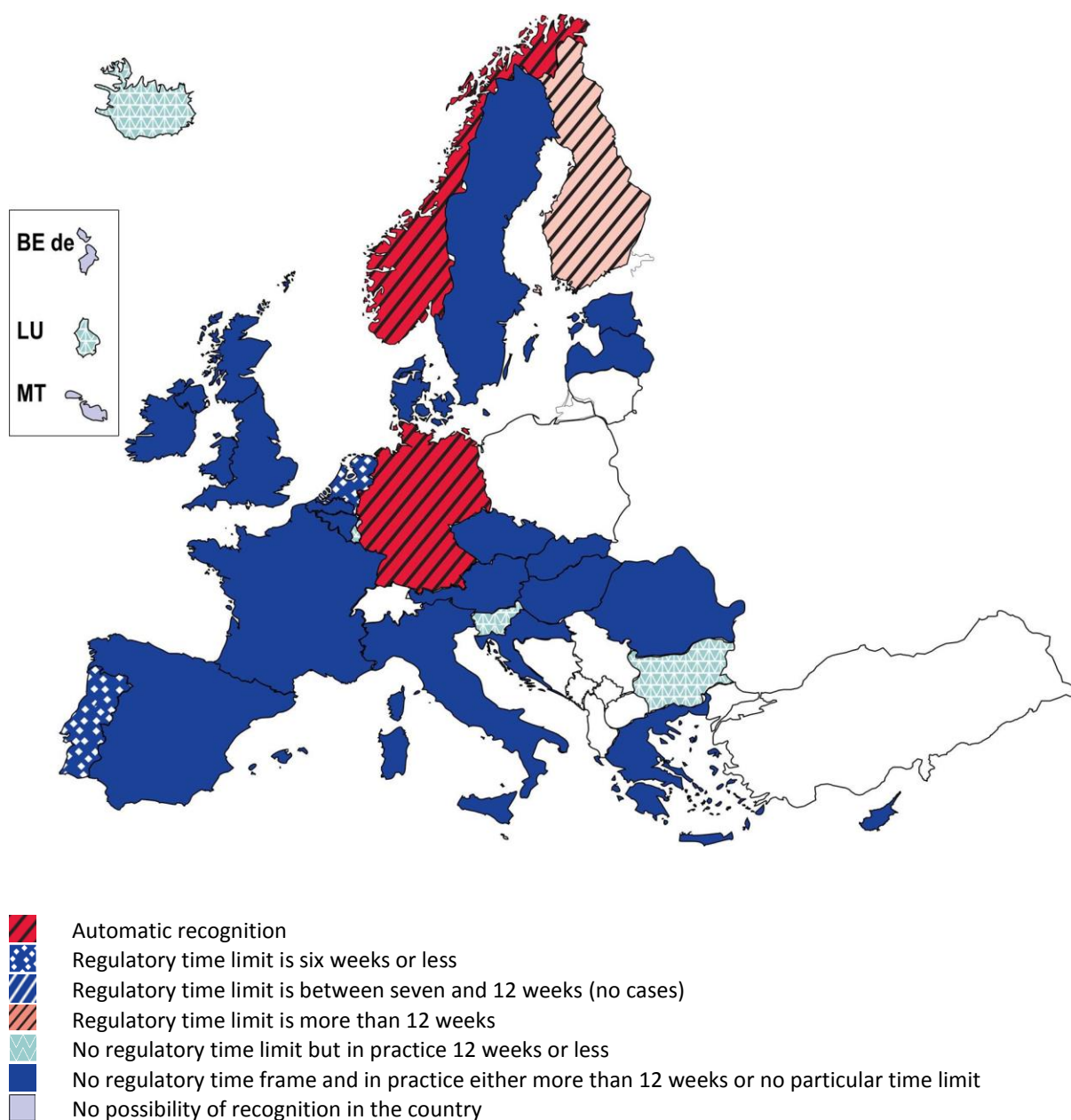
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Among the 28 countries represented, 14 have complete nationwide coordination, all with decentralised implementation (Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Sweden). France has incomplete coordination, but with plans for completion. Croatia, the Czech Republic and Hungary have incomplete coordination but no plans for completion. Ireland, Slovenia and Belgium-FR lack nationwide coordination but are planning to develop one. Five countries (Cyprus, Greece, Iceland, Slovakia, and the United Kingdom) and Belgium-NL lack nationwide coordination and development plans. In Austria, Malta and Belgium-DE, recognition is lacking or very limited, so there are no coordination mechanisms.

Section 3.1.3 of each country fiche gives details on the coordination of the country's approach to recognition.

Map 3.2.3 – Time limit for granting recognition



This map is focused on the time frame for granting recognition, including upon learners' request. The underlying rationale is that, from a user standpoint, the sooner recognition is processed and notified, the better for being able to go ahead with further study/work plans.

Countries are distinguished depending on whether they have (or not) a time frame for the recognition process. When there is a time frame, it can be set-up by regulations or usual practice.

Some countries (Germany, Norway) have automatic recognition, so the learner knows from the start that recognition will be granted. Three countries have a regulatory time limit for processing recognition, which is maximum six weeks in the Netherlands and Portugal; and more than 12 weeks in Finland. In Bulgaria, Iceland, Luxembourg and Slovenia, there is a 12-weeks maximum time limit, which is not regulatory but set by practice. In Belgium-FR, Belgium-NL and 17 countries, there is either no time frame at all or a practice-based limit of more than 12 weeks. Malta and Belgium-DE have no recognition mechanism so no time frame for it.

Section 3.1.4 of each country fiche gives details on the country's approach with respect to the time-frame of the recognition process.

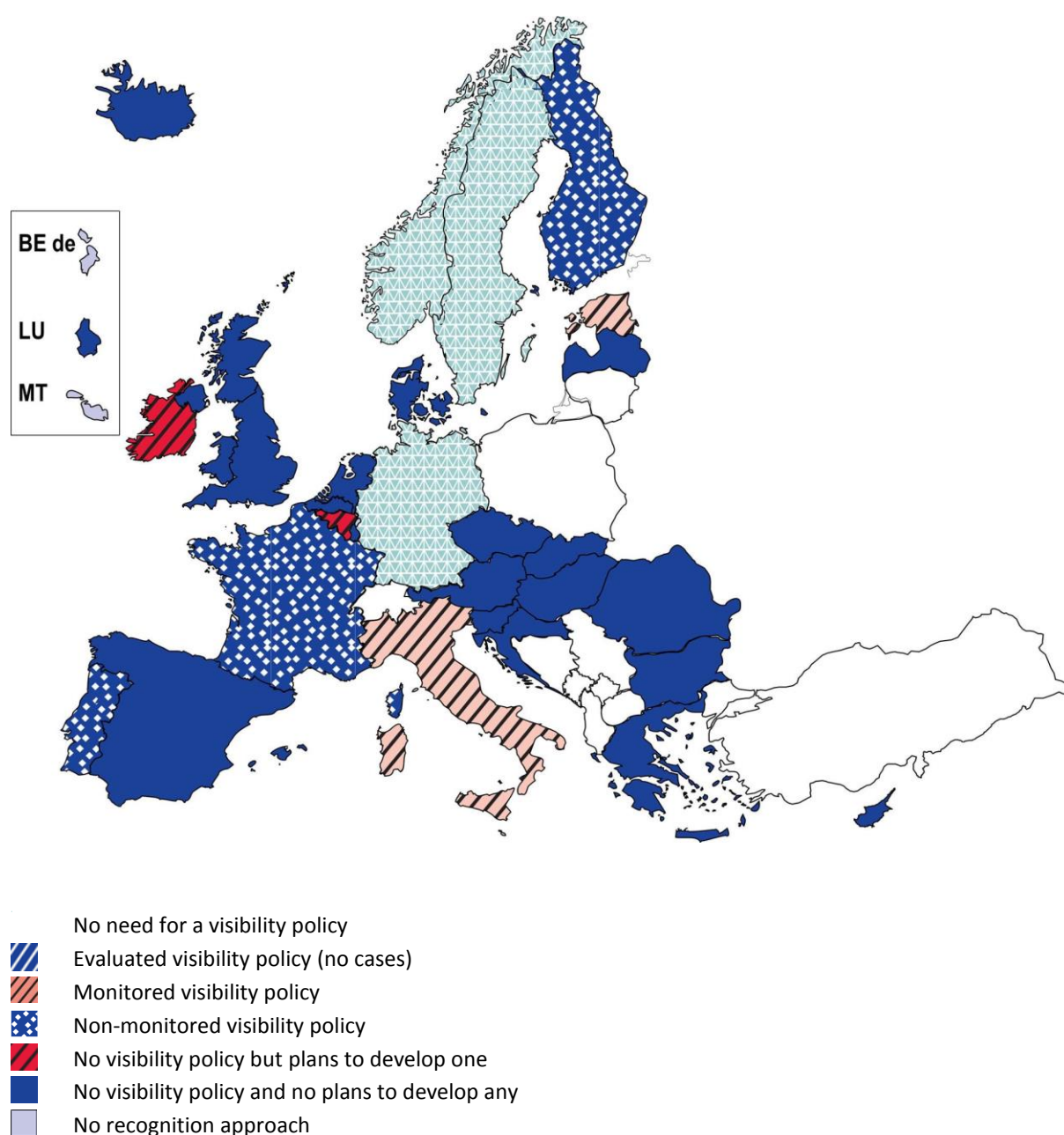
Map 3.2.4 – Policy to make more visible contact points for information on recognition

Setting contact points for information on recognition cannot be effective if potential learners are not aware of them. This map focuses on whether countries have developed a visibility policy to make the contact points for information on recognition known from potential users. Possible actions for visibility include participation of contact points' representatives in mobility-related events, information days, meetings; visiting schools or being located in school premises; and making sure that guidance counsellors know about the contact points, make users aware of them, and redirect users to them as necessary.

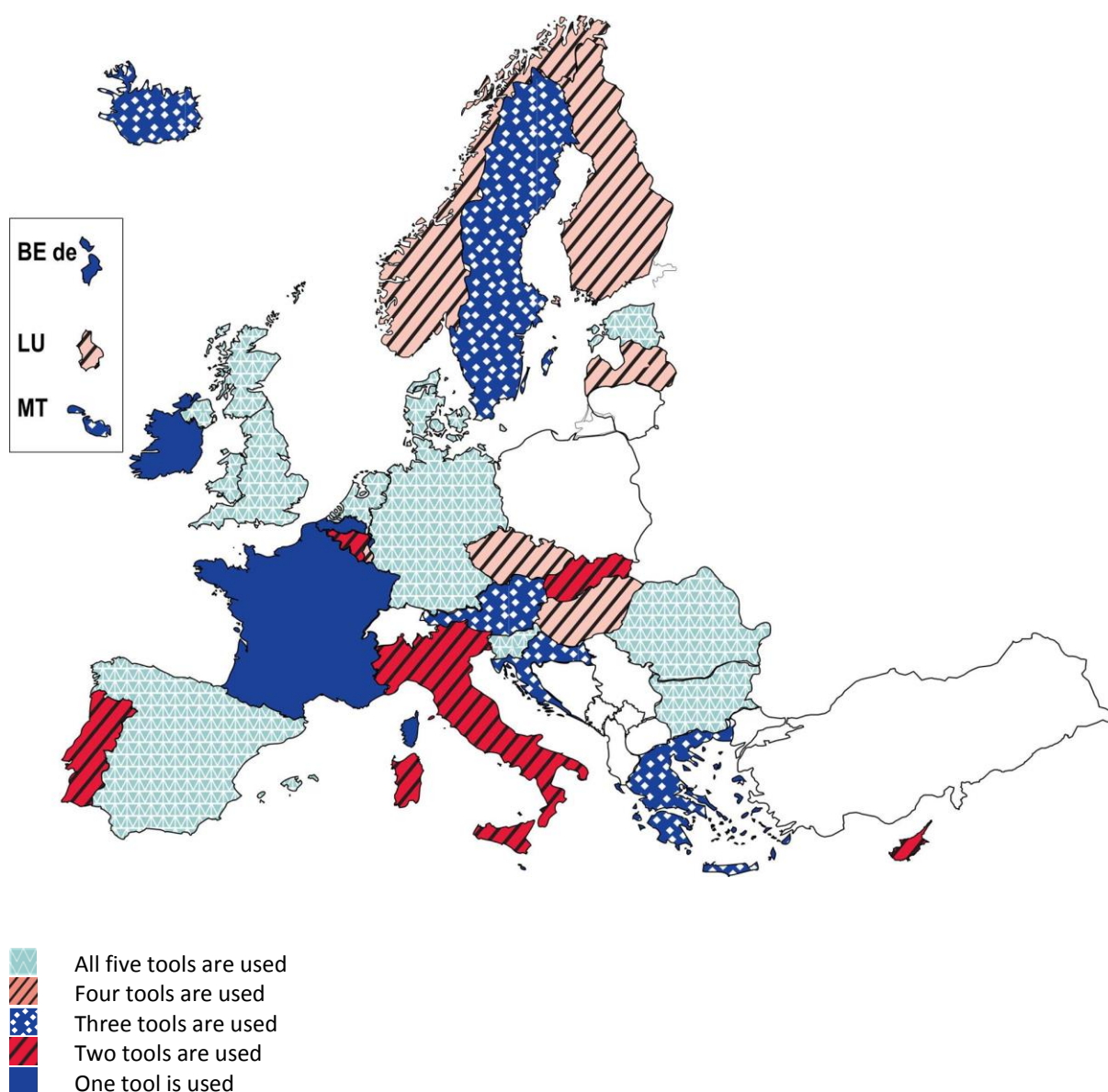
The map distinguishes countries depending on whether they have a visibility policy or not, and if they do, whether it is evaluated (monitored with recommendations leading to further reforms), or simply monitored, or not monitored at all. Countries that do not have a visibility policy are differentiated depending on whether they have plans for developing any. Countries that do not have a recognition mechanism or where there is recognition but no need for a visibility policy constitute two additional categories. A visibility policy is considered not needed if (a) recognition is automatic; or (b) recognition is ensured by teachers/trainers which users are in contact with on a daily basis; or (c) fully-fledged investigations / research / studies / users or stakeholders surveys targeted at checking the need for a visibility policy on the ground have been carried out and came to the conclusion that no such needs exist.

Among the 28 countries represented, none has an evaluated visibility policy. Estonia and Italy have a monitored visibility policy. Finland, France and Portugal have non-monitored visibility policies. Ireland and Belgium-FR have no visibility policies but plans to develop one. 17 countries and Belgium-NL have no visibility policies and no plans to develop any. Visibility policies proved to be un-needed in Germany and Norway (where recognition is automatic and learners do not have to take any step for getting it) and in Sweden (where recognition is operated by teachers in schools). Malta and Belgium-DE do not have a recognition mechanism.

Section 3.1.5 of each country fiche gives details on the country's approach to the visibility of contact points for information on recognition.



Map 3.2.5 – Use of EU tools to enhance the visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET learners



This map focuses on the range of EU tools for visibility, transfer and recognition that are in use – at least to some extent – for IVET international mobility in countries. Five EU tools were considered here: the Europass Mobility Document, the Europass Certificate Supplement, ECVET, the EQF/NQF, and the learning outcomes approach. Within this framework, the map distinguishes countries depending on the number of

tools that they use. It can be noted that there is not in the European Union a single country where at least one of these five EU tools is not used for visibility, facilitating mutual understanding between sending and receiving institutions, transfer or recognition in IVET mobility.

With regard to the specific purpose of mobility in IVET, nine out of the 28 countries represented use all five tools (Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and the United Kingdom). Six countries use four tools (Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Luxembourg, Norway). Six countries use three tools (Austria, Croatia, Greece, Iceland, Malta, Sweden). Four countries (Cyprus, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia) and Belgium-FR use two tools. Only one tool is used for the purpose of IVET mobility in France, Ireland, Belgium-DE and Belgium-NL.

Table 3A.2 shows which tools exactly are in use in which countries. The respective popularity of these tools is somewhat contrasted: for the purpose of IVET mobility, the Europass Mobility Document is used in 27 out of the 28 countries, whereas the EQF/NQF is used in only 13 countries.

Table 3A.2. EU tools for visibility, transfer and recognition in use for IVET mobility in countries					
Country	EU tools				
	Europass Mobility Document	Europass Certificate Supplement	ECVET	EQF/NQF	Learning outcomes approach
Austria	X	X	X		
Belgium-DE					X
Belgium-FR	X	X			
Belgium-NL	X				
Bulgaria	X	X	X	X	X
Croatia	X		X		X
Cyprus	X	X			
Czech Republic	X		X	X	X
Denmark	X	X	X	X	X
Estonia	X	X	X	X	X
Finland	X	X	X		X
France	X	X	X		
Germany	X	X	X	X	X
Greece	X	X	X		
Hungary	X	X	X		X
Iceland	X	X	X		
Ireland	X				
Italy	X		X		
Latvia	X		X	X	X
Luxembourg	X	X	X		X

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	Europass Mobility Document	Europass Certificate Supplement	ECVET	EQF/NQF	Learning outcomes approach
Malta	X	X	X		
Netherlands	X	X	X	X	X
Norway	X	X		X	X
Portugal	X			X	
Romania	X	X	X	X	X
Slovakia			X		X
Slovenia	X	X	X	X	X
Spain	X	X	X	X	X
Sweden	X	X	X		
United Kingdom	X	X	X	X	X
Total	28	21	23	13	18

Section 3.1.6 of each country fiche gives more details on the country's approach to the use of EU tools for visibility and mutual understanding, transfer and recognition of learning acquired abroad by IVET learners.

3.3. Indicator for the area

The 2011 Council Recommendation "*Youth on the move*" assigns to countries the objective of promoting the international mobility of IVET learners through enhancing the recognition of learning outcomes based on the use of existing EU tools and by improving the recognition procedures.

The indicator for monitoring developments in this area is based on the following five reference criteria:

- (a) The recognition mechanism can take into account the six following types of learning components: courses, credit points, units, modules, programmes, and qualifications / diplomas / degrees;
- (b) The approach to recognition is coordinated countrywide⁸;
- (c) After the end of the mobility period or upon submission of a request

⁸ There is countrywide coordination of a process when, for all existing actions related to the process, both regulation and implementation of the process are arranged through / underpinned by

- Either top-down guidelines followed by all stakeholders/players; or
- Any form of cooperation and dialogue involving all stakeholders/players and leading to convergent practices and approaches.

Countrywide coordination may be partial / incomplete when it applies only to part of the actions or players related to the process.

for recognition, there is a short (six weeks or less) regulatory time limit for granting recognition or processing applications for recognition;

- (d) Where necessary⁹, there is an evaluated¹⁰ policy for making more visible contact points where IVET learners can obtain information on how learning outcomes and qualifications acquired abroad can be recognised and certified;
- (e) The Europass Mobility Document, Europass Certificate Supplement, ECVET, the EQF/NQF, and the learning outcomes approach are used in the country for visibility, transfer and recognition in IVET international mobility.

Table 3B.1 presents the indicator in terms of criteria and benchmarks.

⁹ Visibility policy is deemed un-necessary in three cases: (a) recognition is automatic so the learner does not have to take any action for requiring it; (b) recognition is dealt with by teachers / trainers / schools which learners can approach on a day-to-day basis to get information, which makes a visibility policy un-necessary; or (c) fully-fledged investigations / research / studies / users or stakeholders surveys targeted at checking the need for a visibility policy on the ground have been carried out and came to the conclusion that no such needs exist.

¹⁰ Evaluation goes beyond monitoring in that it includes translating the conclusions of monitoring in recommendations that are implemented in the perspective of improving the next generation of actions.

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Table 3B.1. Indicator 3 – Recognition of learning outcomes: criteria and benchmarks					
	Criterion 3.1 – The recognition mechanism can take into account courses, credit points, units, modules, programmes, and qualifications / diplomas / degrees	Criterion 3.2 – The approach to recognition is coordinated countrywide	Criterion 3.3 – After the end of the mobility period or upon submission of a request for recognition, there is a short (six weeks or less) regulatory time limit for granting recognition or processing applications for recognition	Criterion 3.4 – Where necessary, there is an evaluated policy for making more visible contact points where IVET learners can obtain information on recognition	Criterion 3.5 – The Europass Mobility Document, Europass Certificate Supplement, ECVET, the EQF/NQF, and the learning outcomes approach are used in the country for visibility, transfer and recognition in IVET international mobility
5	The recognition mechanism can take into account courses, credit points, units, modules, programmes, and qualifications / diplomas / degrees	Complete countrywide coordination of the approach to recognition (recognition is processed within a countrywide framework which is set by regulations and/or arrangements agreed between players)	Regulatory time limit of six weeks or less	A visibility policy is not necessary or, if it is, has been put in place and is subject to regular evaluation which translates in implemented recommendations oriented towards reforms	The five EU tools are used
4	The recognition mechanism can take into account only five of the six learning components	Incomplete coordination of the recognition mechanism is in place (elements of coordination exist, but no complete countrywide coordination of all players or actions). However, plans for	Regulatory time limit of seven to 12 weeks	A visibility policy is in place and subject to monitoring that does not systematically translate in implemented recommendations oriented towards reforms	Four of the five EU tools are used

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		complete coordination are being prepared.			
3	The recognition mechanism can take into account only four of the six learning components	Incomplete coordination of the recognition mechanism is in place (elements of coordination exist, but no complete countrywide coordination of all players or actions). No plans to make the coordination complete are being prepared.	Regulatory time limit of more than 12 weeks	A visibility policy is in place but is not monitored	Three of the five EU tools are used
2	The recognition mechanism can take into account only three of the six learning components	No countrywide coordination of the approach to recognition is in place, but preliminary preparation (initial debate, consultation, design, planning, etc.) to develop one has begun	There is no regulatory time limit but in practice recognition takes 12 weeks or less	There is no visibility policy, but preliminary preparation (initial debate, consultation, design, planning, etc.) to develop one has begun	Two of the five EU tools are used
1	The recognition mechanism can take into account no more than two of the six learning components	No countrywide coordination of the approach to recognition is in place, and there is no plan to set any	There is no regulatory time limit but in practice recognition takes more than 12 weeks, or there is no particular time limit	There is no visibility policy, and no plan to set any	One or none of the five EU tools is used

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Calculation of indicator's average score per country leads to the *Country categorisation* presented in Table 3B.2 below.

Table 3B.2. Indicator 3 – Recognition of learning outcomes: Country categorisation by level of performance		
	Countries per category	
Degree of closeness / distance to full implementation of Recommendation		Average EU 26
		Average EU 26+IS+NO
	Germany, Norway	
	Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden	
	Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom	
	Austria, Belgium-All, Belgium FR, Belgium NL, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Malta, Slovakia	
	Belgium-DE	

CHAPTER 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. Council Recommendation

The Council Recommendation indicates that Member States should:

“(a) encourage learning mobility partnerships with both public and private actors operating at regional and local level. Chambers of commerce, business, vocational education and training and professional associations and non-governmental organisations can be valuable partners in this context. In addition, networks of schools, universities and enterprises exchanging information, news and experience should be fostered;

(b) encourage regional and local authorities to play an increasing role in promoting learning mobility by building on existing networks and creating new partnerships;

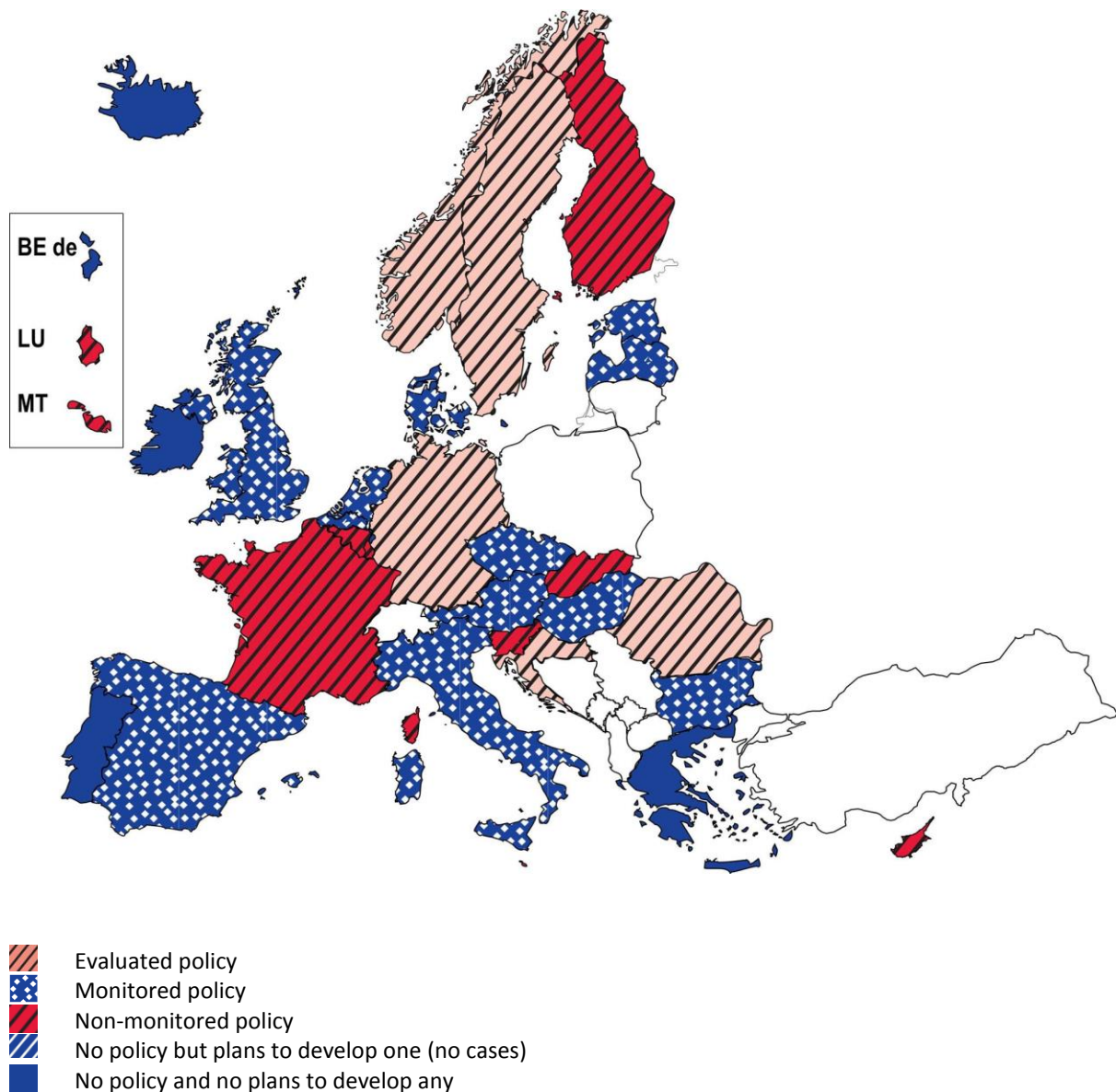
(c) stimulate active cooperation and communication, including awareness-raising and advocacy about the value of learning mobility, between the education and the business sector, since the involvement of businesses is an important factor in strengthening youth mobility, for example by providing work placements. Where appropriate, provide incentives, such as special grants to businesses, in accordance with Union and national legislation, aimed at encouraging their engagement in providing placements;

(d) contribute to the coherence and complementarity of national and Union programmes, with a view to creating synergies and improving the efficiency of mobility programmes.”

4.2. Maps

The maps presented here focus on three aspects of country support to the mobility of learners i.e. supporting the creation of partnerships and networks for IVET mobility; funding IVET learners’ mobility; and providing support to companies and IVET institutions involved in arranging mobility projects.

Map 4.2.1 – Actions to support the creation of mobility partnerships and networks



This map focuses on the support provided to companies and IVET institutions in the creation of international partnerships and networks for learning mobility in IVET. Support can take a variety of forms, e.g. provision of information and assistance, search for possible partners across Europe, setting up a database of possible partnerships, organising contact seminars, setting up agreements between possible partners, funding.

The map distinguishes countries depending on whether they have actions or not and, (a) if they do, whether the support policy is evaluated,

monitored, or not; (b) if they don't, whether they have development plans. The policy is considered evaluated if it undergoes monitoring which translates in recommendations that are implemented in view of reforming the next generation of policy. It is considered monitored if the part of the process targeted to future improvement is lacking.

Of the 28 countries represented, five (Croatia, Germany, Norway, Romania and Sweden) have an evaluated policy; 11 and Belgium-NL have monitored policies (Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom); seven and Belgium-FR have non-monitored policies (Cyprus, Finland, France, Luxembourg, Malta, Slovakia and Slovenia); four countries and Belgium-DE lack actions and development plans to support the creation of mobility partnerships and networks (Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Portugal).

Section 4.1.1 of each country fiche gives details on the country's approach to supporting the creation of partnerships and networks for international mobility activities.

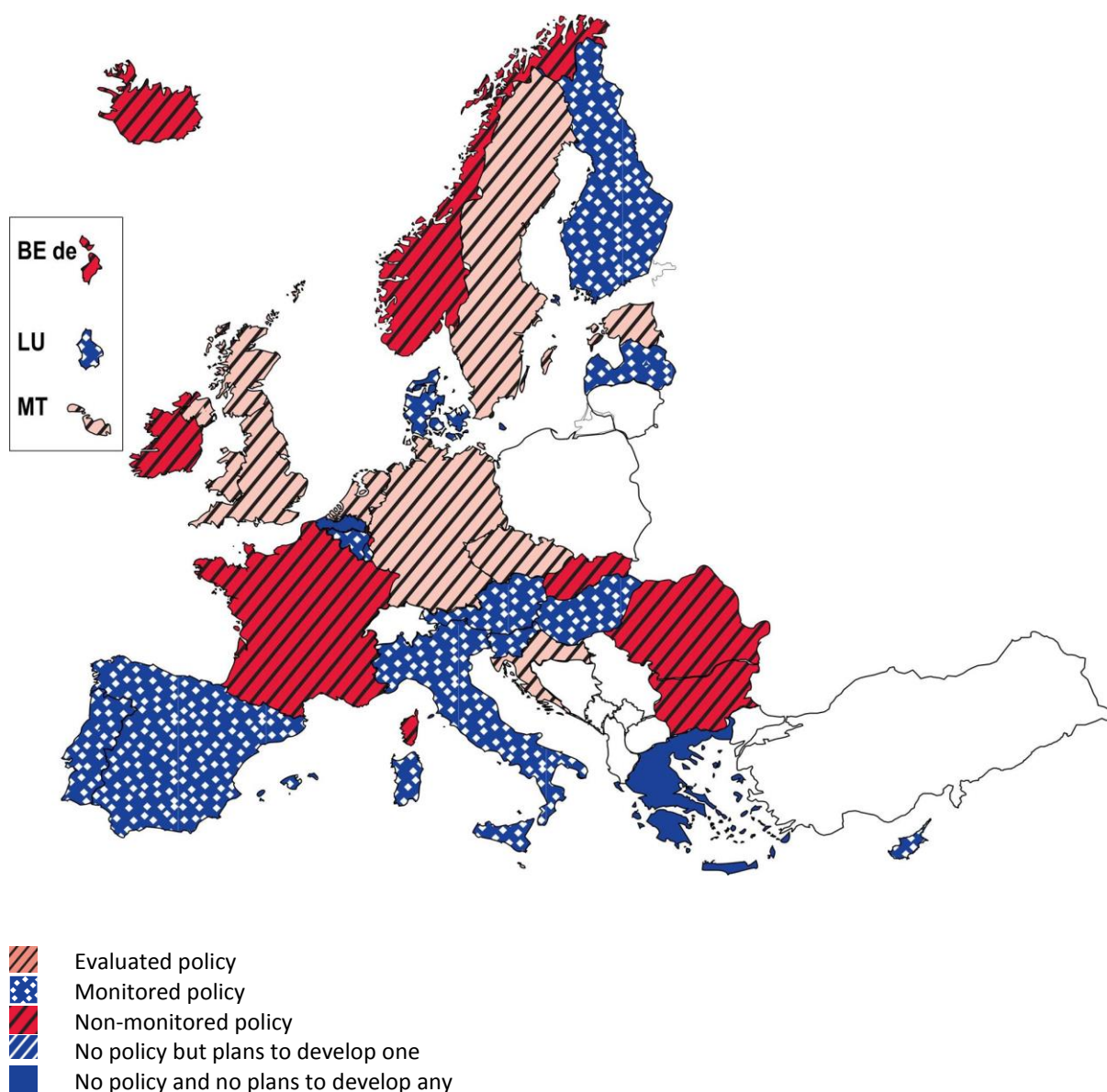
Map 4.2.2 – Actions to fund the international mobility of IVET learners

This map focuses on the support to learners in terms of funding their mobility. Funding generally covers travel expenses and daily subsistence. In some cases, additional costs may also be covered, e.g. accompanying persons for participants with disabilities.

The map distinguishes countries depending on whether they have actions or not and, (a) if they do, whether the support policy is evaluated, monitored, or not; (b) if they don't, whether they have development plans. The policy is considered evaluated if it undergoes monitoring which translates in recommendations that are implemented in view of reforming the next generation of policy. It is considered monitored if the part of the process targeted to future improvement is lacking.

Of the 28 countries represented, eight (Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Malta, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom) have evaluated policies; 11 and Belgium-FR (Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain) have monitored policies; seven countries and Belgium-DE have non-monitored policies (Bulgaria, France, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Romania and Slovakia). Greece and Belgium-NL seem to lack actions and development plans to fund learners' mobility.

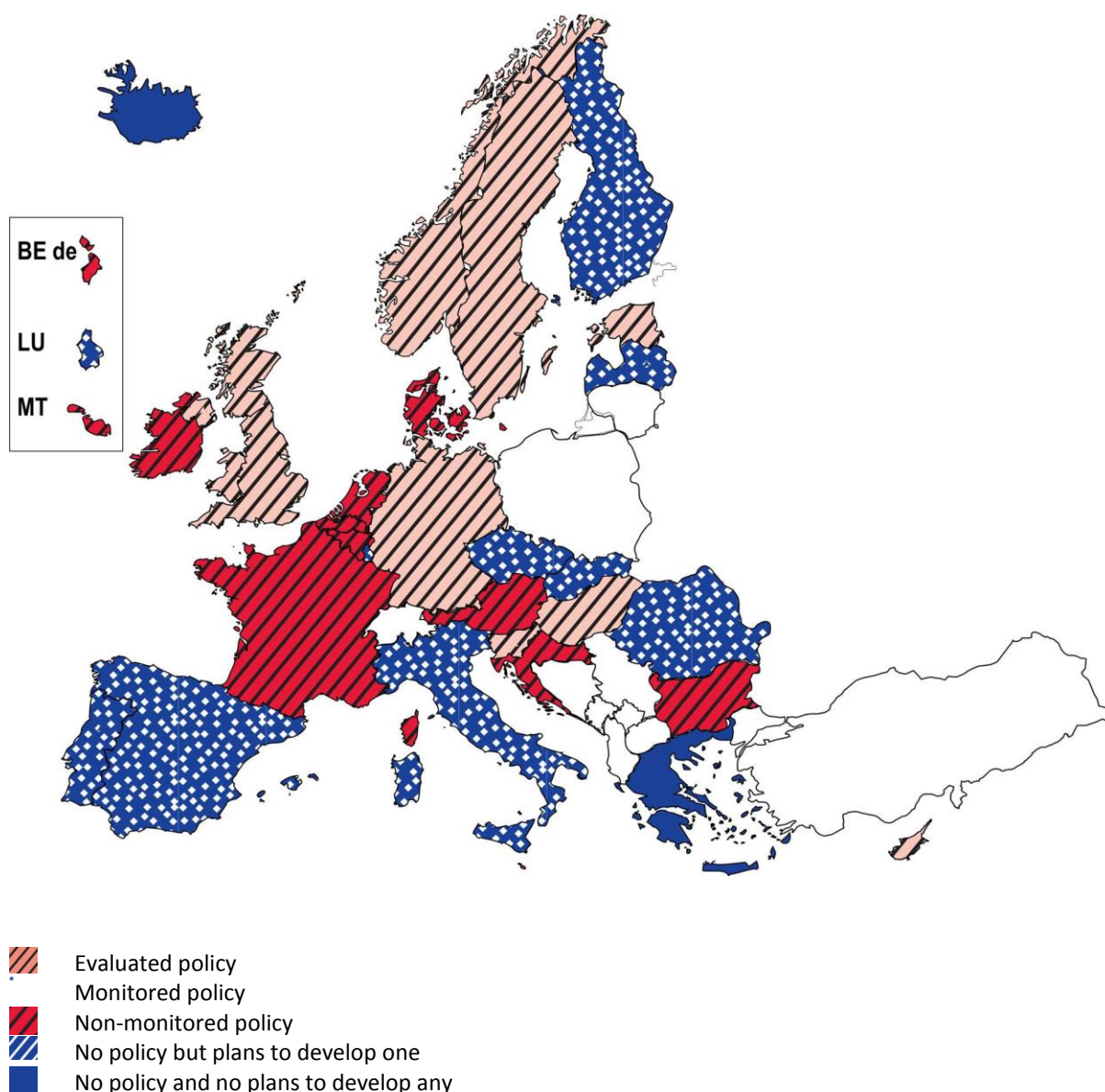
Section 4.1.2.1 of each country fiche gives details on the country's approach to funding the international mobility of IVET learners.



Map 4.2.3 – Actions to support companies and institutions in organising mobility projects

This map focuses on the support provided to companies and IVET institutions involved in arranging international mobility projects. The support provided can be financial (e.g. funding companies which send their apprentices on an internship abroad; or funding mobility of teachers), or non-financial (e.g. information and assistance; organising study visits; organising conferences, workshops and training on how to

organise mobility activities).



The map distinguishes countries depending on whether they have actions or not and, (a) if they do, whether the support policy is evaluated, monitored, or not; (b) if they don't, whether they have development plans. The policy is considered evaluated if it undergoes monitoring which translates in recommendations that are implemented in view of reforming the next generation of policy. It is considered monitored if the part of the process targeted to future improvement is lacking.

Of the 28 countries represented, eight (Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom) have evaluated policies; nine have monitored policies (the Czech Republic, Finland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and

Spain); nine (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, France, Ireland, Malta and the Netherlands) have non-monitored policies. Greece and Iceland lack actions or development plans to support companies and institutions involved in organising mobility projects.

Section 4.1.2.2 of each country fiche gives details on the country's approach to providing stakeholders with financial and non-financial support.

4.3. Indicator for the area

The 2011 Council Recommendation "*Youth on the move*" assigns to countries the objective of developing the international learning mobility of IVET learners through supporting partnerships between private and public actors, and providing mobility incentives to participants and stakeholders.

The indicator for monitoring the development of partnerships and funding in countries is based on the following three reference criteria:

- (a) There is an evaluated policy to support companies and institutions in the creation of mobility partnerships and networks;
- (b) There is an evaluated policy to fund the international learning mobility of IVET learners; and
- (c) There is an evaluated policy to provide companies and IVET institutions involved in organising mobility projects with financial and/or non-financial support.

Table 4B.1 presents the indicator in terms of criteria and benchmarks.

PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

Table 4B.1. Indicator 4 – Partnerships and funding: criteria and benchmarks			
	Criterion 4.1 – There is an evaluated policy to support companies and institutions in the creation of mobility partnerships and networks	Criterion 4.2 – There is an evaluated policy to fund the international learning mobility of IVET learners	Criterion 4.3 – There is an evaluated policy to provide companies and IVET institutions involved in organising mobility projects with financial and/or non-financial support
5	A policy to support the creation of partnerships and networks is in place and is subject to regular evaluation which translates in implemented recommendations oriented towards reforms	A policy to fund the mobility of IVET learners is in place and is subject to regular evaluation which translates in implemented recommendations oriented towards reforms	A policy to support companies and institutions in arranging mobility is in place and is subject to regular evaluation which translates in implemented recommendations oriented towards reforms
4	A policy to support the creation of partnerships and networks is in place and subject to monitoring that does not systematically translate in implemented recommendations oriented towards reforms	A policy to fund the mobility of IVET learners is in place and subject to monitoring that does not systematically translate in implemented recommendations oriented towards reforms	A policy to support companies and institutions in arranging mobility is in place and subject to monitoring that does not systematically translate in implemented recommendations oriented towards reforms
3	A policy to support the creation of partnerships and networks is in place but is not monitored	A policy to fund the mobility of IVET learners is in place but is not monitored	A policy to support companies and institutions in arranging mobility is in place but is not monitored
2	There is no policy to support the creation of partnerships and networks, but preliminary preparation (initial debate, consultation, design, planning, etc.) to develop one has begun	There is no policy to fund the mobility of IVET learners, but preliminary preparation (initial debate, consultation, design, planning, etc.) to develop one has begun	There is no policy to support companies and institutions in arranging mobility, but preliminary preparation (initial debate, consultation, design, planning, etc.) to develop one has begun
1	There is no policy to support the creation of partnerships and networks, and no plan to set any	There is no policy to fund the mobility of IVET learners, and no plan to set any	There is no policy to support companies and institutions in arranging mobility, and no plan to set any

Calculation of indicator's average score per country leads to the *Country categorisation* presented in Table 4B.2 below.

Table 4B.2. Indicator 4 – Partnerships and funding: Country categorisation by level of performance		
	Countries per category	
Degree of closeness / distance to full implementation of Recommendation		Average EU 26
		Average EU 26+IS+NO
	Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom	
	Austria, Belgium-FR, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain	
	Belgium-All, Belgium-DE, Belgium-NL, France, Ireland, Portugal	
	Iceland	
	Greece	

CHAPTER 5. COUNTRY SCORECARDS

Scorecards are a tool for getting a first snapshot view on a country's performance. Each Scorecard presents a country's performance, indicator by indicator, and on overall average. For each indicator, performance is detailed criterion by criterion. The Scorecard thus allows for identifying at a glance a country's strengths and weaknesses. Scorecards are presented here for each of the 28 countries and for the whole set of countries on average. Each Scorecard presented here covers the four thematic areas analysed in this document.

Interpretation

Colours indicate the degree of closeness/distance to the requirements of the "*Youth on the move*" Recommendation, from closest (dark green) to farthest (red).

The colour of an indicator (e.g. "1. Information and guidance") represents the average performance for all criteria of this indicator.

The colour of a criterion (e.g. "*1.1. Mechanism for provision*") reflects the level of performance reached on the performance scale defined for this criterion in Tables 1B.1-Indicator 1 (page 19), 2B.1-Indicator 2 (page 29), 3B.1-Indicator 3 (page 43) or 4B.1-Indicator 4 (page 53).

COUNTRY SCORECARDS

AUSTRIA
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

BELGIUM - ALL
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

BELGIUM DE
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

BELGIUM FR
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

COUNTRY SCORECARDS

BELGIUM NL
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

BULGARIA
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

CROATIA
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

CYPRUS
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

COUNTRY SCORECARDS

CZECH REPUBLIC
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

DENMARK
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

ESTONIA
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

FINLAND
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

COUNTRY SCORECARDS

FRANCE
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

GERMANY
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

GREECE
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

HUNGARY
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

COUNTRY SCORECARDS

ICELAND
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

IRELAND
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

ITALY
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

LATVIA
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

COUNTRY SCORECARDS

LUXEMBOURG
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

MALTA
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

NETHERLANDS
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

NORWAY
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

COUNTRY SCORECARDS

PORTUGAL
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
<i>3.3. Time limit</i>
<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
<i>4.2. Funding learners' mobility</i>
<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

ROMANIA
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
<i>2.2. Facilitating measures</i>
3. Recognition
<i>3.1. Scope</i>
<i>3.2. Coordination</i>
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<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
<i>3.5. Use of EU tools</i>
4. Partnerships & funding
<i>4.1. Creation of partnerships</i>
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1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
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4. Partnerships & funding
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<i>4.3. Arranging mobility</i>
COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

SLOVENIA
1. Information and guidance
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<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
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2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
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3. Recognition
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4. Partnerships & funding
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COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

COUNTRY SCORECARDS

SPAIN
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
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<i>3.4. Visibility policy</i>
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COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

SWEDEN
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
2. Adm. & institutional issues
<i>2.1. Integration & targets</i>
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COUNTRY'S OVERALL AVERAGE

UNITED KINGDOM
1. Information and guidance
<i>1.1. Mechanism for provision</i>
<i>1.2. Coordination</i>
<i>1.3. Evaluation</i>
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OVERALL AVERAGE

AVERAGE EU COUNTRIES+IS+NO
1. Information and guidance
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2. Adm. & institutional issues
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OVERALL AVERAGE

CHAPTER 6. OVERVIEWS OF COUNTRIES' PERFORMANCE

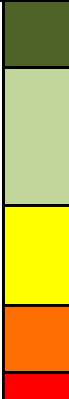
The overview tables presented here are targeted at capturing at a glance the performance of all countries. Three overview tables are presented:

- Table of country categorisation in terms of overall average performance (Table 6.1);
- Table of countries' performance across indicators (Table 6.2);
- Table of countries' performance across indicators and criteria (Table 6.3).

6.1. Table of country categorisation in terms of overall average performance

Table 6.1 shows countries' performance with regard to all analysed thematic areas taken as a whole. Performance is shown by country and on average for the 28 countries reviewed (average for the 26 EU Member States, and average for all 28 countries).

Table 6.1 shows that on average, the reviewed countries are only one step away from fully meeting the requirements of the Recommendation with respect to the four thematic areas analysed. The whole picture looks rather positive: 22 countries out of the 28 appear in the two best ranking categories; none of the 28 countries is in the red zone; and only two countries (Iceland, Slovakia) and two regions of Belgium (Belgium-DE and Belgium-NL) appear to be in critical situation. The table thus shows that the countries where significant effort is to be made in priority are in limited number.

Table 6.1. Country categorisation in terms of overall average performance							
Levels of overall average performance		Countries					
		Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden	<table><tr><td>Average EU 26</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Average EU 26+IS+NO</td><td></td></tr></table>	Average EU 26		Average EU 26+IS+NO	
	Average EU 26						
	Average EU 26+IS+NO						
		Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom					
		Belgium-All, Belgium-FR, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Portugal					
	Belgium-DE, Belgium-NL, Iceland, Slovakia						
	—						

6.2. Table of countries' performance across indicators

Table 6.2 introduces information on the areas of concern at group and country levels. Overall, it appears that in this group of 28 countries, Recognition of learning outcomes is the thematic area where countries' performance is the lowest and would require to be addressed in priority. Performance is equally high in the other three areas, but obviously efforts should be continued since the highest performance level is not reached in any of the four thematic areas.

In terms of countries, only Germany performs at top level in all four thematic areas. All countries have strengths however, as, in general, countries have at least one area where they reach one of the best two performance categories. This also suggests that in most countries, remedying efforts could have to be focussed on a limited number (one or two) of the four thematic areas. Only Belgium and Iceland (and maybe Greece, but information is lacking) might have to address all four areas.

6.3. Table of countries' performance across indicators and criteria

Table 6.3 goes deeper into indicators and informs on the criteria where performance is most satisfactory or critical at country level and on average. Provision of information and guidance is the only criterion where the countries' average hits the highest performance level. In the area of Partnerships and funding, countries' average reaches uniformly high level in all criteria. In contrast, countries' average is lowest over *regulatory time limit for recognition* and *visibility policy for contact points*, which thus appear as dimensions where action is needed in priority at EU policy level. Less urgent but also needed is action to improve countries' average situation regarding *evaluation of information and guidance provision*, *measures to remove obstacles to mobility*, and *scope of recognition*.

OVERVIEW OF COUNTRIES' PERFORMANCE

Table 6.2. Countries' performance across indicators					
	I1 - Information and guidance	I2 - Adm. & institutional issues	I3 - Recognition	I4 - Partnerships and funding	Country overall average
AUSTRIA					
BELGIUM - ALL					
BELGIUM DE					
BELGIUM FR					
BELGIUM NL					
BULGARIA					
CROATIA					
CYPRUS					
CZECH REPUBLIC					
DENMARK					
ESTONIA					
FINLAND					
FRANCE					
GERMANY					
GREECE					
HUNGARY					
ICELAND					
IRELAND					
ITALY					
LATVIA					

OVERVIEW OF COUNTRIES' PERFORMANCE

	I1 - Information and guidance	I2 - Adm. & institutional issues	I3 - Recognition	I4 - Partnerships and funding	Country overall average
LUXEMBOURG					
MALTA					
NETHERLANDS					
NORWAY					
PORTUGAL					
ROMANIA					
SLOVAKIA					
SLOVENIA					
SPAIN					
SWEDEN					
UNITED KINGDOM					
AVERAGE EU 26					
AVERAGE EU 26+IS+NO					

OVERVIEW OF COUNTRIES' PERFORMANCE

Table 6.3.

Countries' performance across indicators and criteria

[illegible]

[illegible]

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AUSTRIA

IVET levels covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary
 - Post-secondary non-tertiary
- VET schools (school-based VET, 3-4 years, ISCED-97 3B)
 - VET colleges (school-based VET, 5 years, ISCED-97 3A/4A)
 - Apprenticeship training (2-4 years, ISCED-97 3B)

Apprentices in Austria account for almost half of the number of IVET learners in the country and form part of the staff of a company. As VET curricula in Austria are rather 'prescriptive' and leave little room for flexibility in course planning to IVET learners, temporary VET mobility abroad implies that the employer will miss out on some of its manpower. This may have an overall effect on mobility figures. In 2014, a total number of 2,694 IVET learners participated in transnational mobility projects, of which 603 were apprentices and 2,091 were learners in school-based VET¹¹.

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Austria has mechanisms for information and guidance provision on IVET mobility topics. OeAD¹² is the Austrian agency for international mobility and cooperation in education, science and research. The establishment of the OeAD is based on the national OeAD Act, and the agency is owned by the Austrian Federal Government. The main objective of OeAD is to promote and support international cooperation in education, science and research. The activities of the OeAD embrace general, academic and vocational education with – a historically grown – specific focus on academic mobility. OeAD is also home to the National Agency for Lifelong Learning (NA LLL), the central administration body for the Erasmus+ programme. Every year, they organise a large number of events¹³ to promote international mobility, and provide information about mobility projects (and funding possibilities). The NA LLL also publishes statistics on

¹¹ Data provided by the National Agency for Lifelong Learning.

¹² www.oead.at

¹³ <https://www.oead.at/oead/veranstaltungen/alle/DE/>

mobility and mobility programmes. In terms of provision of information and guidance, they focus on educational institutions, although they also provide information and guidance to individuals. The NA LLL is also regularly represented at education fairs.

While OeAD/the National Agency for Lifelong Learning does not provide one-to-one guidance and counselling to IVET learners, IFA certainly does. The role of IFA very much revolves around 'information and guidance'. They provide one-to-one guidance to individuals seeking to engage in VET mobility. The IFA agency ('International Young Workers Exchange'¹⁴) more specifically focuses on mobility of VET learners (and graduates). Founded in 1995, this association's mission is to support the international mobility of apprentices, VET learners and VET graduates, by providing administrative and organisational support. Their core service area is related to internships abroad for young apprentices. The members of the IFA association are as follows: the Austrian Economic Chambers, the Federation of Austrian Industry, the Junior Chamber Austria and the Young Industrialists. As a central information and consulting centre for young people, companies and VET providers, the IFA agency organises work placements and provides support with the organisation of these placements. IFA can be considered as an intermediary organisation or agency, which provides support to IVET learners (mostly apprentices), companies and VET providers in organising European learning mobility. IFA's main activity thereby consists in providing guidance, and providing support for administrative and organisational aspects of mobility projects. IFA offers different types of support models for organising internships (most are carried out using Erasmus+ funding):

- a) IFA organises internship places and issues a call for interest; apprentices can submit an application;
- b) For large companies, which want to organise internships for a group of apprentices, IFA offers to develop company-specific internship packages, tailored to the individual companies' needs and requirements;
- c) Companies can organise internships on their own and only approach IFA to deal with funding issues.

IFA also provides information to incoming learners¹⁵.

Apart from these two main actors, information and guidance is also provided by other bodies or organisations, such as the Economic Chambers, youth information centres, the Europass portal and relevant

¹⁴ <http://www.ifa.or.at/>

¹⁵ http://www.ifa.or.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Beschaeftigung_von_Incomings.pdf

Ministries¹⁶.

Furthermore, there are regional and sectoral programmes and initiatives which provide guidance and information on VET learner mobility. Examples:

- At regional level, xchange¹⁷ is a regional exchange programme which organises work placements abroad for apprentices (duration: 3-4 weeks). xchange provides support in finding a suitable company for the exchange of apprentices, as well as support for organisational and funding issues. The following countries/regions are part of this initiative: four western provinces of Austria (Vorarlberg, Salzburg, Tyrol, Upper Austria); Germany, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Italy, region of Alsace.
- At sectoral level,
 - the Rural Youth Association provides information and guidance on internships in agriculture-related fields¹⁸;
 - Atempo¹⁹ is a social enterprise which provides, amongst other things, support to individuals with learning difficulties or disabilities in organising internships abroad;
 - Wienwork²⁰ is a regional social enterprise with the mission of creating and finding employment for disadvantaged people. They also support international VET mobility for disadvantaged learners.

As pointed out above, VET curricula in Austria are rather 'prescriptive' in the sense that they leave little room for flexibility in course planning. As a result, the aspect of guidance and counselling will generally have less significance than in systems with very open/flexible curricula.

IFA in particular (as well as the other sectoral and regional initiatives engaged in VET mobility mentioned above) assumes the role of a central consulting and guidance centre for IVET learners who wish to engage in transnational VET mobility.

¹⁶ <https://www.wko.at/Content.Node/Service/Bildung-und-Lehre/Lehre/Auslandspraktika-fuer-Lehrlinge/Auslandspraktika-fuer-Lehrlinge---Themenstartseite.html> > focus on internships abroad for apprentices

<http://www.europass.at/>

<http://www.jugendinfo.at/home/publikationen/einfach-weg/>

<http://www.jugendportal.at/praktikum-im-ausland>

https://www.bmbf.gv.at/schulen/euint/IIa_is/schulbesuch_ausland.html

<http://www.bmwf.gv.at/Berufsausbildung/InternationaleBerufsausbildung/Seiten/Austauschprogramme.aspx>

<http://www.pro-mobility.net/en/pmtoolkit.php>

¹⁷ <http://www.xchange-info.net>

¹⁸ <https://landjugend.at/praktikum/schritt-fuer-schritt-zum-praktikum>

¹⁹ <http://www.atempo.at>

²⁰ <http://www.wienwork.at>

Furthermore, it should be mentioned that VET teachers and trainers play a significant role in providing information and guidance to IVET learners on an individual basis, providing support to IVET learners who wish to spend a mobility period abroad.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

Countrywide coordination is ensured in the sense that both the Austrian National Agency for Lifelong Learning and IFA operate at national level. They provide information and guidance free of charge. As indicated above, the National Agency has a broader scope (focusing on information for all types of learners), while IFA provides one-to-one guidance and counselling to individual VET learners seeking to engage in VET mobility.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

There is no specific reference to the promotion of learning mobility in IVET included in national legislation. Although in its current work programme (2013-2018), the current Austrian federal government states its commitment to promoting international mobility for learning purposes, and to promoting participation in international cooperation and exchange programmes, this stated commitment does not specifically refer to VET²¹. However the Vocational Training Act²² (which regulates apprenticeship training) includes an indirect reference to the promotion of learning mobility by stating that the 'international dimension' of vocational education and training should be taken into consideration.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

There are no actions specifically targeted towards an improvement of the provision of information and guidance, nor is there a specific 'action plan'

²¹ <https://www.bka.gv.at/DocView.axd?CobId=53264>

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20005873>

²²

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10006276>

for this purpose.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Since there are no specific actions for improvement as such, there is no evaluation thereof. The National Agency for Lifelong Learning and IFA certainly evaluate their information and guidance activities, but there is no specific initiative which is dedicated to evaluate the improvement of the provision of information and guidance on IVET.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

The main institutions are the ones described above: the National Agency for Lifelong Learning and IFA agency. The IFA agency not only provides support to VET learners, but also directly to companies. It is also possible for companies to approach IFA in order to develop a corporate scheme for the mobility of their VET learners (apprentices).

Also, since 2012, the national ECVET contact point provides VET institutions and companies with support on the application of ECVET. They host ECVET-related events and offer individual assistance to institutions and companies, supported through the national team of ECVET experts. This team of eight national ECVET experts provides advice and assistance to actors in the Austrian VET sector (in particular those involved in curriculum development) and companies which want to engage in ECVET-related learners' mobility.

In addition, the Austrian Economic Chambers provide information and assistance to institutions and companies on this topic (e.g. on administrative, social security and funding issues).

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

Austria has countrywide-coordinated mechanisms to provide IVET learners with information and guidance for their international learning mobility. However, the country lacks actions targeted at improving this provision over time. Future progress in this area could consist in checking, e.g. through a user survey, whether improvement actions are necessary,

and if so, putting in place an appropriate evaluated improvement process.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

There is a clear policy intention to enabling and facilitating the completion of learning mobility within IVET programmes. This is about creating conditions which allow to fully integrate learning mobility into learners' training pathways. In 2014, the Austrian Ministry of Education published its approach to the implementation of ECVET in Austria. One of its key objectives was to improve the implementation and quality assurance of VET learning mobility (in particular internships). This ECVET policy document outlines the principles of ECVET implementation in Austria and specifies a list of activities that are planned for the period 2014-2016 and that are organised around the two main strategic objectives of ECVET in Austria: mobility and permeability for LLL. The main goals of ECVET implementation in Austria are: further develop the learning outcomes approach; improve the quality of learners' periods of mobility at home and abroad; increase permeability between the subsectors of the education and training system; promote the recognition of non-formally and informally acquired learning outcomes²³.

For internships within apprenticeship, the amendment to the Vocational Training Act (entered into force in July 2010) stipulates that work placements completed abroad and international training programmes in which training is provided that corresponds to the job profile of the respective apprenticeship (i.e. the curriculum for the company-based part of the training) must be credited by the apprenticeship office – to the extent of up to six months per apprenticeship year – to the apprenticeship period that must be completed in Austria²⁴. If programmes of a more general nature are attended, such as language courses, a maximum

²³

http://www.bildung.erasmusplus.at/fileadmin/III/dateien/lebenslanges_lernen_pdf_word_xls/leonardo/ecvet/2014-04-07_strategiepapier_ecvet_in_at__final.pdf; 12.05.2015

²⁴

<http://www.bmwfw.gv.at/Berufsausbildung/InternationaleBerufsausbildung/Seiten/Austauschprogramme.aspx>; 12.05.2015

duration of four months can be credited.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

No quantitative targets have been set at national level, and there is no indication of a use of the EU 6-percent benchmark. A qualitative target have been set however in the form of promoting IVET mobility (in particular of apprentices), which is currently still at a rather low level (in particular compared to the mobility of HE students)²⁵. What is referred to here is the number of outgoing IVET learners. No specific target figure has been defined, rather the reference is whether there is an increase in numbers from one year to another.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

No measures have been taken in this respect. IVET mobility of learners who require (because of their origin) visa and residency permits is however rather the exception than the rule, as most mobility is across EU Member States.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

IFA, as described earlier on, can be considered as an intermediary organisation or agency, which provides support to IVET learners (mostly apprentices) and companies in organising European learning mobility. IFA's main activity thereby consists in providing guidance, and providing support for administrative and organisational aspects of mobility projects, and helping with funding arrangements. Furthermore, the regional and sectoral players engaged in VET mobility (see Section 1.1.1) also seek to reduce administrative burdens for IVET learners, their schools and employers.

²⁵ For this reason, one of the key objectives of the national ECVET strategy is to improve the efficiency and quality assurance of VET mobility (in particular of internships).

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

International mobility of minors is generally possible. There are no specific legal obstacles. Parental consent is however required when minors want to engage in international learning mobility. IFA, for instance, has published a form on its website²⁶ which can be downloaded. With their signature, parents consent that they agree with the mobility and assume responsibility for their children during their stay abroad. It has however been reported that host companies abroad may not accept minors under the age of 18 as interns, and that this can sometimes be problematic.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social Security

Outgoing mobility

With European mobility, Austrian VET learners who go abroad remain covered by social security. Apprentices who make an internship abroad will continue to earn their monthly apprenticeship remuneration. Their apprenticeship contract remains operative, so does social security coverage. As regards learners in school-based VET, they are generally covered by their parents' social security, also during their stay abroad. It is generally recommended to learners to take out a liability and casualty insurance when going abroad. Some agencies, such as IFA, even make this a requirement.

Incoming mobility

As regards incoming students, the situation depends on the type of internship – i.e. in particular whether it is a paid or unpaid internship (the former might be considered as a regular employment, not an internship; in this case different social security rules apply). Interns from other EU Member States are generally treated in the same way as domestic interns. For the purpose of social security, they are to be treated in the same way as domestic interns i.e. when the learner's internship is carried out as part of an education and training programme and it is unpaid, no social security contributions will be required. The intern has no legal claim to remuneration or holidays, but they are covered by casualty insurance. However, if it is a paid internship (i.e. remuneration exceeds a threshold sum of EUR 405.98), it is to be treated like a regular employment

²⁶

http://www.ifa.or.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Einverstaendnis_Erziehungsberechtigte.pdf

contract, including social security contributions. Internships in the hotel and gastronomy sector always have the status of regular employment, i.e. the intern has a legal claim to be paid remuneration, and social security contributions must be paid.

For interns from outside the EU, different rules apply (e.g. it has to be checked whether the law on the employment of foreigners applies). They are to be treated as regular employees (also in terms of social security). When an Austrian company offers an internship to a foreigner, it is required to make a formal announcement of its intention to the public employment service and to the local tax office, at least two weeks before the internship starts. For interns under the age of 18, the law on the employment of minors includes certain restrictions in relation to maximum working hours and inappropriate work tasks (e.g. working with hazardous materials)²⁷.

Labour protection

Incoming IVET students and apprentices are entitled to the same protection in terms of labour standards and safety as domestic ones. For young people under the age of 18, more restrictive requirements apply, in particular related to maximum working time and night/weekend work²⁸.

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES" THEMATIC AREA

Austria has a marked intention to promote integration of mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes, and has taken measures to reduce administrative burdens relating to mobility and legal obstacles to the movement of minors. A policy target for the international mobility of IVET learners has also been adopted. The country lacks frameworks and measures to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries. In future, it could be

²⁷ <http://www.sozialministerium.at/cms/site/attachments/4/5/4/CH2141/CMS1242116496119/praktikantinnen.pdf>; 12.05.2015
http://www.ifa.or.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Beschaeftigung_von_Incomings.pdf;
 12.05.2015 http://www.ifa.or.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Folder_Rahmenbedingungen-Anerkennung_2012.pdf; 12.05.2015
<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10008365>; 12.05.2015; law on the employment of foreigners <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10008632>; 12.05.2015

²⁸ <http://www.sozialministerium.at/cms/site/attachments/4/5/4/CH2141/CMS1242116496119/praktikantinnen.pdf>, 12.05.2015
http://www.ifa.or.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Beschaeftigung_von_Incomings.pdf, 12.05.2015

checked, e.g. through user surveys, whether such frameworks or measures are needed.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

The 1986 School Education Act ('SchUG') and the 2010 Vocational Training Act set the legal framework within which providers have room for implementing recognition of learning outcomes acquired in international learning mobility.

Different arrangements apply. In general, there is an evident lack of instruments and procedures to allow the validation and recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad. Recognition of learning outcomes acquired by VET learners abroad can be problematic. This however also depends on whether mobility is undertaken as a work placement or school-based learning. There are specific regulations which facilitate recognition of entire stays abroad (internships or school-based) under particular circumstances. In the following two cases, a kind of '*block recognition*' applies:

- For school-based VET: Despite the recognition issues mentioned above, the Austrian School Education Act ('SchUG' law), which also applies to school-based VET (VET schools, VET colleges), provides quite some flexibility for school attendance and internships abroad.
 - For mobility between five and twelve months (school attendance): The 1986 School Education Act ('SchUG') stipulates that learners who can prove that they have completed at least five months (and up to an entire school year) in school-based education in non-German-speaking countries are automatically entitled to progress to the next year/class. This regulation refers to school-based education in general and is not restricted to VET.
 - For mobility of less than five months (school attendance): In this case, approaches differ across schools; learners might have to take additional exams after returning to their school.
 - For internships (work placement): Many VET college curricula require learners to do compulsory work placements (internships) in

companies. They are typically carried out during the annual summer school holidays. Learners can also choose to do their internships abroad. The School Education Act stipulates that the internships are not to be graded²⁹.

- For internships within apprenticeship training³⁰: With the amendment to the Vocational Training Act, which entered into force in July 2010, work placements completed abroad and international training programmes in which training is provided that corresponds to the job profile of the respective apprenticeship (this refers to the company-based element of apprenticeship training) must be credited by the apprenticeship office to the extent of up to six months per apprenticeship year to the apprenticeship period that must be completed in Austria.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

As outlined above, there is a general lack of instruments and procedures to allow the validation and recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad in Austrian VET. Exceptions are the specific cases stated above, where there is '*block-recognition*' of an internship (for apprentices or compulsory internships of VET college learners) or part of a school year. Also, the apprenticeship-leave exam can technically also be taken without having participated in the respective apprenticeship training programme. The only requirement for candidates is that they are over 18 years old and can provide evidence of having acquired the corresponding vocational skills and knowledge in another form; for example, through practice (work experience, also abroad) or through courses.

As mentioned above, recognition of learning outcomes acquired in international learning mobility also takes place on a case-by-case basis, at provider level.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

There is no 'recognition approach' as such in Austria, so none of the types of learning components considered for this review (courses, credit points, units, modules, programmes, qualifications / diplomas / degrees) is

²⁹

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10009600> <http://www.ibw.at/html/fb/fb137.pdf>, 12.05.2015

³⁰

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10006276>, 12.05.2015

recognized. However, within the different arrangements described (block recognition under specific circumstances, and case-by-case recognition), there can be recognition of semesters.

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

Austria does not have a general system for the recognition of learning acquired abroad by IVET learners during mobility stays. Existing arrangements are framed by national laws, but implementation on the ground is not coordinated. Non-coordinated case-by-case recognition at provider level also exists.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

There is no general recognition system, and no time frame for the existing specific arrangements neither.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

The issue of visibility of contact points has not been addressed in Austria.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

There is no visibility policy, so no evaluation of it.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Since 2014, Europass Mobility documents are administered through a new dedicated online platform³¹. It allows sending institutions to create Europass Mobility documents for their learners. Both sending and host institutions can edit the documents. Since April 2015, Europass Mobility

³¹ <https://www.europass-db.at/de/europass-mobilitaet-login.asp>

can also be used for intra-national mobility. First-time use of the online platform requires registration. Depending on the specific type of learning mobility, there are three different procedures (A-C) for the preparation and completion of the Europass Mobility document. Europass provides a separate guidance document on the use of Europass Mobility³².

There is a public register³³ which stores Certificate Supplements (in English and German language) for a wide array of VET qualifications, including VET schools, VET colleges and apprenticeship training).

At the moment, ECVET is only used on a project-based level, in particular in the framework of EU-funded mobility projects. As indicated above, the Austrian ECVET strategy (2014) intends a more widespread implementation of ECVET in Austria that sees permeability and mobility as the two primary objectives and strands for action. Pilot projects are currently ongoing to test ECVET implementation. In addition, working groups have been set up to develop ECVET implementation strategies for sub-sectors.

In Austria, the NQF has not been implemented yet. Current plans suggest that the respective law might be passed in the course of the year 2015.

So far, a learning outcomes based approach has not been systematically used for the transfer and recognition of learning outcomes acquired during VET mobility. In general terms, however, there is an ongoing transition towards a learning outcomes based approach in Austrian VET.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

Although Austria has a mechanism of 'block recognition' in certain circumstances, as well as the possibility for case-by-case recognition at school level, the country lacks a general system for recognition of learning acquired abroad by IVET learners. The existing arrangements may recognize semesters acquired abroad, and make use of the Europass Mobility Document, the Europass Certificate Supplement and ECVET. However, they are not coordinated countrywide, and lack a time frame for processing recognition requests. In future, it could be considered putting in place a fully-fledged system of recognition, taking into account the need for user information and user friendliness, quick processing of

32

http://www.europass.at/fileadmin/dateien_redaktion/mobilitaetsnachweis/Leitfaden.pdf

33 <http://www.europass.at/was-ist-europass/zeugniserlaeuterung/zeugniserlaeuterung-holen/>

requests, and countrywide coordination. Introducing a wider range of standardised learning components such as courses, credit points, units, modules, programmes and qualifications / degrees / diplomas could help bridging the practice gap between the country and the rest of the European Union, thus helping to increase the place of Austria in the flows of international IVET mobility. In future, extending the range of EU tools for recognition used to EQF/NQF and the learning outcomes approach could be considered as well.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

Austria has policy actions aimed to support the creation of partnerships for organising international learning mobility projects in IVET. There are several different actors and institutions to support VET providers or training companies in their development of mobility partnerships. Again, the National Agency for Lifelong learning and IFA can be considered as two key actors in this respect.

The National Agency for Lifelong Learning (located within the OeAD agency) organises events to inform VET providers and other institutions about the possibilities for European mobility projects. These events are often also designed as networking events.

IFA provides guidance and information on the creation of mobility partnerships. IFA also directly liaises with companies abroad to offer and organise internships.

The Austrian ECVET website³⁴ provides information on ECVET-related mobility. It provides information about ECVET and provides practical information on its application, including templates for Memoranda of Understanding, Learning Agreement, Personal Transcript. The ECVET contact point is the central point of contact for information related to ECVET mobility. It also coordinates the activities of the ECVET experts: members of the national team of ECVET experts provide guidance and support to VET institutions or companies which wish to engage in

³⁴ www.ecvet-info.at

European ECVET mobility.

The Economic Chambers provide support to companies/enterprises which wish to engage in international cooperation. In addition, there are initiatives (such as the regional 'xchange' initiative, described in Part 1) which promote exchanges of apprentices, i.e. company A sends one of its apprentices to company B abroad and, in exchange, will take on an apprentice from country B. Furthermore, the eTwinning initiative can be mentioned in this context, as a tool to promote cooperation and the establishment of partnerships between European schools. It targets school education, thus also including school-based VET³⁵. Most information and guidance websites cited in Part 1 also refer to external platforms or websites which assist in finding mobility partners (both for company and school-based periods abroad).

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The actions to support partnerships are subject to some form of evaluation. Both National Agency for Lifelong learning and IFA carry out internal evaluations of their information and guidance activities. In 2009, IFA also carried out a survey on the added value of internships (of apprentices) to the Austrian sending companies³⁶.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

Austria has taken policy actions to provide IVET learners with financial support for their international mobility. Most European mobility periods are funded within the Erasmus+ programme (and formerly the lifelong learning programme). Further potential sources of funding include: Ministry of Science, Research and the Economy; selected municipalities; regional governments. The availability of these further sources of funding is however quite limited. There are also special funding arrangements, e.g. on regional basis (e.g. offered by a regional government, in cooperation with the regional Economic Chamber) or for specific groups of learners (e.g. a funding scheme for high-potential apprentices, organised

³⁵ <http://www.etwinning.net/de/pub/index.htm>

³⁶ http://www.ifa.or.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Nutzen-von-Auslandspraktika_Endbericht_mit_Anhang.pdf; 12.05.2015

by the Austrian Economic Chambers and the Austrian Ministry of Science, Research and the Economy).

For internships of apprentices, personal contribution of several hundred euros is typically required (for internships of three to six weeks' duration, typically 200 – 600 euros). In a few companies, the workers' council will take on part of the costs³⁷.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The National Agency for Lifelong Learning monitors its funding activity through publishing statistics on mobility carried out within European programmes and also providing annual reports on activities and the use of EU funds.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

Austria has policy actions to provide stakeholders involved in organising international IVET mobility projects with financial and non-financial support. The IFA agency is an important provider of support, guidance and information to companies who engage in IVET mobility projects. The Austrian Economic Chambers also provide support and guidance. In addition, companies which send their apprentices on an internship abroad can apply for funding, with the apprenticeship offices, in order to be refunded the sum of the gross amount of the apprenticeship remuneration that they have to pay to their apprentices during their stay abroad. This is to compensate companies for the remuneration they have to pay to their apprentices during their stay abroad, while they are not available to work for them³⁸.

³⁷ http://www.ifa.or.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Folder_Rahmenbedingungen-Anerkennung_2012.pdf, 12.05.2015
http://www.ifa.or.at/fileadmin/user_upload/2015_Begabtenfoerderung_Mobilitaet_Ausschreibung, 12.05.2015

³⁸ https://www.wko.at/Content.Node/Lehre-F-rdern/Merkblatt_-_Auslandspraktikum.html, 12.05.2015

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

There is no evaluation of the support to stakeholders and staff.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

Austria has actions to support IVET providers and companies in the creation of mobility partnerships and networks and in organising mobility projects. The country also funds the mobility of IVET learners. The support to creation of partnerships and learners mobility is monitored (through surveys and reports), while the support to organising mobility is not evaluated at all. In future, it could be considered making the evaluation more systematic for all policies in the area, and ensuring that the conclusions drawn from monitoring actions translate into identification and implementation of suggestions for readjustments /corrections / reforms of the next generation of policies.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

Austria has countrywide-coordinated mechanisms to provide IVET learners with information on international mobility. However, the country lacks actions targeted at improving this provision over time. Future progress in this area could consist in checking, e.g. through a user survey, whether improvement actions are necessary, and if so, putting in place an appropriate evaluated improvement process.

In the area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, Austria has a marked intention to promote integration of mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes, and has taken measures to reduce administrative burdens relating to mobility and legal obstacles to the movement of minors. A policy target for the international mobility of IVET learners has also been adopted. The country lacks frameworks and measures to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries. In future, it could be checked, e.g. through user surveys, whether such frameworks or measures are needed.

Regarding Recognition of Learning Outcomes, although Austria has a mechanism of 'block recognition' in certain circumstances, as well as the possibility for case-by-case recognition at school level, the country lacks a general system for recognition of learning acquired abroad by IVET

learners. The existing arrangements may recognize semesters acquired abroad, and make use of the Europass Mobility Document, the Europass Certificate Supplement and ECVET. However, they are not coordinated countrywide, and lack a time frame for processing recognition requests. In future, it could be considered putting in place a fully-fledged system of recognition, taking into account the need for user information and user friendliness, quick processing of requests, and countrywide coordination. Introducing a wider range of standardised learning components such as courses, credit points, units, modules, programmes and qualifications / degrees / diplomas could help bridging the practice gap between the country and the rest of the European Union, thus helping to increase the place of Austria in the flows of international IVET mobility. In future, extending the range of EU tools for recognition used to EQF/NQF and the learning outcomes approach could be considered as well.

Finally, in the area of Partnerships and Funding, Austria has in place actions to support IVET providers and companies in the creation of mobility partnerships and networks and in organising mobility projects. The country also funds the mobility of IVET learners. The support to creation of partnerships and learners mobility is monitored while the support to organising mobility is not evaluated at all. In future, it could be considered making the evaluation more systematic for all policies in this area, and ensuring that the conclusions drawn from monitoring actions translate into identification and implementation of suggestions for readjustments / corrections / reforms of the next generation of policies.

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IVET levels covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary
- Post-secondary non-tertiary
- Tertiary

Quick overview of IVET mobility schemes in Belgium

Apart from the Leonardo programmes (until 2013) and henceforth ERASMUS+, there is no initiative in Belgium geared specifically to Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET), except those run on a very small scale by the four existing training operators for apprentices and small business owners under a partnership agreement with a neighbouring country/company, or what is known as mentoring for certain occupations. For future business leaders, whether they attended one of these operators' programmes or an institution of higher education, there are also initiatives pursued by chambers of commerce, and more specifically initiatives that promote each region abroad (Bruxelles Export, for instance; AWEX in Wallonia, etc.).

Conversely, there have long been public and private structures in Belgium, in each of the Communities, and even regions, which organise language exchanges, volunteer programmes and even internships, but for all, i.e. without focusing on specific target groups like IVET learners. This policy is generally pursued in the "culture" or "youth" departments/agencies of the ministries in each Community.

Every ministry of education also has its general division or department of international relations which, under bilateral agreements geared more to culture, language, but also to training at times, undertakes mobility activities for students and/or professors, instructors, or researchers. Here, with the possible exception of certain students who are still in school (including IVET), we are dealing more with CVET.

In each Region (Flanders, Brussels and Wallonia), there are international relations services in the departments of employment or within the PES which manage the EURES and EURODYSSÉE networks or which, through a consortium with Belgian and foreign VET partners and companies, can introduce Erasmus+ mobility projects. They also promote mobility (internships and jobs abroad). Although the aim is geared more to employment, an internship can nonetheless also be seen as an opportunity to undergo further training. This offer is geared to every person registered as a jobseeker – it is an administrative obligation which does not necessarily mean that the person is available on the labour market; s/he may be a student, undergoing training, etc. Part of addressees can be regarded as people in IVET, inasmuch as they have not

attended a Vocational Education and Training programme at school, but as jobseekers undergo a vocational training course under an occupational project established with a consultant. Nevertheless, these programmes are not specifically dedicated to IVET.

Regarding the coordination issue, it should be borne in mind that in addition to the ministry of education which governs policies, budgets etc., there are, in each Community European agencies that implement LLL policies, i.e.

- AEF – Agence francophone pour l'éducation et la formation tout au long de la vie, the French-speaking agency for lifelong education and training³⁹;
- EPOS vzw – Europese Programma's voor Onderwijs, Opleiding en Samenwerking, the Flemish agency which manages European programmes⁴⁰; and
- Jugendbüro (Youth Office) in the German-speaking community. Located within the Ministry of education, Jugendbüro coordinates European programmes.

There are also:

- Coordination centres of European programmes (in the French-speaking Community), with a mobility unit which provides support for projects pursued in compulsory education;
- The Euroguidance network, which is integrated in EPOS in Flanders; managed by Bruxelles Formation in the French-speaking part of the country; and falls under the Ministry of the German-speaking community.

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

The German-speaking community of Belgium has an information and guidance mechanism for international learning mobility of IVET learners.

³⁹ www.aef-europe.be

⁴⁰ www.epos-vlaanderen.be

Provision is ensured by Jugendbuero, the European agency for youth and education⁴¹.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

Community-wide coordination of the provision is ensured by the Department for Training and Organisation of education, Ministry of the German-speaking Community.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

The Regional law (Dekret) of 26 June 1986 regarding grants for students includes the objective of promoting international learning mobility in IVET.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

This information is not available at this time.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

This information is not available at this time.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

Companies and VET institutions can get information and assistance from Jugendbuero.

⁴¹ jugendbuero.be

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE “INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE” THEMATIC AREA

The German-speaking community of Belgium is reported to have a countrywide coordinated policy to provide IVET learners with information and guidance on international learning mobility. The information presented in this fiche on this policy is very limited however. It remains to be clarified what the policy consists of; to what extent the provision covers not only information but also personalised advice, guidance and counselling to IVET learners directly; and how it is coordinated.

To meet the requirements of the “*Youth on the move*” Recommendation in this area, the community could in future make sure that actions to improve the provision over time are in place and subject to regular evaluation.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

In the German-speaking community of Belgium, international learning mobility is not taken into account in the curricula of IVET programmes.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

The German-speaking community of Belgium has not set targets for international learning mobility in IVET.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

The German-speaking community of Belgium does not have in place any measure specifically targeted at smoothing the delivery of visas and

residency permit to IVET learners from third countries. Belgium does not make the difference between reasons for coming in Belgium, just the difference between a length of stay more or less than 3 months and more or less than 18 years old. Any regulation in this sphere is within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs⁴².

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

This information is not available at this time.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

The German-speaking community of Belgium does not have in place any measure specifically targeted at removing the legal obstacles to the international learning mobility of minors in IVET.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Incoming apprentices and IVET students from the EU benefit (through the European Health Insurance card) from the same medical care as their counterparts in the country (i.e. local IVET learners).

Incoming apprentices and IVET students (whether from the EU or from third countries) are subject to the in force labour regulation and benefit from labour and safety protection in the same conditions as their counterparts in the country (i.e. local IVET learners at work).

⁴² http://diplomatie.belgium.be/fr/Services/venir_en_belgique/visa_pour_la_belgique/
<https://dofi.ibz.be/sites/dvzoe/FR/Pages/home.aspx>
 Specific information on passports and visa can be found on the following webpage:
http://www.jint.be/portals/0/documenten/publicaties/visum_reispas_en_andere_poespas.pdf

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE “ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES” THEMATIC AREA

The German-speaking community of Belgium lacks a policy intention to integrate international learning mobility in the curricula of IVET programmes. No targets have been set for international learning mobility in IVET. No measures have been taken to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permit to IVET learners from third countries, or to remove the possible legal obstacles that could hinder the international learning mobility of minors in IVET. Finally, it is unknown whether measures are in place to reduce administrative burdens that may hinder the international mobility of IVET learners. To better meet the requirements of the “*Youth on the move*” Recommendation, it could be considered in future formulating a clear policy support to the integration of international mobility in the curricula of IVET programmes. It could also be considered setting national targets for mobility in IVET, for example through translating / adapting the EU 6% benchmark into the country’s IVET policy landscape. Finally, it could also be checked on the ground – e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys – the existence of needs for assisting incoming and outgoing learners in arranging their mobility. Taking appropriate measures could then be considered accordingly.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

The mechanism is being developed and is planned to be operational in 2018.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

There is no possibility of recognition of learning acquired abroad by IVET learners. Country’s tests must be taken and passed in the same conditions as regular IVET learners for the learning outcomes to be acknowledged.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

There is no possibility of recognition, so no learning component acquired abroad can be recognised.

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

There is no recognition process, so no coordination thereof.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

There is no recognition process, so no time frame for it.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

There is no possibility of recognition, so the question of visibility of contact points does not apply.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

There is no visibility policy, so no evaluation of it.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The learning outcomes approach is in use in IVET in the community.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE “RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES” THEMATIC AREA

The German-speaking community of Belgium lacks mechanisms for the recognition of learning acquired abroad by IVET learners. Coming closer to the requirements of the “*Youth on the move*” Recommendation would require putting in place a coordinated recognition mechanism applicable to the widest range of learning components (courses, credit points, units, modules, programmes, qualifications), and that ensures easy and informed access to users, as well as a quick response to their requests. It could also be considered making use of the widest range of EU tools (Europass Mobility Document and Certificate Supplement; ECVET; EQF/NQF and the Learning Outcomes approach) for visibility, transfer and recognition.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The German-speaking community of Belgium does not have any policy actions to support IVET providers and companies in the creation of mobility partnerships and networks.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

There is no support to the creation of partnerships and networks, so no evaluation thereof.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

The German-speaking community of Belgium supports financially IVET learners for their international learning mobility within the framework of European programmes such as Erasmus+ (and before Leonardo).

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

There is no evaluation of the actions carried out to fund the international mobility of IVET learners.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

Within Erasmus+ there are policy actions aimed to provide stakeholders involved in organising international IVET mobility projects with financial and non-financial support.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

There is no evaluation of the actions carried out to provide companies, institutions and staff with financial and non-financial support.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

The German-speaking community of Belgium is reported to – through Erasmus+ – support financially IVET learners for their international learning mobility, and provide financial and non-financial support to companies and VET institutions in organising mobility projects. The information presented in this fiche on these support actions is very limited

however. It remains to be clarified what exactly these actions consists of.

For further progress in this area, it could be made sure in future that IVET learners, IVET institutions, and companies receive all the types and amounts of support they need to achieve their mobility objectives. It could be considered putting in place actions to support IVET providers and companies in the creation of mobility partnerships and networks. To better meet the requirements of the “*Youth on the move*” Recommendation, it could also be made sure that all policies in this area undergo full-fledged evaluation, including translating monitoring activities into recommendations that are actually implemented and improve the next generation of actions.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In the thematic area of Information and Guidance, the German-speaking community of Belgium is reported to have a countrywide coordinated policy to provide IVET learners with information and guidance on international learning mobility. The information presented in this fiche on this policy is very limited however. It remains to be clarified what the policy consists of; to what extent the provision covers not only information but also personalised advice, guidance and counselling to IVET learners directly; and how it is coordinated. To meet the requirements of the “*Youth on the move*” Recommendation in this area, the community could in future make sure that actions to improve the provision over time are in place and subject to regular evaluation.

Regarding the area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, The German-speaking community of Belgium lacks a policy intention to integrate international learning mobility in the curricula of IVET programmes. No targets have been set for international learning mobility in IVET. No measures have been taken to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permit to IVET learners from third countries, or to remove the possible legal obstacles that could hinder the international learning mobility of minors in IVET. Finally, it is unknown whether measures are in place to reduce administrative burdens that may hinder the international mobility of IVET learners. To better meet the requirements of the “*Youth on the move*” Recommendation, it could be considered in future formulating a clear policy support to the integration of international mobility in the curricula of IVET programmes. It could also be considered setting national targets for mobility in IVET, for example through translating / adapting the EU 6% benchmark into the country’s IVET policy landscape. Finally, it could also be checked on the ground – e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys – the existence of needs for assisting

incoming and outgoing learners in arranging their mobility. Taking appropriate measures could then be considered accordingly.

In the area of Recognition of Learning Outcomes, the German-speaking community of Belgium lacks mechanisms for the recognition of learning acquired abroad by IVET learners. Coming closer to the requirements of the *“Youth on the move”* Recommendation would require putting in place a coordinated recognition mechanism applicable to the widest range of learning components (courses, credit points, units, modules, programmes, qualifications / diplomas / degrees), and that ensures easy and informed access to users, as well as a quick response to their requests. It could also be considered making use of the widest range of EU tools (Europass Mobility Document and Certificate Supplement; ECVET; EQF/NQF and the Learning Outcomes approach) for visibility, transfer and recognition.

Finally, regarding Partnerships and Funding, the German-speaking community of Belgium is reported to – through Erasmus+ – support financially IVET learners for their international learning mobility, and provide financial and non-financial support to companies and VET institutions in organising mobility projects. The information presented in this fiche on these support actions is very limited however. It remains to be clarified what exactly these actions consists of.

For further progress in this area, it could be made sure in future that IVET learners, IVET institutions, and companies receive all the types and amounts of support they need to achieve their mobility objectives. It could be considered putting in place actions to support IVET providers and companies in the creation of mobility partnerships and networks. To better meet the requirements of the *“Youth on the move”* Recommendation, it could also be made sure that all policies in this area undergo full-fledged evaluation, including translating monitoring activities into recommendations that are actually implemented and improve the next generation of actions.

BELGIUM – French-speaking community

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IVET levels covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary
- Post-secondary non-tertiary
- Tertiary

The information in this document includes those on dual system, secondary and post-secondary. Training organised by VET Institutions and targeting unemployed people – even these to be considered as IVET for young people aged 18+ who have left the school system – are not taken into consideration here due to the definition given by Cedefop. In Belgium, there is also the possibility for Adults to attend IVET Education in the second chance education/enseignement de promotion sociale (secondary, upper secondary and higher education) and in Arts (*“Enseignement artistique à horaire réduit”*) neither secondary nor post-secondary, but giving an upper secondary certification: this kind of education is not covered here, as it has been left out till now from all mobility policies.

Quick overview of IVET mobility schemes in Belgium

Apart from the Leonardo programmes (until 2013) and henceforth ERASMUS+, there is no initiative in Belgium geared specifically to Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET), except those run on a very small scale by the four existing training operators for apprentices and small business owners under a partnership agreement with a neighbouring country/company, or what is known as mentoring for certain occupations. For future business leaders, whether they attended one of these operators' programmes or an institution of higher education, there are also initiatives pursued by chambers of commerce, and more specifically initiatives that promote each region abroad (Bruxelles Export, for instance; AWEX in Wallonia, etc.).

Conversely, there have long been public and private structures in Belgium, in each of the Communities, and even regions, which organise language exchanges, volunteer programmes and even internships, but for all, i.e. without focusing on specific target groups like IVET learners. This policy is generally pursued in the “culture” or “youth” departments/agencies of the ministries in each Community.

Every ministry of education also has its general division or department of international relations which, under bilateral agreements geared more to culture, language, but also to training at times, undertakes mobility activities for students and/or professors, instructors, or researchers. Here, with the possible exception of certain students who are still in school (including IVET), we are dealing more with CVET.

In each Region (Flanders, Brussels and Wallonia), there are international relations services in the departments of employment or within the PES which manage the EURES and EURODISSEE networks or which, through a consortium with Belgian and foreign VET partners and companies, can introduce Erasmus+ mobility projects. They also promote mobility (internships and jobs abroad). Although the aim is geared more to employment, an internship can nonetheless also be seen as an opportunity to undergo further training. This offer is geared to every person registered as a jobseeker – it is an administrative obligation which does not necessarily mean that the person is available on the labour market; s/he may be a student, undergoing training, etc. Part of addressees can be regarded as people in IVET, inasmuch as they have not attended a Vocational Education and Training programme at school, but as jobseekers undergo a vocational training course under an occupational project established with a consultant. Nevertheless, these programmes are not specifically dedicated to IVET.

Regarding the coordination issue, it should be borne in mind that in addition to the ministry of education which governs policies, budgets etc., there are, in each Community European agencies that implement LLL policies, i.e.

- AEF – Agence francophone pour l'éducation et la formation tout au long de la vie, the French-speaking agency for lifelong education and training⁴³;
- EPOS vzw – Europese Programma's voor Onderwijs, Opleiding en Samenwerking, the Flemish agency which manages European programmes⁴⁴; and
- Jugendbüro (Youth Office) in the German-speaking community. Located within the Ministry of education, Jugendbüro coordinates European programmes.

There are also:

- Coordination centres of European programmes (in the French-speaking Community), with a mobility unit which provides support for projects pursued in compulsory education;
- The Euroguidance network, which is integrated in EPOS in Flanders; managed by Bruxelles Formation in the French-speaking part of the country; and falls under the Ministry of the German-speaking community.

⁴³ www.aef-europe.be

⁴⁴ www.epos-vlaanderen.be

Main IVET-mobility-related structures in the French-speaking community of Belgium

(a) Public Bodies

- The Ministry of the French Community in charge of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports has a Department for youth mobility called Bureau International de la Jeunesse (BIJ⁴⁵). Created in the mid 90's, BIJ manages several programmes financed by national and European funds.
- Agence Education Formation Europe⁴⁶ was created to manage and promote European lifelong education and training programmes and tools such as Erasmus+; Europass, ECVET, etc.
- Centre de Coordination et de Gestion des Programmes Européens⁴⁷ (Coordination and management centre for European programmes) – a department within the ministry of the French Community – encourages VET schools to participate in transnational mobility programmes⁴⁸. It coordinates measures and activities within the context of European programmes: ESF, FEDER, ERASMUS+ and INTERREG. It previously managed the Leonardo da Vinci programme and now handles the Erasmus+ programme for students and schools in technical and vocational upper secondary education.
- Wallonie Bruxelles International⁴⁹ (WBI) is an agency responsible for valorizing the Brussel's and Walloon's talents abroad. It proposes various trainings abroad for young people wishing to become entrepreneurs or to have a first professional experience abroad (in cooperation with AWEX⁵⁰, the Agency for export and investments in Wallonia).
- Brussel's Invest and Export Agency⁵¹ is the foreign trade and foreign

⁴⁵ www.lebij.be

⁴⁶ AEF - www.aef-europe.be

⁴⁷ www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=26545&se_id=2393

⁴⁸ Through:

- Inviting schools to participate and send their pupils and trainers for internship abroad;
- Developing a partnership network across Europe, as well as management and project tracking tools;
- Assisting schools in the drafting of applications, preparing beneficiaries, developing evaluation grids for the skills acquired, looking for host partners, providing support for logistics and administrative as well as financial management of projects;
- Organising contact seminars and conducting study visits to expand the network of partners.

⁴⁹ www.wbi.be

⁵⁰ AWEX is The Walloon Agency for export and investments abroad. It has some specific programs like Explort aiming at teaching young people some techniques of the international trade.

⁵¹ www.invest-export.irisnet.be

investment department of the Brussels Region Public Service (BRPS). It organizes specific programmes such as the Brussels Young Exporters Program, a 6 month immersion programme in international trade.

Besides these, the Walloon Region and the Brussels Region focus on language learning and/or a (first) work experience abroad via internship to boost employability: grants within the Plan Marshall (Wallonia) and Actiris International with various programs, for example "Eurodyssée" and Eures within Actiris, the Employment Agency of the Brussels Region.

(b) VET providers

- FOREM (Wallonia) and BRUXELLES FORMATION (Brussels) manage European grants for interregional mobility of trainees (ESF). BRUXELLES FORMATION is the host institution for the Euroguidance Centre for both Brussel's French-speaking part and Wallonia;
- Specific initiatives are taken by dual-learning (training Services for small and medium-sized enterprises) providers in Brussels and Wallonia (SFPME/EPF, IFAPME). It consists often in an exchange programme with trainees going to other European countries like the nearby countries (France, Luxembourg, Netherlands) but also faraway, like Hungary, for some weeks.

(c) Companies such as WEP (World Education Program), EF (Education First), Languages and Travel are private organisations cooperating with public institutions such as the Ministry of the French Community and the Walloon Region to improve the visibility of their actions, such as the Expedis programme and the grants promoted by the Walloon Region within the Marshall plan.

(d) Non-profit associations, labelled as "organisations de jeunesse" (youth organizations) and therefore funded by the Ministry of the French Community in Belgium. Amongst them Infor-Jeunes is perhaps the better widespread in Wallonia and Brussels, as it is a network of independent non-profit associations created in 1972 especially to inform young people. The American YFU (Youth for Understanding) and AFS (American Field Service) are also well known and their Belgian offices are also recognized as Youth organizations. There is a general portal for youth mobility in/out⁵².

(e) Private foundations offering their own grants. Traditional foundations are Rotary Belux; Lions Belgium; Belgian America educational foundation with the full bright programme in scientific research.

⁵² www.mobilitedesjeunes.be

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

There is no specific guidance service designed for IVET mobility. IVET learners can get information on mobility from the public bodies, VET providers, companies, non-profit associations and private foundations that organise mobility projects. Information on mobility can also be obtained from Higher Education institutions: every university has an information service for student mobility⁵³.

For personalised advice and guidance more specifically, VET providers FOREM (Wallonia) and BRUXELLES FORMATION (Brussels) host counselling Department for international and inter-regional mobility, open to all publics.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

There are elements of coordination. The Agencies depend on the Government of the French Community for their policy although their management is fully independent. Infor-Jeunes is funded by the Ministry of the French Community and cooperates with BIJ for the portal "Mobilité des Jeunes". There are also links between the agency for the development of lifelong training (AEF) and the Coordination and management centre for European programmes. Finally, VET providers funded by the Regions cooperate with the public bodies and between them for interregional mobility for training.

⁵³ www.unamur.be/international/mobilite-etudiants/autres.html

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

In 2011 the Ministry of The French Community published a Circular (n° 3690) addressing short stays abroad for secondary school learners – “*Organisation de séjours scolaires individuels pour les élèves de l’enseignement secondaire*”, which includes the promotion of mobility within IVET and general upper secondary Education. This specific programme is called EXPEDIS. Also, programmatic regional’s and Community Governments’ statements (2014-2019) promote international mobility and international education and training for both students and teachers⁵⁴.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

There are no actions on guidance, but there are some on information. The Coordination and management centre for European programmes (CCG) has been endowed with additional staff to support students, teachers and schools, in particular providing them with information. The Agency “Wallonia-Brussels Campus” was created in 2010 by the Ministry of the French Community and Wallonia-Brussels International, with information provision as part of its missions⁵⁵.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Although the Coordination and management centre for European programmes annually assesses its activities⁵⁶, there is no evaluation on the specific issue of improving information and guidance.

⁵⁴ <http://gouvernement.cfwb.be/d-clARATION-de-politique-communautaire-2014-2019-f-d-rer-pour-r-ussir>. P.30

⁵⁵ www.studyinbelgium.be

⁵⁶ This assessment is based on field assessment in schools and companies participating in projects, and visiting students abroad. Assessment criteria comprise:

- Quantitative aspects, i.e. number of mobility stays achieved against the targets; change in number of mobility stays since the previous call;
- In situ project evaluation with all stakeholders to analyze the whole project in terms of stakeholder satisfaction and organizational, logistical and qualitative aspects. Internal evaluation forms are completed and a final annual report issued.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

The agency "AEF" disseminates calls for projects to all others agencies, non-profit organisations, and other stakeholders. Technical and vocational schools receive information through the letters from the Coordination and management centre for European programmes, and official circulars from the General Directorate for Compulsory secondary education.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

The French-speaking community of Belgium has mechanisms to provide IVET learners with information for international learning mobility. Some of these mechanisms may provide some personalised guidance to their users, but no systematic provision of personalised guidance, advice and counselling to IVET learners is in place. The existing provision is also not systematically coordinated at the community level, although several stakeholders cooperate with each other. Actions to improve the current approach to information and guidance provision have been taken through restaffing the Coordination and management centre for European programmes and creating in 2010 a new "Wallonia-Brussels Campus" agency. However these actions have not been evaluated. For further progress in this area, it could be considered in future putting in place at the community level a streamlined, coordinated and systematic mechanism for provision of information and personalised guidance, advice and counselling to IVET learners for their international mobility. To better meet the requirements of the "*Youth on the move*" Recommendation, putting in place an evaluated process for regular improvement of the provision could also be considered.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

2011 Circular 3690 issued by the French community on short stays abroad for secondary school learners ("*Organisation de séjours scolaires individuels pour les élèves de l'enseignement secondaire*") includes promotion of mobility within IVET. In 2004, a special fund was established to provide financial support for student mobility, and in 2007 the Higher Council for Mobility was created to promote policies and measures for good quality mobility.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

The community does not have targets for international learning mobility in IVET.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

No specific measures have been taken to facilitate the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries. Belgium does not make any difference between reasons for coming into the country, just the difference between the length of stay (more or less than 3 months) and age (more or less than 18 years old). Any learner / student registered and accepted in a school may stay longer than 3 months in the country as far he/she has sufficient resources. He/she must register with the municipality of his/her place of residence and provide the proof of enrolment in a school or company⁵⁷.

⁵⁷ http://diplomatie.belgium.be/fr/Services/venir_en_belgique/visa_pour_la_belgique/
<http://www.mobilitedesjeunes.be/en-pratique/droit-du-sejour-demarches-a-la-commune>

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

No specific measures have been taken to reduce IVET learners' administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility. Assistance is provided to schools however: within Erasmus+, the Coordination and management centre for European programmes assists schools in managing their project files, including all related administrative aspects. Education networks can also support schools in reducing their administrative burden.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

No measures have been taken to facilitate the international learning mobility of minor IVET learners.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social security

Social security of apprentices and IVET learners engaged in international mobility is ensured through the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). The card is issued free of charge and allows anyone who is insured / covered by a statutory social security scheme of the EEA countries and Switzerland to receive medical treatment in another member state for free or at a reduced cost.

Labour protection

Foreign apprentices and IVET students working as interns in the community⁵⁸ benefit from the protection of labour and safety law as local employees. For those within the Erasmus+ programme, work accidents are covered by their self-subscribed insurances.

⁵⁸ Law of 30 April 1999 on the employment of foreign workers. - Royal Decree of 9 June 1999 implementing the Act of 30 April on the employment of foreign workers. - Act of 19 February 1965 on the exercise by foreigners, independent professional activities. - Royal Decree of 2 August 1985 implementing the law of 19 February 1965 on the exercise by foreigners, independent professional activities.

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE “ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES” THEMATIC AREA

The French-speaking community of Belgium clearly promotes integration of international learning mobility in secondary education curricula, including IVET. Measures have been taken to alleviate the mobility-related administrative burden of schools. However, the community has not set any targets for mobility in IVET, and has not taken any measures to smooth the delivery of visas and permits to IVET learners from third countries, or to ease the international mobility of IVET learners. To better meet the requirements of the “*Youth on the move*” Recommendation, it could be considered in future setting community-level targets for international mobility in IVET, and checking on the ground – e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys – the existence of needs for assisting incoming and outgoing learners in arranging their mobility. Taking appropriate measures could then be considered accordingly.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

Recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility is regulated by law at national and regional level. A Decree of 26 of March 2009 states that internship periods have the same value as would be followed in Belgium.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

Learning acquired abroad by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility may be recognised, but the process is felt by users as somewhat difficult.

Certification of acquired competencies⁵⁹

The responsible bodies are the official VET providers, FOREM, BRUXELLES FORMATION, SFPME, IFAPME and the second chance education. The candidates must first meet a counsellor, then attend a guidance session led by a professional from the specific field; then pass an exam. The whole process is for free.

Diplomas⁶⁰

The Authority in charge is the Ministry of the French Community⁶¹. Process: first the person must define what he/she wants his/her diploma recognized for, i.e. either continue studying in Belgium (if so at which education level); or work or attend a professional training. Then he/she must examine the specific rules and agreements (if any) between Belgium and the other country involved. Finally the applicant must build a dossier with several authenticated papers and pay 200 € (150€ for students from specific countries). The whole process takes some time.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in the community applies to:

- Units
- Modules
- Programmes
- Qualifications / diplomas / degrees

Students in upper secondary school go abroad with an evaluation grid which covers a part of the training programme of the year. The skills to be acquired shall be evaluated by the company / school on the basis of that grid.

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

There is no coordination of the recognition process at the community level. Harmonisation is under consideration however, and constitutes one of the objectives of the political programme 2014-2020 for Wallonia and Brussels (Wallonie-Bruxelles 2020). VET providers are receiving funding

⁵⁹ www.cvdc.be

⁶⁰ <http://www.equivalences.cfwb.be/>

⁶¹ - Direction générale de l'enseignement obligatoire (Local 0F013), Service des équivalences de l'enseignement obligatoire or for post graduates: Service de la reconnaissance académique et professionnelle des diplômes étrangers d'enseignement supérieur.

to work on that matter.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

There is no regulatory time frame at community level for processing recognition requests.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

Vet providers, employment public bodies and guidance public centres provide information on validation of learning outcomes and qualifications acquired abroad. However, there is currently no systematic policy actions aimed at making more visible the contact points where IVET learners can obtain information on validation of learning outcomes and qualifications acquired abroad.

However, one objective of the Political Action Plan (2014-2019) set by the French-speaking authorities responsible for Education and VET (FWB and Cocof in Brussel) is to increase in future the visibility of the "Consortium de validation des compétences" (the body in charge of validating competencies), and the "Service francophone des Métiers et des Qualifications" (in charge of defining training contents for each specific profession outside Tertiary Education).

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

There is no visibility policy, so no evaluation of it.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Europass Mobility Document is being delivered to student going abroad⁶². There are no statistics about how many and who uses this tools but the Europass unit for FR Belgium cooperates with 120 IVET schools in order to make a complete portfolio for each student, including Europass

⁶² <http://www.moneuropass.be/>

and ECVET information.

Agence Education Formation Europe (AEF) affirms that The Europass Certificate Complement is widely used by all IVET institutions.

ECVET is used by several schools in FR Belgium.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

The approach for recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET learners that is in place in the French-speaking community of Belgium is felt as somewhat difficult by its users. The recognition mechanism is not coordinated at community level, and is not subject to a time limit for processing applications. The community does not have an evaluated policy to make visible contact points for information on recognition. However the existing recognition mechanism takes into account units, modules, programmes and qualifications / diplomas / degrees, and makes use of the Europass Mobility Document and Certificate supplement, as well as of ECVET. Future steps that could be considered to better implement the "*Youth on the move*" Recommendation include smoothing, coordinating/harmonizing the recognition process and subjecting it to a time limit as regards the processing of applications; extending the range of learning components (to courses and credit points) and EU tools (to ECVET, the EQF/NQF and the learning outcomes approach) used in the recognition process. Putting in place an evaluated policy for the visibility of contact points for information on recognition would be relevant too.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

There are actions aimed to support the creation of partnerships for organising international learning mobility projects in IVET. The mission of the Coordination and management centre for European programmes is to

help schools to participate in European programmes. The support provided consists in looking for other schools and enterprises for partnerships in Europe, and arranging agreements.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

Although the Agency (AEF) and the Coordination Centre publish annual reports, statistics and sometimes qualitative results⁶³, there is no evaluation of the support to the creation of partnerships and networks.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

Apart from the ERASMUS+ programme, various schemes offer funding for learners' international mobility, including IVET learners:

- The Region Wallonia's Plan Marshal, which offers different types of special grants for the mobility of secondary school pupils;
- "BRIC" grants, which give impulse to professional experiences in Brazil, Russia, India and China;
- "EXPLORT" grants, especially oriented towards export and language learning.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Plan Marshall is evaluated.

Both the agency AEF and the Coordination and management centre for European programmes publish an annual report.

⁶³ <http://www.aef-europe.be/index.php?Rub=aef&page=021>

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

There are actions aimed to provide stakeholders involved in organising international IVET mobility projects with financial and non-financial (e.g. organising study visits) support. Support can be obtained from a range of stakeholders, e.g. AEF, the Coordination and management centre for European programmes, Euroguidance.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

There is no evaluation of these actions.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

The French-speaking community of Belgium has policies to provide IVET learners with financial support for their international learning mobility, and support institutions and companies in the creation of networks and partnerships as well as in organising mobility projects. However, despite some monitoring actions, these policies are not subject to complete evaluation. In future, it could be considered putting in place full-fledged evaluation for all policies in this area, including translating monitoring activities into recommendations that are actually implemented and improve the next generation of actions.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

The French-speaking community of Belgium has mechanisms to provide IVET learners with information for international learning mobility. Some of these mechanisms may provide some personalised guidance to their users, but no systematic provision of personalised guidance, advice and counselling to IVET learners is in place. The existing provision is also not systematically coordinated at the community level, although several stakeholders cooperate with each other. Actions to improve the current approach to information and guidance provision have been taken through restaffing the Coordination and management centre for European

programmes and creating in 2010 a new “Wallonia-Brussels Campus” agency. However these actions have not been evaluated. For further progress in this area, it could be considered in future putting in place at the community level a streamlined, coordinated and systematic mechanism for provision of information and personalised guidance, advice and counselling to IVET learners for their international mobility. To better meet the requirements of the “*Youth on the move*” Recommendation, putting in place an evaluated process for regular improvement of the provision could also be considered.

In the thematic area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, the French-speaking community of Belgium clearly promotes integration of international learning mobility in secondary education curricula, including IVET. Measures have been taken to alleviate the mobility-related administrative burden of schools. However, the community has not set any targets for mobility in IVET, and has not taken any measures to smooth the delivery of visas and permits to IVET learners from third countries, or to ease the international mobility of IVET learners. To better meet the requirements of the “*Youth on the move*” Recommendation, it could be considered in future setting community-level targets for international mobility in IVET, and checking on the ground – e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys – the existence of needs for assisting incoming and outgoing learners in arranging their mobility. Taking appropriate measures could then be considered accordingly.

Regarding Recognition of Learning Outcomes, the approach for recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET learners that is in place in the French-speaking community of Belgium is felt as somewhat difficult by its users. The recognition mechanism is not coordinated at community level, and is not subject to a time limit for processing applications. The community does not have an evaluated policy to make visible contact points for information on recognition. However the existing recognition mechanism takes into account units, modules, programmes and qualifications / diplomas / degrees, and makes use of the Europass Mobility Document and Certificate supplement, as well as of ECVET. Future steps that could be considered to better implement the “*Youth on the move*” Recommendation include smoothing, coordinating/harmonizing the recognition process and subjecting it to a time limit as regards the processing of applications; extending the range of learning components (to courses and credit points) and EU tools (to the EQF/NQF and the learning outcomes approach) used in the recognition process. Putting in place an evaluated policy for the visibility of contact points for information on recognition would be relevant too.

Finally, in the area of Partnerships and Funding, the French-speaking community of Belgium has policies to provide IVET learners with financial support for their international learning mobility, and support institutions

and companies in the creation of networks and partnerships as well as in organising mobility projects. However, despite some monitoring actions, these policies are not subject to complete evaluation. In future, it could be considered putting in place full-fledged evaluation for all policies in this area, including translating monitoring activities into recommendations that are actually implemented and improve the next generation of actions.

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IVET level(s) covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary
- Post-secondary non-tertiary

Quick overview of IVET mobility schemes in Belgium

Apart from the Leonardo programmes (until 2013) and henceforth ERASMUS+, there is no initiative in Belgium geared specifically to Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET), except those run on a very small scale by the four existing training operators for apprentices and small business owners under a partnership agreement with a neighbouring country/company, or what is known as mentoring for certain occupations. For future business leaders, whether they attended one of these operators' programmes or an institution of higher education, there are also initiatives pursued by chambers of commerce, and more specifically initiatives that promote each region abroad (Bruxelles Export, for instance; AWEX in Wallonia, etc.).

Conversely, there have long been public and private structures in Belgium, in each of the Communities, and even regions, which organise language exchanges, volunteer programmes and even internships, but for all, i.e. without focusing on specific target groups like IVET learners. This policy is generally pursued in the "culture" or "youth" departments/agencies of the ministries in each Community.

Every ministry of education also has its general division or department of international relations which, under bilateral agreements geared more to culture, language, but also to training at times, undertakes mobility activities for students and/or professors, instructors, or researchers. Here, with the possible exception of certain students who are still in school (including IVET), we are dealing more with CVET.

In each Region (Flanders, Brussels and Wallonia), there are international relations services in the departments of employment or within the PES which manage the EURES and EURODISSEE networks or which, through a consortium with Belgian and foreign VET partners and companies, can introduce Erasmus+ mobility projects. They also promote mobility (internships and jobs abroad). Although the aim is geared more to employment, an internship can nonetheless also be seen as an opportunity to undergo further training. This offer is geared to every person registered as a jobseeker – it is an administrative obligation which does not necessarily mean that the person is available on the labour market; s/he may be a student, undergoing training, etc. Part of addressees can be regarded as people in IVET, inasmuch as they have not attended a Vocational Education and Training programme at school, but

as jobseekers undergo a vocational training course under an occupational project established with a consultant. Nevertheless, these programmes are not specifically dedicated to IVET.

Regarding the coordination issue, it should be borne in mind that in addition to the ministry of education which governs policies, budgets etc., there are, in each Community European agencies that implement LLL policies, i.e.

- AEF – Agence francophone pour l'éducation et la formation tout au long de la vie, the French-speaking agency for lifelong education and training⁶⁴;
- EPOS vzw – Europese Programma's voor Onderwijs, Opleiding en Samenwerking, the Flemish agency which manages European programmes⁶⁵; and
- Jugendbüro (Youth Office) in the German-speaking community. Located within the Ministry of education, Jugendbüro coordinates European programmes.

There are also:

- Coordination centres of European programmes (in the French-speaking Community), with a mobility unit which provides support for projects pursued in compulsory education;
- The Euroguidance network, which is integrated in EPOS in Flanders; managed by Bruxelles Formation in the French-speaking part of the country; and falls under the Ministry of the German-speaking community.

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Information on mobility for IVET learners is delivered on a variety of websites in order to reach the different target groups.

⁶⁴ www.aef-europe.be

⁶⁵ www.epos-vlaanderen.be

- The Flemish Ministry of Education and Training provides:
 - Specific information on organizing traineeships for IVET learners, including traineeships abroad⁶⁶;
 - Information on international mobility actions for learners and staff in secondary education⁶⁷. Part of this information is provided in cooperation with RYCKEVELDE⁶⁸ and Alden Biesen⁶⁹.
- EPOS vzw, the Erasmus+ National Agency of the Flemish Community of Belgium, provides specific information for mobility of IVET learners and staff⁷⁰. Euroguidance (Flemish Community) is since 2014 part of EPOS vzw.

Information can also be obtained from:

(a) Other public bodies that offer mobility grants, i.e.

- The Province of West-Flanders, which delivers grants for cross-border mobility to Nord-Pas de Calais (FR), Kent (UK) or Zeeland (NL) for learners in secondary education, including IVET⁷¹;
- The Flemish Agency for Social-Cultural Work for Youth and Adults, which co-funds, together with the European Commission, JINT vzw⁷², an organization for the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme; and
- GO Strange⁷³, which provides information on different grants for young people going abroad for study and traineeship.

(b) VET providers, in particular WEP⁷⁴ (World Education Program) and EF⁷⁵ (Education First).

(c) Private foundations offering their own grants.

⁶⁶ <http://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/edulex/document.aspx?docid=13301>

⁶⁷ <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/internationaal/seconderwijs.htm>

⁶⁸ http://www.ryckvelde.be/nl/europa_beleven/subsidies/secundair_onderwijs-93.html

⁶⁹ <http://www.alden-biesen.be/nl/infodagen-en-seminaries-voor-leerkrachten>

⁷⁰ <http://www.epos-vlaanderen.be/?CategoryID=636&SearchParam=>

⁷¹ <http://www.west->

[vlaanderen.be/overdegrens/gebiedenbeleid/externe_relaties/subsidiereglementen/Pagina s/grensoverschrijdendeuitwisselingsprojecten.aspx](http://www.west-vlaanderen.be/overdegrens/gebiedenbeleid/externe_relaties/subsidiereglementen/Pagina%2Fs/grensoverschrijdendeuitwisselingsprojecten.aspx)

⁷² www.jint.be

⁷³ <http://www.gostrange.be/themas/stage/stage-beurzen>

⁷⁴ <http://www.wep.be/nl>

Specific information for youngster in secondary education, including IVET: <http://www.wep.be/nl/vertrekken-tijdens-je-studies>

⁷⁵ <http://www.ef.be/nl/top/buitenlandse-stage/>

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

The different actors pursue their mission separately. There is no coordination mechanism.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

Legal provisions do not include the objective of promoting international learning mobility in IVET.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

The Dutch-speaking region/community of Belgium does not have actions to improve the current provision of information and guidance for the international mobility of IVET learners, although actions were undertaken by the Flemish Euroguidance.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

There are small improvement actions, but no central organised evaluation is carried out.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

Euroguidance (Flemish Community) actively gives advice and support in the development of IVET-projects in which guidance and mobility play a role and in partnership with practitioners, under Erasmus+, ESF and Flemish funds. Euroguidance also helps IVET schools in finding partners for mobility projects under Erasmus+, both in Flanders and abroad, with the help of the Euroguidance network. Within the framework of SID-IN fairs organised yearly, Euroguidance makes guidance counsellors, trainers and teachers aware of the mobility opportunities available to IVET

learners.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE “INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE” THEMATIC AREA

The Dutch-speaking region/community of Belgium provides IVET learners with information on international learning mobility. However this provision does not seem to cover personalised advice, counselling and guidance to IVET learners directly. This provision is operated by various institutions acting separately without any community-level coordination. In addition, the community is lacking a policy to assess and improve its current provision of information and guidance for IVET mobility. Making sure that the provision covers the full spectrum of information and guidance (not only information), creating coordination mechanism to ensure convergence, consistency and complementarity of the provision, and putting in place evaluated actions to improve the provision of information and guidance could be considered in future in order to promote international learning mobility in IVET.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

The Dutch-speaking region/community of Belgium does not have a policy orientation for integrating international learning mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes. IVET providers have the right to organise international mobility projects, and doing so is a decision they can make autonomously⁷⁶.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

The Dutch-speaking region/community of Belgium has not set targets for

⁷⁶ <http://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/edulex/document.aspx?docid=13301>

international mobility in IVET.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

No specific measures have been taken to facilitate the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries. Belgium does not make any difference between reasons for coming into the country, just the difference between a length of stay (more or less than 3 months) and age (more or less than 18 years old)⁷⁷.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

No specific measures have been taken.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

No specific measures have been taken.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Incoming apprentices and IVET students from the EU benefit (through the European Health Insurance card) from the same medical care as their counterparts in the country (i.e. local IVET learners).

Incoming apprentices and IVET students (whether from the EU or from third countries) are subject to the in force labour regulation and benefit from labour and safety protection in the same conditions as their counterparts in the country (i.e. local IVET learners at work).

⁷⁷http://diplomatie.belgium.be/fr/Services/venir_en_belgique/visa_pour_la_belgique/
http://www.jint.be/portals/0/documenten/publicaties/visum_reispas_en_andere_poespas.pdf

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE “ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES” THEMATIC AREA

The Dutch-speaking region/community of Belgium does not promote the integration of international mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes, and has not set targets for international mobility in IVET. The community does not have measures in place to ease the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries, and neither does it have measures to reduce the administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility or remove the obstacles to the movement of minor apprentices and IVET students. To better meet the requirements of the “*Youth on the move*” Recommendation, it could be considered in future formulating a clear policy support to the integration of international mobility in the curricula of IVET programmes. It could also be considered setting national targets for mobility in IVET, for example through translating / adapting the EU 6% benchmark into the country’s IVET policy landscape. Finally, it could also be checked on the ground – e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys – the existence of needs for assisting incoming and outgoing learners in arranging their mobility. Taking appropriate measures could then be considered accordingly.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

Recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility is at the discretion of IVET providers. The IVET providers make autonomously a decision on the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad. It is the board of teachers (“Klasseraad”) in the IVET-schools that has the power to make decisions in that matter.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

Learning acquired abroad by IVET learners involved in international

learning mobility may be recognised, but the process is felt by users as somewhat difficult to understand as it is an internal process within the teachers' team (Klasseraad) where learners are not present.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in the community applies to:

- Courses
- Modules
- Programmes

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

There is no coordination at community level. Each IVET provider can decide autonomously on recognition.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

No time limit has been set for processing applications.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

No central action has been taken to make visible the contact points for information on recognition as the recognition decisions are made by the VET providers and these are the contact points most visible and nearest to the mobile learners.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

There is no additional central visibility policy, so no evaluation thereof.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Europass-Mobility in Flanders is used by IVET students within the Erasmus+ programme during international learning mobility periods. In 2014 this group counted for approx. 85% of the 801 Europass-Mobility recipients in Flanders. As decided by the Flemish National Erasmus+ Agency (EPOS vzw) the Mobility document counts as an equivalent of the participant's certificate of attendance for the Erasmus+ project report. Moreover the document is used by the sending organisation to record a description of the activities and the acquired skills and competences. In Flanders the sending partner is responsible for filling in the complete document (in consultation with the receiving partner). The document needs to be validated by the sending and by the receiving organisation.

In the Flemish Community of Belgium the Europass Certificate Supplement is used for recognition of prior learning /work experience, but not to enhance visibility, transfer and recognition of the learning outcomes acquired by IVET students during international mobility periods.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

The Dutch-speaking region/community of Belgium ensures recognition of learning (courses, modules and programmes) acquired abroad by IVET learners and makes use of the Europass Mobility Document in that process. However, access to recognition is felt as difficult by users, and the recognition process is not coordinated at community level. It is also not subject to a time limit for processing applications. The community has not undertaken actions to make visible contact points for information on recognition. Such a visibility policy might not be needed as the recognition decisions are made by the VET providers and these are the contact points most visible and nearest to the mobile learners. However, it should be made sure (e.g. through user surveys) that in practice all learners know whom to contact for information on recognition and have easy access to the information they need. Addressing these issues in the near future could help enhance international mobility in IVET. To that end, making the recognition process easier for users to handle and understand, coordinating / harmonising the process at community level, subjecting it to a time limit for processing the requests, and increasing the range of learning components (to credit points, units, qualifications) and EU tools (to Europass Certificate Supplement, ECVET, EQF/NQF and the Learning Outcomes approach) that can be used in the recognition process, could be considered.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

Until recently the Flemish Agency for Erasmus+ (EPOS vzw) organised contact seminars for finding partners. The agency also funded participation of Flemish applicants to attend similar events abroad. The organisations Ryckvelde and Alde Biesen are also supporting the finding of partners abroad.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

There is some form of monitoring of the support to partnerships and funding in the sense that the Ministry of Education and Training controls the use of funds that it allocates to organisations and institutions.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

No action has been taken.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

There is no action to fund IVET learners' mobility, so no evaluation thereof.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

There are actions aimed to provide stakeholders involved in organising international IVET mobility projects with non-financial support in the form of advice and information. IVET-providers in particular provide this kind of support to their staff.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

There is no evaluation of the non-financial support provided to stakeholders and staff.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

The Dutch-speaking region/community of Belgium provides institutions and companies involved in IVET international mobility projects with support for the creation of partnerships and networks. Stakeholders also receive non-financial support (advice and information) to organise mobility projects. These support actions are not evaluated. The community also does not provide IVET learners with funding for their international mobility. Steps for further progress in future could include ensuring financial support to learners for their mobility; extending the support for organising projects to a wider range of stakeholders needs (not only advice and information); and making sure that the support provided to learners, companies and IVET institutions meet their mobility needs. It could also be considered putting in place, for all support policies in this area, a full-fledged regular evaluation, including translating monitoring activities into recommendations that are actually implemented and improve the next generation of actions over time.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In the area of Information and Guidance, the Dutch-speaking region/community of Belgium provides IVET learners with information on international learning mobility. However this provision does not seem to

cover personalised advice, counselling and guidance directly offered to IVET learners. This provision is operated by various institutions acting separately without any community-level coordination. In addition, the community is lacking a policy to assess and improve its current provision of information and guidance for IVET mobility. Making sure that the provision covers the full spectrum of information and guidance (not only information), creating coordination mechanism to ensure convergence, consistency and complementarity of the provision, and putting in place evaluated actions to improve the provision of information and guidance could be considered in future in order to promote international learning mobility in IVET.

Regarding the area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, the Dutch-speaking region/community of Belgium does not promote the integration of international mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes, and has not set targets for international mobility in IVET. The community does not have measures in place to ease the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries, and neither does it have measures to reduce the administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility or remove the obstacles to the movement of minor apprentices and IVET students. To better meet the requirements of the *“Youth on the move”* Recommendation, it could be considered in future formulating a clear policy support to the integration of international mobility in the curricula of IVET programmes. It could also be considered setting national targets for mobility in IVET, for example through translating / adapting the EU 6% benchmark into the country’s IVET policy landscape. Finally, it could also be checked on the ground – e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys – the existence of needs for assisting incoming and outgoing learners in arranging their mobility. Taking appropriate measures could then be considered accordingly.

In the area of Recognition of Learning Outcomes, the Dutch-speaking region/community of Belgium ensures recognition of learning (courses, modules and programmes) acquired abroad by IVET learners and makes use of the Europass Mobility Document in that process. However, access to recognition is felt as difficult by users, and the recognition process is not coordinated at community level. It is also not subject to a time limit for processing applications. The community has not undertaken actions to make visible contact points for information on recognition. Such a visibility policy might not be needed as the recognition decisions are made by the VET providers and these are the contact points most visible and nearest to the mobile learners. However, it should be made sure (e.g. through user surveys) that in practice all learners know whom to contact for information on recognition and have easy access to the information they need. Addressing these issues in the near future could help enhance international mobility in IVET. To that end, making the recognition process easier for users to handle and understand, coordinating /

harmonising the process at community level, subjecting it to a time limit for processing the requests, and increasing the range of learning components (to credit points, units, qualifications) and EU tools (to Europass Certificate Supplement, ECVET, EQF/NQF and the Learning Outcomes approach) that can be used in the recognition process, could be considered.

Finally, in the area of Partnerships and Funding, the Dutch-speaking region/community of Belgium provides institutions and companies involved in IVET international mobility projects with support for the creation of partnerships and networks. Stakeholders also receive non-financial support (advice and information) to organise mobility projects. These support actions are not evaluated. The community also does not provide IVET learners with funding for their international mobility. Steps for further progress in future could include ensuring financial support to learners for their mobility; extending the support for organising projects to a wider range of stakeholders needs (not only advice and information); and making sure that the support provided to learners, companies and IVET institutions meet their mobility needs. It could also be considered putting in place, for all support policies in this area, a full-fledged regular evaluation, including translating monitoring activities into recommendations that are actually implemented and improve the next generation of actions over time.

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IVET levels covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary
- Tertiary

Main schemes for international IVET mobility in Bulgaria

Mobility scheme	Source of funds	Target group
Erasmus+	European	IVET learners, including disadvantaged learners
In company policy measures	Corporate funds	IVET learners - employees

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

In Bulgaria, the international learning mobility of IVET learners is carried out within projects under Erasmus+ (during the previous period under the LLP Programme (2007 – 2013)). The Human Resources Development Centre (National Agency for LLP and now for Erasmus+) is the institution responsible for providing information and guidance about the opportunities for learning mobility for students from vocational schools, vocational colleges, centres for vocational training, as well as from universities. Experts of the Centre provide detailed information and counselling to the education and training institutions related to the preparation of project proposals for IVET learning mobility. The education and training institutions provide information and guidance to their students related to their participation in the IVET learning mobility projects planned and under implementation.

In the period 2012 – 2015 a network of 28 career guidance centres in the school education system has been established in the frames of a project funded under Operational Programme Human Resources Development (2007 – 2013). The centres provide information and counselling related to individual education and career planning and support in implementation of individual plans to students. The information and guidance for

international learning mobility concerns only opportunities for general secondary education and higher education, since the IVET learning mobility, as pointed out above, is implemented in the frames of mobility projects.

There are also NGOs which provide practically oriented trainings for preparation of mobility projects.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

The provision of information on IVET international learning mobility topics is coordinated countrywide. According to its Rules of organisation and activities, the Human Resources Development Centre administers, promotes, consults, organizes and coordinates the participation of Bulgaria in Erasmus+ and implementation of its horizontal priorities.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

Legal provisions in Bulgaria do not specifically include the objective of promoting international learning mobility in IVET.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

In the national Lifelong Learning Strategy (2014-2020), an activity was defined to “Encourage application of the European instruments designed to support academic-purpose mobility and lifelong learning”, under impact area “Enhancing the quality of school education and training towards attainment of key competences, improving learners’ achievements and personality development”. Limited financial resources of IVET learners and the level of foreign language competences are among the reasons for implementation of international IVET learning mobility exclusively in the frames of EU funded mobility projects. It is expected that the activity pointed out includes measures related to broadening the funding opportunities, improvement of foreign language training and of information and guidance services for IVET mobility.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

It is obvious from the above that there are no explicitly defined actions planned for improving information and guidance for IVET mobility. Considering that the Strategy is planned to be monitored annually and a Report on the results achieved should be submitted to the Council of Ministers, it is supposed that there will be conclusions about measures to be taken to support IVET mobility and improve information and guidance.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

As IVET international mobility is carried out under Erasmus+, information is provided based on the Programme's Rules and national priorities.

Information to VET providers is delivered on the website⁷⁸ of the Human Resources Development Centre (National Agency for LLP and now for Erasmus+); in different towns of the country through information campaigns; at the office of the Centre by experts; and through promotional leaflets and brochures. Experts of the Centre provide applicants (education and training institutions and companies) with assistance in preparing mobility project proposals and counselling about their implementation.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

Bulgaria has a mechanism in place to provide IVET learners with information and guidance on international learning mobility opportunities. The provision is ensured and coordinated countrywide by the Human Resources Development Centre that is responsible with the activities related to the Erasmus+ Programme at national level. Specific measures to improve the provision of information and guidance are lacking however, although a Lifelong Learning Strategy (2014-2020) was adopted to improve education and training at large. In order to meet the requirements of the "*Youth on the Move*" Recommendation in this thematic area, the country could consider taking policy initiatives aimed to improve the information and guidance provision for IVET mobility, and putting in place a regular evaluation of these initiatives.

⁷⁸ www.hrdc.bg

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

In Bulgaria there are no policy initiatives to include international learning mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes. Some universities have included in their curricula the study in another university abroad on the basis of joint curricula and bilateral agreements, including IVET at tertiary level.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

In the 2015 Action Plan for implementation of the National LLL Strategy, a target for achieving 2700 mobility experiences was envisaged (without differentiation between IVET or CVET or training and placements). The Human Resources Development Centre has a national annual plan for the mobility of university students, based on university plans, including IVET at tertiary level.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

As an EU Member State, Bulgaria fulfils its obligations for facilitation of issuance of visas to citizens of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYROM, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Russia, Ukraine, based on Visa facilitation agreements between European Community and these nine non-EU countries. Based on these agreements, both the EU and non-EU citizens benefit from facilitated procedures for issuing visas. Since 19.12.2009 the citizens of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia, who have biometric passports, do not need visas to enter and stay in Bulgaria for a period of 90 days.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

The country has put in place a procedure for the electronic submission of applications for international learning mobility of IVET learners funded by the Erasmus+ Programme. This procedure includes applications by IVET providers and IVET learners. Besides a system including clear requirements and reasonable schedule for implementation of all stages of selection procedure was established, which contributed to shortening the time from application to mobility implementation.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

The travel of Bulgarian citizens under 14 years of age and under 18 years of age, in particular when exiting Bulgaria, is regulated by the Law on Bulgarian Identity Documents (LBID). Police authorities have specific control functions both at the stage of issuing the passport and at the stage of the journey (exit) from Bulgaria. According to Art. 76, item 9 of LBID, citizens under the age of 14, under the age of 18, and persons under legal disability may not be permitted to leave the country if they do not have notarised written consent for travel abroad from their parents, adoptive parents or guardians⁷⁹, even if they possess a valid passport or identity card.

Apart from Bulgarian notary offices, the declaration may be legalised by a registry judge in the respective district court, the mayor of the settlement if it's not a municipal centre, and if it is a municipal centre - the mayor, deputy-mayor, secretary of the municipality and the mayor's substitute when there is no notary in the area. Abroad, this declaration may be legalised by the Bulgarian consular officials in the consular services of the embassies. This declaration may also be legalized abroad by a local notary, but it must be legalised with the "Apostille" if the country is party to the Hague Convention for Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents. If the country is not party to that Convention, the declaration of consent legalised by a local notary must be legalized in the manner described on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs⁸⁰. The lack of a declaration legalised in the manner described is a ground to refuse the exit from Bulgaria of a minor Bulgarian citizen. At the border, the original declaration should be

⁷⁹ The legal text can be found at: <http://www.nsgp.mvr.bg/NR/rdonlyres/827F5101-3BB0-4FB6-9C88-E61D631B83AC/0/deklaracia.doc>.

⁸⁰ <http://www.mfa.bg/bg/pages/view/75>

submitted, usually along with a (uncertified) copy, which remains at the border crossing point.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social security

In Bulgaria there is no specific legislation for the social protection of IVET students and apprentices involved in international learning mobility. Based on European Health Insurance Card all learners from EU have the same access to medical services as all nationals. Bulgaria has concluded Agreements with 13 non-EU countries which include regulations for the terms for providing medical treatment of foreign citizens in Bulgaria, applicable for IVET learners.

Labour protection

There is no specific act for the protection of IVET students and apprentices in terms of labour standards and safety, but all legal provisions on these issues included in the Labour Code are applicable, in case the respective person is an EU citizen, or a citizen of non-EU countries with official permission for short- or long-term residence in Bulgaria.

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES" THEMATIC AREA

In the thematic area of Administrative and Institutional issues, Bulgaria appears to be committed to support learning mobility in IVET as indicated by the target set in the 2015 Action Plan for the implementation of the National Lifelong Learning Strategy. The country has also taken measures to reduce the administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility. To better meet the requirements of the "*Youth on the Move*" Recommendation, and further promote IVET mobility, an explicit policy initiative to include international learning mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes could represent a step ahead. In future, it could also be investigated, e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys, whether the existing conditions for delivering visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries and for the exit of minor learners are easy enough, or instead require putting in place support measures for

assisting learners (or their institutions) in their mobility process.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

In Bulgaria, learning outcomes acquired by IVET mobility are recognised as part of training programmes in the framework of project agreements under Erasmus+.

There is a Regulation for the recognition of stages and levels of education and degrees of vocational qualifications on the basis of documents issued by schools in other countries. It regulates the documents that should be submitted to the school. The decision for recognition is taken by an expert commission. Art.13 states that recognition of vocational qualifications is done in relation with the recognition of a stage or level of education.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

IVET learners involved in international learning mobility have easy access to recognition of learning acquired abroad.

Mobility of students from secondary vocational schools and vocational training centres for adults (persons above the age of 16 – employed and unemployed) is carried out within projects under the Erasmus+ Programme. Learning acquired abroad is recognized based on agreements between the sending and host organisations.

Holders of vocational qualifications acquired abroad in professions that are not regulated in Bulgaria have direct access to the labour market. The recognition of such qualifications is at the discretion of employers. For practicing professions that are regulated in Bulgaria, the provisions of Directive 2005/36/EO are applied. The recognition of such qualifications is carried out by the competent body for the respective regulated profession.

The procedure for recognition of higher education acquired in foreign

higher education institutions is organized by:

1. The Minister of Education and Science through the National Centre for Information and Documentation, when the recognition is aimed at facilitating access to the labour market.
2. The universities, when the recognition aims continuation of training in the higher education system, including doctorate. Procedures for recognition are defined in the Internal Regulations of universities. The rector of the university where the candidate intends to continue his/her education is responsible for the recognition of periods of training abroad.

This procedure applies also to tertiary IVET programmes.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in Bulgaria applies to the following learning components acquired abroad:

- Courses
- Credit points
- Modules
- Programmes
- Qualifications / diplomas / degrees

Although the recognition approach applies to all learning components listed above, the last two (programmes and qualifications / diplomas / degrees) cannot be acquired through short-term mobility. Instead, programmes and qualifications / diplomas/ degrees can be recognized in case of long-term mobility at tertiary level. Recognition of units is in the process of elaboration.

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

The approach to recognition is coordinated countrywide.

Recognition of learning outcomes acquired during IVET mobility period is done by vocational schools on the basis of the signed Memorandum of understanding and Learning agreement. In these ECVET documents the learning outcomes planned during mobility activities are described in detail. The evaluation procedures and the procedures of validation and recognition are also agreed. Countrywide coordination of recognition approach is carried out by the national Agency for Vocational Education

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and Training (NAVET) which is a National ECVET Coordination point. Control over implementation of the recognition procedure is carried out by Regional Inspectorates of Education (regional structures of Ministry of Education and Science) for vocational schools and by NAVET for licensed centres for vocational training.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

The recognition process is not bound to a maximum time limit for handling applications but, in practice, this is usually done within one month after the mobility period, according to the procedures mentioned above.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

In Bulgaria, no actions have been taken to establish, or make more visible, contact points for the recognition of learning acquired abroad by IVET learners.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

There is no visibility policy, so no evaluation thereof.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Europass Mobility document is used by vocational schools and universities during the procedure for recognition of periods of training abroad.

The Europass Certificate Supplement is used by employers as a source of information necessary for the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad in professions that are not regulated in Bulgaria.

Mobility of students from vocational schools and vocational training centres is carried out within projects under the Erasmus+ Programme.

Usually, ECVET credits and points are awarded to IVET learners upon achieving the defined learning outcomes planned for the learning mobility period. This is regulated with amendments of VET Law adopted in July 2014. Special sections on Credits in Vocational Education and Training were introduced⁸¹.

For each unit of learning outcomes planned for the learning mobility of students from vocational schools and vocational training centres, the NQF and the corresponding EQF level are defined by the training institutions implementing the learning mobility project.

The learning outcomes approach is used for defining the knowledge, skills and competences planned to be acquired during the learning mobility period by students from vocational schools and vocational training centres, usually structured in units of learning outcomes. This refers here again to learning mobility implemented within projects funded by Erasmus+.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

⁸¹ Art. 32f. states:

(1) Vocational qualification in a profession shall be acquired when, after assessment or validation, it is established that all units of learning outcomes included in the state educational requirement for acquisition of qualification in the respective profession have been achieved.

(2) Separate units of learning outcomes included in the state educational requirement for acquisition of qualification in the respective profession could be assessed or validated, for which credits shall be assigned.

(3) A credit is a measure of a achieved unit of unit of learning outcomes included in the state educational requirement for acquisition of qualification in the respective profession.

(4) Credits shall be assigned by vocational schools, vocational gymnasiums, arts schools and vocational training centres and shall be certified by a document in a standard form approved by the Minister of Education and Science.

(5) Credits may be accumulated for acquisition of vocational qualification in a profession and/or be transferred for acquisition of vocational qualification in another profession in the same occupational field.

(6) Credits assigned for units of learning outcomes on general vocational studies may be transferred and accumulated for acquisition of vocational qualification in all professions from the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training.

(7) The terms and procedure for assigning, accumulation and transfer of credits shall be defined by Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science.

The Regulation, mentioned in item 7 is in process of development and therefore assigning of credits is not an obligatory requirement for acquiring a qualification in professions.

For the purposes of mobility ECVET tools are used by vocational schools and universities on the basis of signed Memorandum of understanding and Learning agreement.

Bulgarian IVET learners have easy access to the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad, and the recognition approach covers courses, credit points, modules, programmes, and qualifications / diplomas / degrees. Recognition of units is in the process of elaboration. The country makes use of the EU tools available for the visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners during international mobility periods, i.e. the Europass Mobility Document and Certificate Supplement, ECVET, EQF/NQF and the Learning Outcomes approach. The recognition of qualification acquired abroad is countrywide coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Science (National Centre for Information and Documentation; Regional Inspectorates of Education) and the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET). However, the recognition process in Bulgaria is not bound to a regulatory time limit (although in practice applications are handled within a month after the mobility period). It could be considered in future putting in place such a regulatory time frame. Another area for improvement could be the establishment of dedicated and visible contact points to make information on recognition visible for all relevant target groups, including those that might undertake mobility projects outside Erasmus+. It could at least be checked through users/stakeholders survey whether there is a need for such a visibility policy.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

Bulgaria has taken measures to support the creation of partnerships for organising international learning mobility projects in IVET.

The Human Resources Development Centre (National Agency for Erasmus+) is the responsible body for providing information, assistance and support to IVET providers and companies for the creation of partnerships and for initiation and implementation of mobility projects in IVET. It has a database containing possible partners across Europe and Bulgaria. This includes schools and companies. For the tertiary level – each university is responsible for concluding bilateral agreements with foreign universities to implement mobility programmes.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The National Erasmus+ Agency updates the partnership database by adding new partners and deleting those who turned out to be unreliable. The updating is based on the evaluation of the mobility projects and analysis of the feedback of beneficiaries. The universities review the results of the implementation of their agreements with foreign universities on annual basis. In the last published 2013 annual report of National LLP Agency (now National Erasmus+ Agency) the objective "Development of European partnerships as an additional instrument for introduction of good practices" was declared reached.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

In Bulgaria, the mobility of IVET learners is supported by public funds under the Erasmus+ Programme.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Information not available at this time.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

The responsible body is the National Erasmus+ Agency. It provides information and assistance to companies, institutions and staff in support of preparation of mobility projects and their successful implementation after approval for funding. There are also NGOs which provide training to institutions, organizations and individuals for development of mobility projects.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

It is planned to carry out an interim impact evaluation of the National LLL Strategy (2014-2020). Annual internal evaluation is also planned to be conducted. This evaluation is expected to include evaluation of support to organizing mobility projects. The first evaluation will be published in the beginning of 2016.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

In the thematic area Partnerships and Funding, Bulgaria has policy actions to support the creation of partnerships for international learning mobility projects in IVET. This is done through Universities and the Human Resources Development Centre (National Agency for Erasmus+), which maintains a database with potential partners in Bulgaria and across Europe. The same body, along with NGOs, provides support to stakeholders and staff involved in organising international IVET mobility projects. IVET learners are also provided with financial support under the Erasmus+ Programme. To better promote IVET mobility, the country could make sure that sufficient financial support is allocated to IVET learners. However, although some of these support actions are subject to monitoring, systematic and complete evaluation of policies in this area is lacking. In future, it could be considered putting in place, for all support policies in this area, a full-fledged regular evaluation, including translating monitoring activities into recommendations that are actually implemented and improve the next generation of actions over time.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In the thematic area of Information and Guidance, Bulgaria has a mechanism in place to provide IVET learners with information and guidance on international learning mobility. The provision is ensured and coordinated countrywide by the Human Resources Development Centre. Specific measures to improve the provision of information and guidance are lacking however, although a Lifelong Learning Strategy (2014-2020) was adopted to improve education and training at large. In order to meet the requirements of the "*Youth on the Move*" Recommendation in this thematic area, the country could consider taking policy initiatives aimed to improve the information and guidance provision for IVET mobility, and putting in place a regular evaluation of these initiatives.

In the thematic area of Administrative and Institutional issues, Bulgaria appears to be committed to support learning mobility in IVET as indicated by the target set in the 2015 Action Plan for the implementation of the National Lifelong Learning Strategy. The country has also taken measures to reduce the administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility. To better meet the requirements of the *“Youth on the Move”* Recommendation, and further promote IVET mobility, an explicit policy initiative to include international learning mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes could represent a step ahead. In future, it could also be investigated, e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys, whether the existing conditions for delivering visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries and for the exit of minor learners are easy enough, or instead require putting in place support measures for assisting learners (or their institutions) in their mobility process.

Regarding the area of Recognition of Learning Outcomes, Bulgarian IVET learners have easy access to the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad. The recognition approach covers courses, credit points, modules, programmes, and qualifications / diplomas / degrees. Recognition of units is in the process of elaboration. The country makes use of the EU tools available for the visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners during international mobility periods, i.e. the Europass Mobility Document and Certificate Supplement, ECVET, EQF/NQF and the Learning Outcomes approach. The recognition of qualification acquired abroad is countrywide coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Science (National Centre for Information and Documentation; Regional Inspectorates of Education) and the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET). However, the recognition process in Bulgaria is not bound to a regulatory time limit (although in practice applications are handled within a month after the mobility period). It could be considered in future putting in place such a regulatory time frame. Another area for improvement could be the establishment of dedicated and visible contact points to make information on recognition visible for all relevant target groups, including those that might undertake mobility projects outside Erasmus+. It could at least be checked through users/stakeholders survey whether there is a need for such a visibility policy.

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IVET level covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary

In Croatia, almost all of IVET mobility has been taking place within the former Lifelong Learning programme and now Erasmus+. IVET learners in the Croatian context in the Erasmus+ programme are vocational school students at secondary level.

Main schemes for international IVET mobility in Croatia

Mobility scheme	Source of funds	Target group
Erasmus+	- European	IVET learners (and other groups)

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

In Croatia, IVET learners can participate in international learning mobility within Erasmus+ projects. The Agency for mobility and EU Programmes (AMEUP) is the National Agency appointed to implement the Erasmus+ programme, and it ensures the provision of information on opportunities for participation in Erasmus+ for the VET sector. AMEUP is the main body that provides IVET learners with all the necessary information regarding the possibilities for mobility.

AMEUP regularly participates in informative days and other similar events organised by other institutions and bodies, aiming to provide learners from different institutions and regions with information on learning mobility. In addition, AMEUP regularly informs and advises all the institutions that can participate in Erasmus+ on the possibilities for learning mobility for their learners, so that students can be informed via their schools as well.

The Agency ensures information and promotion of mobility opportunities for the VET sector through the following main activities:

- information days and workshops;
- webinars;
- promotional materials;
- information available on the internet website www.mobilnost.hr.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

The provision of information for the international mobility of IVET learners is coordinated countrywide.

AMEUP ensures equal geographical distribution of the information, guidance and support for the schools who are potential applicants in the Erasmus+ programme in the VET sector. For the Call year 2015 AMEUP organised and held four information days and workshops: one workshop was held in the capital city of Zagreb and three were held at regional level. Additionally, one webinar session on possibilities for participation in the Erasmus+ programme in the VET sector was held, ensuring access to information to potential applicants from geographically remote regions. All information regarding possibilities for participation in the Erasmus+ programme are available on AMEUP's website (www.mobilnost.hr).

The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MoSES) is developing a new Programme for the Development of Vocational Education and Training. Within this programme, a more comprehensive approach to promotion is planned, as well as coordinated action for promotion and information for all relevant institutions in the system, namely Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes, Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETA).

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

In Croatia, the promotion of international learning mobility in IVET is implied in the Acts concerning the establishment of the relevant institutions: the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes⁸² and the Agency

⁸² The Act on Amendments to the Act on the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes: Article 4, Paragraph 2 defines that, in performing its activities, the Agency provides information and advice, ensures dissemination of information, promotes all activities supported under the Erasmus+ Programme and prepares instructions and manuals for the interested parties.

<https://vlada.gov.hr/UserDocsImages//Sjednice/2015/221%20sjednica%20Vlade//221%20-%206.pdf>

for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education⁸³.

The new Strategy of Education, Science and Technology (hereinafter: Strategy) was adopted by the Croatian Parliament in October 2014⁸⁴. The Strategy focuses on enhancing mobility of students and teachers in the higher education sector. Although it does not include as one of its goals the mobility of IVET learners, the Strategy envisages the drafting and adoption of the Programme for the Development of Vocational Education and Training (hereinafter: Programme)⁸⁵. The Programme will set goals focused on quality, excellence and attractiveness of the VET system in Croatia, including the internationalisation of VET, namely mobility. The Draft Programme identifies the need to increase the number of VET schools without previous experience in mobility projects and to ensure equal geographic distribution of schools participating in mobility projects. It lists several measures in the area of mobility: to identify and remove legal and administrative barriers for IVET mobility, to ensure visibility and availability of the results of mobility projects with emphasis of good practice examples. The Programme will also promote the implementation of ECVET and the Europass Certificate Supplement.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

In Croatia no specific actions have been taken to improve the provision of information and guidance on international mobility for IVET learners.

However, the country has taken steps for the internationalisation of VET, by joining the Lifelong Learning Programme and the Erasmus+ Programme. In addition, the new Programme for the Development of Vocational Education and Training⁸⁶, which is currently being drafted, sets

⁸³ The Act on the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education: Article 4 specifies that the activities of the Agency include the cooperation and participation in the implementation of programmes and projects in the area of vocational education, as well as advisory activities.

<http://www.asoo.hr/UserDocsImages/Dokumenti/Zakon%20o%20Agenciji%20za%20strukovno%20obrazovanje%20i%20obrazovanje%20odraslih%20NN%2024-2010.pdf>

⁸⁴ Reference: "The Official Gazette" 124/2014

⁸⁵ The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MoSES) is responsible for drafting the Programme while the working group delivering it includes the following: representatives of MoSES, AVETAE, Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts, Ministry of Labour and Pension System, Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts, Croatian Chamber of Economy, Croatian Employment Service, AMEUP, union representatives, representatives of vocational schools. The Programme will be adopted at national level by the end of 2015.

⁸⁶ The first draft of the programme was delivered in April 2015 and it is foreseen that it will be adopted at national level by the end of 2015. The Programme will set specific goals to promote the international learning mobility in IVET, such as giving support to VET institutions in participation in mobility projects and promoting the use of ECVET.

specific goals to promote the international learning mobility in IVET.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

As there are no specific actions for the improvement of information and guidance for IVET learners on IVET mobility topics, there is not evaluation.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

The Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes (AMEUP) provides information on opportunities for participation in Erasmus+ for the VET sector, and especially aims to reach and motivate newcomers to the programme, as well as to ensure equal geographical distribution of information and promotion campaigns.

The Agency informs VET stakeholders on possibilities for IVET learners to undertake international mobility. The target groups to which AMEUP provides information in the context of the Erasmus+ programme include any public or private organisation in the field of VET or active in the labour market, such as:

- vocational education schools/institutes/centres;
- public or private, small, medium or large enterprises (including social enterprises);
- social partners or other representatives of working life, including chambers of commerce, craft/professional associations and trade unions;
- public bodies at local, regional or national level, research institutes, foundations;
- non-profit organisations, associations, NGOs;
- bodies providing career guidance, professional counselling and information services;
- bodies responsible for policies in the field of vocational education and training.

AMEUP ensures information and promotion of mobility opportunities for the VET sector through the following main activities:

- information days and workshops;

The Draft Programme identifies the need to increase the number of VET schools without previous experience in mobility projects and to ensure equal geographic distribution of school participating in mobility projects.

- webinars;
- promotional materials;
- information available on the internet website www.mobilnost.hr.

Each call year⁸⁷ AMEUP holds information days and workshops across Croatia, as well as webinars, and informs potential applicants about mobility possibilities via the internet.

In its promotional campaigns, AMEUP provides information to VET stakeholders on the following aspects:

- possibilities for VET institutions and IVET learners to participate in the Erasmus+ programme;
- technical support for writing quality project proposals;
- opportunities to establish and implement international partnerships.

The agency also provides assistance to potential applicants to Erasmus+ projects in the VET sector in the form of individual counselling on how to write a good project proposal. The target groups for counselling are mainly teaching staff and project coordinators in VET institutions.

AMEUP promotes best practice examples in its publications and on its website⁸⁸. Best practice examples of mobility projects in the VET sector especially highlight the benefits of international mobility both to the institution and to the participants.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

In Croatia, the provision of information on international learning mobility to IVET learners is ensured by the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes (AMEUP), either directly or via the VET providers. Responsible with the implementation of the Erasmus+ Programme at national level, the Agency ensures equal geographical distribution and countrywide coordination for the provision of information and support for potential participants in Erasmus+. Although the country has taken steps to further promote international learning mobility in IVET, the main drawbacks in this thematic area are the lack of guidance on IVET mobility to students, and the lack of specific actions aimed to improve the information and guidance provision on mobility topics to IVET learners. A step ahead for Croatia would be to ensure that IVET learners are also provided with guidance on IVET mobility, including personalised advice by trained guidance counsellors, taking into account the students personal

⁸⁷ For the Call 2015 AMEUP held 4 information days and 1 webinar for the VET sector.

⁸⁸ www.mobilnost.hr

situations and aspirations, career plans and mobility options. The country could also consider putting in place specific improvement measures, identifying the issues that are intended for improvement, and an evaluation to ensure their effectiveness.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

In Croatia, there is a policy orientation towards integrating international mobility periods in the curricula of IVET learners. Although not explicit, this is evidenced by the concrete targets set for IVET mobility by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports within its three-year strategic plan (please see section 2.1.1.2 below).

Furthermore, the Programme for the Development of Vocational Education and Training⁸⁹, envisaged in the new Strategy of Education, Science and Technology, will set goals focused on quality, excellence and attractiveness of the VET system in Croatia, as well internationalisation of VET. The Programme will promote the implementation of ECVET and the Europass Certificate Supplement.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

Croatia has set targets for international learning mobility in IVET.

Result indicators and quantitative targets addressing international learning mobility in VET are set by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MoSES) within the three-year strategic plans (Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport for the period 2015 – 2017; Strategic plan of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport 2016 – 2018).

For the 2016 – 2018 period, MoSES addresses among its objectives the internationalisation of the Croatian education system. In the following three-year period, the Ministry aims to enhance the international

⁸⁹ The Programme will be adopted at national level by the end of 2015.

dimension in the initial and continuing VET system through EU programmes and other programmes with international dimension. Two result indicators and corresponding quantitative targets are related to VET:

1. Number of VET students who have realized a study or training period abroad (including work placements) under the Erasmus+ programme is targeted to 560 students in 2018, comparing to the 2014 result of 333⁹⁰.
2. Number of educational staff (teachers and assistants) participating in the teaching/training activities abroad under the Erasmus+ programme is targeted at 220 in 2018, in comparison to 103 in 2014⁹¹.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

No specific measures have been taken in Croatia to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries.

Mobility between Erasmus+ Programme countries is regulated in detail, unlike the mobility between non-Programme countries, which is infrequent. Detailed regulations regarding the temporary stay of learners from foreign countries are included in The Foreigners Act⁹². This Act regulates conditions for the entry, movement, stay and work of foreigners in the Republic of Croatia. Foreign nationals intending to study in Croatia must regulate their temporary residence for that purpose. Croatia has adopted the Council Directive 2004/114/EC of 13 December 2004⁹³ on the conditions of admission of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

No specific measures have been taken in Croatia to reduce administrative

⁹⁰ In the school year 2013/14 the number of students attending the upper secondary vocational schools was 121.777 according to the Croatian Bureau of Statistics (CBS, 2014).

⁹¹ The number of teachers and assistants working in upper secondary VET schools was 13.663 in 2014. Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2014. First release - Upper Secondary Schools at the end of 2012/2013 School Year and beginning of 2013/2014 School Year, Zagreb.

⁹² The Foreigners Act, <http://www.zakon.hr/z/142/Zakon-o-strancima>

⁹³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/HR/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32004L0114>

burdens that may hinder the international mobility of IVET learners, apart from the harmonization with EU directives in what regards the Foreigners Act⁹⁴, when the country became an EU Member State.

However, since international mobility is increasing, AMEUP has a strong cooperation with other competent bodies relevant in this process. For example, the Agency cooperates with the Ministry of Interior aiming to collect and analyse data and information on the difficulties and obstacles for foreigners, with a view to promoting mobility. AMEUP is also involved in consultations in the process of drafting the acts that regulate the issue of foreigners in relation to mobility activities.

Relevant information for foreigners is accessible on the websites of competent bodies.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

No specific measures have been taken in Croatia to remove legal obstacles to the mobility of minors.

Based on the analysis of the relevant legislation⁹⁵, no legal obstacles were identified in the procedure for sending minor students abroad. Special care is being given to this group of mobility participants. It is necessary for a parent or a legal guardian to give a written consent for the minor to participate in mobility activities and to sign an agreement with the institution organising the mobility.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social security

In Croatia, there is legislation ensuring that IVET students and apprentices involved in international learning mobility have appropriate access to protection in terms of social security.

Health insurance of foreigners is regulated by the Act on Obligatory

⁹⁴ Harmonization with EU directives through the Foreigners Act was attained, and the visa regime for the EU citizens was repealed. The procedures for entry into and exit out of the country, work and applications to authorities were simplified in accordance with the EU legislation.

⁹⁵ The Foreigners Act, <http://www.zakon.hr/z/142/Zakon-o-strancima>

Health Insurance and Health Insurance of Foreigners⁹⁶. There are two kinds of health insurance – travel health insurance and health insurance under the Croatian Institute for Health Insurance. Health insurance is obligatory for foreigners on permanent stay, nationals of other EU member states with temporary stay if they do not have a health insurance in one of the EU member states and nationals of third countries with temporary stay in the Republic of Croatia. Their rights and obligations regarding the health insurance are provided on the basis of reciprocity, solidarity and equality under conditions determined by the EU and national laws. For nationals of the countries with which the Republic of Croatia has concluded an agreement on social insurance, the proof of health insurance is considered to be: a European Health Insurance Card, a patient's certificate issued by the Croatian Institute for Health Insurance, a regular certificate of a foreign health insurance agency or any other proof provided for under the agreement on social insurance. The nationals of the countries with which the Republic of Croatia has not concluded an agreement on social insurance have different obligations defined by the said Act. The foreigners on temporary stay are not obligated to submit an application for the occupational health insurance if their stay in the Republic of Croatia is, among other reasons, part of the mobility programmes and other programmes and initiatives implemented by the competent authority, if the health insurance is covered by those programmes⁹⁷. The European Health Insurance Card⁹⁸ is giving access to medically necessary, state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay in any of the 28 EU countries, Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, under the same conditions as people insured in that country.

Labour protection

The country has legislation ensuring that IVET students and apprentices involved in international learning mobility have appropriate access to protection in terms of labour standards and safety.

Health and safety systems at work in the Republic of Croatia are regulated by The Occupational Health and Safety Act⁹⁹. Article 3 defines that a "person at work" is a natural person who is not employed by that employer but performs certain activities or works for the employer. This includes incoming students from both EU and non-EU countries. The obligations regarding the implementation of this Act apply to all work activities and refer to "persons at work". The Act provides information on

⁹⁶ <http://www.zakon.hr/z/634/Zakon-o-obveznom-zdravstvenom-osiguranju-i-zdravstvenoj-za%C5%A1titi-stranaca-u-Republici-Hrvatskoj->

⁹⁷ The Croatian Institute for Health Insurance, <http://www.hzzo.hr/lijecenje-u-inozemstvu/vasa-prava-europska-iskaznica-zdravstvenog-osiguranja-ehic-i-europskonacionalno-zakonodavstvo/>

⁹⁸ <http://www.propisi.hr/print.php?id=11521>

⁹⁹ <http://www.zakon.hr/z/167/Zakon-o-za%C5%A1titi-na-radu>

basic occupational health and safety rules and requirements and also the specific occupational health and safety in case that some risks cannot be fully eliminated by applying the set basic rules.

General obligations regarding the organisation and implementation of occupational health and safety stipulate that the employer must organise and implement occupational health and safety, taking into account risk prevention as well as informing, training, organisation and resources. The employer is responsible for the organisation and implementation of occupational health and safety in all segments of the organisation of work and in all work processes.

There are specific rules regarding minors (defined in Article 38) that state the obligation of providing specific occupational health and safety for a minor for the purpose of preserving his unimpaired mental and physical development, as well as the obligation to adjust conditions and working time organisation for the purpose of eliminating safety and health risks, ensure other appropriate work, ensure the implementation of other occupational health and safety rules, in accordance with a special regulation.

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES" THEMATIC AREA

In relation to the Administrative and Institutional Issues thematic area, Croatia has set quantitative targets for VET mobility of both students and teachers, in the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport. These targets, together with the goals of the Programme for the Development of Vocational Education and Training which is currently being developed, also indicate an orientation towards the integration of international learning mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET learners. To better support IVET mobility in the future, the country should take steps to identify and to remove possible obstacles to mobility, especially in what regards the delivery of visas and residency permits for IVET learners from third countries, and the procedure for sending minor IVET learners abroad. A first step could be to conduct a systematic study or survey on these topics. The cooperation of AMEUP with other relevant bodies, aimed to collect and analyse information on the difficulties and obstacles for foreigners is a positive first step in this regard. Possible administrative burdens that may hinder the outgoing mobility of Croatian IVET learners should also be identified and reduced, for example by establishing a "one-stop shop" for mobility-related services, if necessary.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

In Croatia, the recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners during international mobility periods is at the discretion of IVET providers, and may be granted on a case by case basis according to the specific learning agreements between the sending and receiving institutions.

ECVET is the main instrument for mobility and recognition in Croatia. In the context of ECVET, partnerships between the sending and host institutions are based on the mutual trust that all of the previously agreed elements of mobility projects would be complied with. Therefore, the recognition of learning outcomes achieved through work-based learning or practical training might entail an exemption from an exam or from part of an exam for the related subjects.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

Learning acquired abroad by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility may be recognised, but the process is felt by users as somewhat difficult.

The Act on Vocational Education and Training introduced credit points in relation to qualifications and curricula but the schools are still working on the ways for the learning outcomes acquired abroad to be recognised in their institutions. The sending institution generally recognises mobility placements. Since most of the IVET learners going abroad for mobility are involved in work-based learning and, to a small extent, in practical learning, the entire process of recognition at the level of school is determined based on the scope of activities undertaken during the mobility and the results achieved. As practical training is mandatory part of the vocational education, the mobility period is in most cases recognised in this way. The implementation and use of ECVET is a work in progress.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in the country applies to:

- Units

This component is based on ECVET implementation practices. Since most of the IVET learners involved in international mobility stay abroad for two weeks on average, this period is not sufficiently long to acquire more extensive elements of learning, other than units. The current practice of VET schools is to send students for. The usual practice of VET providers is that short mobility periods (2-3 weeks) are recognised as part of the obligatory period that VET students have to spend with employers. However, recognition is more in terms of recognition of time spent and much less in terms of learning outcomes achieved.

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

In Croatia, there is no common framework or set of common guidelines followed by all VET providers and stakeholders in charge of recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners during mobility abroad. However some activities for common understanding have been carried out.

The recognition of learning acquired abroad by IVET learners has been intensively promoted by Croatia's National Team of ECVET Experts in continuous communication with the principals and teachers of VET schools and EU project coordinators. In the last 3 years the Team has conducted a series of workshops for VET schools promoting the use of ECVET in geographical mobility and recognition of learning outcomes. The Team has prepared a set of publications including Guidelines for use of ECVET in geographical mobility. Currently, the publications and workshops of the National Team of ECVET Experts are the only activities targeted at all players in charge of recognition.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

There is no formally prescribed time limit for the recognition process.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

No action has been taken so far to establish or make more visible dedicated contact points for information on recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET students.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

As there is no visibility policy for contact points for information on recognition, there is no evaluation.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Europass Mobility Document has been used in Croatia for educational and professional mobility since March 2012. The National Europass Centre Croatia, which is an integral part of the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes, coordinates the document management and advises the mobility project beneficiaries on the issuing procedure. The document is used by the Croatian education providers (at all levels) participating in mobility projects in the role of sending institutions. The purpose of the document is to ensure high visibility and facilitate the recognition of competencies acquired during the mobility periods.

Most of the activities regarding the Europass Certificate Supplement focused on discussing the context for the completion and issuing of this document to Croatian holders of VET qualifications. The dialogue about the official status of the Certificate Supplement between the Croatian National Europass Centre and the Ministry was concluded during the course of 2014. The Europass Certificate Supplement will be a personal document, qualification-specific, giving a full and precise account of one's educational achievements, validated and issued by the relevant vocational schools. As a result, only examples of the document based on the reformed VET qualifications will be available for informative purposes from the national Europass website. The first Europass Certificate Supplements was planned to be issued at the end of the school year 2014/2015 to students educated for dental assistants following a programme based on the reformed curricula for this occupation. Thus, this document has not been used yet for the visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes acquired during mobility periods abroad.

Although not formally implemented in Croatia by VET schools participating in mobility projects, ECVET has been piloted, especially in view of the (units of) learning outcomes, Learning Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding, which lend transparency to the achievements of IVET learners abroad and enable them to have their learning pathway recognised in the national educational environment.

The Croatian Qualifications Framework was adopted in 2013 and it is an instrument for regulating the system of qualifications at all levels in the Republic of Croatia, through qualifications standards based on learning outcomes and following the needs of the labour market, individuals and society. The central element of the CROQF are the learning outcomes or, in other terms, competences acquired by the individual through the learning process and proved after the learning process¹⁰⁰. However, at the moment CROQF is not used to enhance the visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners during international mobility periods.

The learning outcomes approach was first introduced in VET by the Agency for VET and Adult Education in the process of modernisation of VET in line with labour market needs. The Agency developed the first sets of unit-based, learning outcomes-oriented VET curricula, and they are in experimental implementation in VET schools. For this purpose the Agency developed the on-line database E-kvalifikacije¹⁰¹, which contains more than 800 units with over 10.000 learning outcomes. This database assists VET schools in planning mobility periods abroad, the process of learning, as well as recognition.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

In the thematic area for Recognition of Learning Outcomes, the situation of Croatia is somewhat contrasted. Recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad is possible, based on partnerships and mutual trust between the sending and host institutions. It has been intensively promoted by Croatia's National Team of ECVET Experts to VET school staff and project coordinators, and ECVET is the main instrument for mobility

¹⁰⁰ Since the central element of the CROQF are the learning outcomes, and not the way in which they were acquired, the CROQF sets a basis for the development of recognition of prior learning (RPL), or in other words, enables the development of recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning, along with the compulsory introduction of a quality assurance system and clear quality assessment procedures.

¹⁰¹ <http://e-kvalifikacije.asoo.hr>

and recognition. However, the approach to recognition is not coordinated countrywide, and the recognition process is somewhat difficult. Three of the EU tools for visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes (i.e. the Europass Mobility Document, ECVET and the learning outcomes approach) are currently used in the context of IVET mobility. Further progress in the implementation of the Europass Certificate Supplement and the NQF/EQF, and the use of these tools for the purpose of IVET mobility would help the country to move closer to the reference profile in this thematic area. Another aspect that could be considered in the future is to set in place a regulatory time frame for the recognition process. The current approach is more in terms of time spent rather than learning outcomes achieved, and units are the only learning component that may be recognised. The country does not have visible contact points where information on recognition could be easily accessed by all IVET students. The Programme for the Development of Vocational Education and Training that is currently being drafted in the country could be a good opportunity to address some of these challenges.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

Croatia has taken steps to support IVET providers and companies to create mobility partnerships and networks.

The Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes (AMEUP) provides support to VET stakeholders in finding suitable partners for international projects through the following activities:

- promoting on-line tools for partner search (AMEUP partner search database, eTwinning portal, EST – European shared treasure, ADAM, Dissemination platform)
- enabling participation of VET stakeholders in contact seminars in Europe helping them to create networks of potential international partners and to design project proposals.

Furthermore, AMEUP is organizing a contact seminar in October 2015 in Croatia entitled “Contact making seminar with the business sector”. The goal of the seminar is to forge links between labour market and the VET sector in the following VET fields: health, tourism & catering,

environmental technologies. The target groups for this contact seminar are:

- enterprises;
- employers who facilitate training at the work place;
- VET schools/institutes/centres;
- research institutions;
- relevant social partners.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The actions taken by AMEUP to support the creation of partnerships and networks are evaluated in order to get a perspective and insight on the further necessary steps for providing support to companies and IVET providers. The content, aims and planned results of the seminars are evaluated as to provide feedback on the need for further development of support actions. The seminars organized by AMEUP are evaluated on the basis of the structure of the participants (number, sector, type of institution) to determine the need for adjustment of the support provided. The results of these evaluations are used to improve the quality of the measures taken to support the creation of partnerships and networks.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

In Croatia, IVET learners are provided with financial support for their international mobility in the frame of Erasmus+ projects. This financial support is allocated through AMEUP, the national agency for Erasmus+.

The objectives of the Erasmus+ programme in the VET sector are, among others, to increase IVET international mobility. Each Call year, successful mobility projects in the VET sector are allocated financial support for the international mobility of IVET learners. For the 2014 Call, AMEUP allocated 1.862.534 EUR for the international mobility of IVET learners in the framework of mobility projects under Key Action 1 – Mobility of Individuals in VET.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The measures to provide IVET learners with financial support for their international mobility are subject to evaluation as part of the regular reporting to MoSES and EC, carried out by AMEUP. This evaluation is used for further improvements of the funding policy.

AMEUP has a regular policy to review the grant agreements signed between the beneficiary school and the learners before the mobility, and particular attention is given to the article on the financial support. Participant questionnaires, especially on the issue of payments, are taken into account in the final report drawn by AMEUP. Constant attention is given to the proper use of the financial support provided to learners.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

In Croatia VET stakeholders involved in organising IVET mobility projects are offered support in the form of information, assistance and training.

The Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes (AMEUP) is the main body which provides this support. The main objective is to assist potential applicants and beneficiaries in successful project implementation. The support that AMEUP provides consists in:

- workshops on writing good project proposals,
- individual counselling on project implementation before and during the project lifetime, in person and via phone and e-mail,
- thematic monitoring meetings where AMEUP gives advice to project beneficiaries on successful project implementation,
- monitoring visits to VET institutions which are project beneficiaries with the aim of giving support and advice concerning successful project implementation.

The target groups for the support are potential applicants and beneficiaries of VET mobility projects:

- project coordinators of mobility projects in VET institutions, enterprises, public bodies, institutes, NGOs, etc.
- headmasters and VET staff in VET schools
- participants in mobility projects.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

There is currently no evaluation of the actions taken to provide support to institutions and staff involved in organising mobility projects.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

Croatia's achievements in the thematic area Partnerships and Funding, are mainly in the frame of the implementation of Erasmus+. The country supports VET providers and companies in the creation of partnerships for mobility projects through the activities of the National Agency for Erasmus+ (AMEUP). These actions are evaluated in terms of content, aims and planned results, and are further adjusted based on the outcomes of this evaluation. IVET learners receive financial support for their international mobility in the frame of Erasmus+ projects. The financial support provided to learners is evaluated through regular reporting to the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports and the European Commission, carried out by AMEUP. In the future, it should be considered that the results of this evaluation are used to further reform the funding policy, in order to ensure not only the appropriate use of funds, but also the sufficiency of funds allocated for the mobility of IVET learners. Stakeholders and staff involved in organising IVET mobility projects receive support from AMEUP, mainly delivered in the form of information, assistance and training. This is provided to potential applicants and project beneficiaries for successful project implementation. A further step that could be suggested is to put in place a regular evaluation of the support provided to mobility organisers, to ensure its effectiveness.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In Croatia, IVET learners are provided with information on international learning mobility through the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes (AMEUP) – the National Agency for Erasmus+. The Agency also ensures countrywide coordination and equal geographical coverage of information provision. Further steps ahead in this thematic area could be to ensure that IVET learners are also provided with personalised guidance on IVET mobility, and that specific evaluated actions are taken to improve the information and guidance mechanism for IVET learning mobility.

In the area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, the main positive aspects in Croatia are an orientation towards integrating mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes, and the existence of quantitative targets for mobility in IVET. In the future, the country could take further steps in this thematic area by trying to identify the possible legal and administrative obstacle to mobility, and implement measures where necessary to reduce administrative burdens that may hinder the mobility of IVET learners, as well as the possible obstacles to the mobility of minors, and the difficulties in the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries.

The Recognition of Learning Outcomes appears to be a new frontier for Croatia's IVET mobility policy. Although recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad is possible, and some EU tools are used for visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes, various issues are still to be considered for a full implementation of the "*Youth on the move*" Recommendation in this area. The process for recognising learning acquired abroad is seen by users as difficult and there is no regulatory time frame for recognition. Units are the only learning component that may be recognised, and there is no coordinating framework or set of common guidelines for all players in charge of recognition. The country also lacks visible contact points where information on recognition could be easily accessed by learners. The Programme for the Development of Vocational Education and Training that is currently being drafted in the country could be a good opportunity to address some of these challenges.

In the thematic area Partnerships and Funding, Croatia has taken steps to support IVET institutions and companies in the creation of mobility partnerships and networks and to provide financial support to IVET learners for their international mobility. These support actions are evaluated and monitored through AMEUP, the National Agency for Erasmus+. A further step in the future would be to consider that the results of this evaluation are used to further reform the funding policy, in order to ensure not only the appropriate use of funds, but also the sufficiency of funds allocated for the mobility of IVET learners. Mobility organisers receive support from AMEUP, consisting in information, assistance and training. To ensure that the support provided for organising mobility projects is adequate, putting in place a regular evaluation of these specific actions could be considered.

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IVET levels covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary
- Post-secondary non-tertiary
- Tertiary

Main schemes for international IVET mobility in Cyprus

Mobility scheme	Source of funds	Target group
Erasmus+	European	IVET learners (students/recent graduates)

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

In Cyprus, there is a mechanism of information and guidance for the international learning mobility of IVET students. This provision is ensured through school career counsellors, and also directly through the National Agency (CY NA) which promotes and manages international mobility activities within the Erasmus+ Programme.

Following specific rules, regulations and procedures, the national Agency for Erasmus+ organises information days open to young people, youth organisation representatives and Erasmus+ programme beneficiaries. The agency organises conferences and seminars, and informs schools on existing mobility opportunities, and it also visits schools and informs students directly.

There are career guidance counsellors in schools of secondary education, including technical schools, as well as at the central and regional offices of the Counselling and Careers Education Service offices of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Guidance counsellors provide guidance on IVET mobility, mainly in relation to opportunities for mobility within the Erasmus+.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

The provision of information and guidance to IVET learners on international mobility topics is coordinated through CY NA, who informs schools on mobility opportunities and the guidance counsellors in schools disseminate this information to students in classrooms. Some of the counsellors participate in the conferences and seminars organised by the CY NA. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education and Culture coordinates the school career counsellors, which provide information and guidance to IVET students.

At policy level, the coordination of information and guidance provision on IVET mobility is ensured by the Directorate General for European Programmes Coordination and Development, which is the National Authority. The National Authority is responsible for all EU programmes and thus coordinates as well as organises and participates in conferences on information and guidance for IVET mobility.

For the development of specific policies, there is cooperation between the National Authority with the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

Legal provisions in Cyprus specifically include the objective of promoting international learning mobility in IVET.

The government of Cyprus established the Foundation for the Management of European Programmes for Lifelong Learning, the CY NA, on 17 January 2007 following decision 64.892/2007, in order to promote the participation of Cypriot citizens and organisations in the European LLP. The Foundation is governed by a tripartite Governing Board comprising nine members, who serve a four year term, appointed by the Council of Ministers. The expenses of the Foundation are covered from EU funds and by the Republic of Cyprus, through the Directorate General for European Programmes Coordination and Development which was appointed by the Council of Ministers on 9 November 2006 to be the Cyprus National Authority.

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1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

In Cyprus, there are no specific improvement actions for information and guidance provision on IVET mobility.

The objectives, work plan and procedures for the provision of information and the implementation of IVET mobility are the responsibility of the CY NA which manages the Erasmus+ programme.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

As there are no specific improvement actions for information and guidance provision on IVET learning mobility, there is no evaluation.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

CY NA has a yearly work plan according to which it provides information and assistance on IVET international mobility to IVET institutions and companies. The agency organises information days, conferences and seminars for organisations and Erasmus+ programme beneficiaries.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

Cyprus has a mechanism for information and guidance on IVET international learning mobility. This provision is ensured through school career counsellors, and also directly through the National Agency for Erasmus+ (CY NA). The information and guidance provision to IVET learners is coordinated by CY NA and by the Ministry of Education and Culture who coordinates the school career counsellors. At policy level, the countrywide coordination is ensured by the Directorate General for European Programmes Coordination and Development, which is the National Authority responsible for all EU programmes, and also through cooperation between the National Authority with the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance. The main drawback in this thematic area in Cyprus is the lack of specific policy actions for the improvement of information and guidance provision.

Although CY NA is responsible with information and guidance provision on IVET mobility and it works towards reaching the objectives set in the frame of Erasmus+, the country could consider putting in place an evaluated improvement plan to ensure the effectiveness of information and guidance provision on international learning mobility for IVET learners.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

In Cyprus there is no explicit policy intention to integrate international learning mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes. There are no tools and mechanisms to evaluate and accredit the knowledge received during periods of international learning mobility, apart from the documents and certificates requested by the Erasmus+ mobility Programme.

However, the CY NA is promoting international learning mobility and the Ministry of Education and Culture is supporting this mobility with circulars sent to schools and colleges. The IVET schools support their students in finding IVET mobility projects which match their subject of studies, but the period of international learning mobility is not integrated in the curricula of the IVET learners.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

In Cyprus, there are targets for IVET mobility specified in the work programme of CY NA, as part of the implementation of the Erasmus+ Programme.

CY NA has set a target to involve in IVET mobility all technical schools and IVET institutions in Cyprus. Another target is to increase over time the number of long-term student mobility.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

No specific measures have been taken in Cyprus to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries.

Delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners is difficult. Due to international mobility from non-EU countries in the frame of the Erasmus+ programme for Higher Education, the national authorities involved are in the process of setting the procedure and steps to be followed in order to facilitate delivery of visas to students from non-Programme countries. This process will also refer to incoming IVET students for long-term mobility stays.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

No specific measures have been taken in Cyprus to reduce administrative burdens that may hinder the international mobility of IVET learners.

However, the CY NA complies with the procedures and documents requested by the Erasmus+ programme for mobility.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

No specific measures have been taken in Cyprus to remove legal obstacles to the mobility of minors.

Outgoing IVET students below 18 years of age have to be accompanied by teachers and their parents have to be informed. However a written parental consent is not always required by the IVET institutions.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social security

In Cyprus, there is legislation ensuring that IVET students and apprentices involved in international learning mobility have appropriate

access to protection in terms of social security.

Social security as a rule applies to employees, meaning persons which are working under an employment relationship and are therefore paid a salary, including IVET students that receive a salary during their learning mobility. Concerning medical care, all EU citizens are covered via the European Health Card. Third country nationals that require a visa to enter the country have to bring with them a valid medical care insurance issued prior to their entry in Cyprus. The Maternity leave legislation covers all persons who fall within the category of employees (this excludes self-employed people regardless of their nationality). Traineeships without remuneration are not considered as proper employment and are not covered by the law. Furthermore, especially for third country nationals, relevant regulations with special reference to students and apprentices apply under the Aliens and Migration Law Chapter 105, Articles 18M and 18N.

Labour protection

In Cyprus, there is legislation ensuring that IVET students and apprentices involved in international learning mobility have appropriate access to protection in terms of labour standards and safety.

The Safety and Health at Work Laws of 1996 to 2011 and the Management of Safety and Health Issues at Work Regulations of 2002 apply to all workplaces. The legislation covers the workers as well as other persons found in the workplace, including students from EU and non-EU countries. Labour standards as a rule apply to employees, meaning persons which are working under an employment agreement and are therefore paid a salary, including IVET students that receive a salary during their learning mobility. Furthermore, especially for third country nationals relevant regulations with special reference to students and apprentices apply under the Aliens and Migration Law Chapter 105, Articles 18M and 18N.

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES" THEMATIC AREA

In relation to the indicator for Administrative and Institutional issues, the main positive aspect in Cyprus is the existence of targets for IVET mobility set by the National Agency for Erasmus+. The agency aims to involve in IVET mobility all technical schools and IVET institutions in Cyprus, and to increase the number of long-term student mobility. On the other hand, although the CY NA and the Ministry of Education and Culture

are promoting mobility, there is no explicit policy intention to integrate international mobility periods in the curricula of IVET programmes, and this could be suggested as a point for consideration in the future. Another drawback in this thematic area is the lack of measures aimed to facilitate the international mobility of IVET learners in terms of delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries, to reduce administrative burdens, or to remove legal obstacles to the mobility of minors. As a first step, the country could try to identify the possible obstacles to mobility in these areas by conducting user surveys or studies/research on these topics. In what regards the incoming students from third countries, a positive aspect is that the national authorities are in the process of setting the procedure in order to facilitate delivery of visas to students from Erasmus+ non-Programme countries.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

In Cyprus, recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility is at the discretion of IVET providers, and may be granted on a case by case basis according to the specific learning agreements between sending and receiving institutions.

The recognition of international learning mobility refers to the recognition of the learning/training period abroad by the home institution. The recognition involves the Europass Mobility document or other certificates issued by the training provider.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

IVET learners involved in international learning mobility have easy access to recognition of learning acquired abroad.

The recognition of the learning outcomes acquired during the mobility period is carried out through learning agreements between the sending and receiving institutions and the IVET learners. The three parties sign a learning agreement which binds them, and following the mobility period

the receiving institution, according to the agreement, issues a certificate which the sending organisation recognises accordingly.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in the country applies to:

- Courses
- Modules
- Programmes

There is no evaluation or accreditation body in order to approve credit points / units / qualifications / diplomas and degrees. In some cases and depending on the home institution, if a period of training was part of the study programme of the student, then modules may be also recognised.

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

In Cyprus, the recognition of learning acquired by IVET students during mobility periods abroad is not coordinated countrywide. There is not yet in place a common framework followed by all VET providers.

Within the ECVET project, the CY NA and the ECVET experts inform the relevant authorities, stakeholders, schools and training providers about ECVET and its tools, in order to set the foundations and then develop and implement ECVET. The ECVET experts are in the process of offering guidance to VET providers on how to use and recognise learning outcomes.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

The recognition process is not currently bound by a regulatory time limit.

The recognition process using Europass Mobility documents and certificates takes place between the host and home institutions taking part in the international mobility.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

In Cyprus, there are no contact points for information on recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad, and therefore no visibility actions.

In the frames of Erasmus+, the CY NA is monitoring the recognition and certification of all international mobility participants. The home/sending institutions are responsible to select and approve international mobility hosts that will provide Europass Mobility documents or other Certificates to the selected participants, as the Erasmus+ programme requires. Information on recognition is provided to participants by their IVET schools and by the CY NA.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

As there are no policy initiatives for the visibility of contact points for the recognition of learning acquired abroad by IVET learners, there is no evaluation.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Europass Mobility document is used within Erasmus+. The home institution prepares and uses this document for international mobility and it is signed by the host training provider at the end of the mobility period. This document certifies the training received by IVET learners. Then the home institution recognises the knowledge gained during the mobility period.

The Europass Certificate Supplement is delivered to people who hold a vocational education and training certificate; it adds information to what is already included in the official certificate, making it more easily understood, especially by employers or institutions outside the issuing country. In tertiary VET education, after long-term IVET mobility periods, the Europass Certificate Supplement can provide information about the training offered and the learning outcomes achieved during the IVET mobility abroad.

The NQF has not yet been finalised in Cyprus.

ECVET is in the course of implementation. So far it has not been used for IVET mobility activities.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

In the area of Recognition of Learning Outcomes, the main positive aspect in Cyprus is that mobility participants have easy access to the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad. Recognition is ensured by the home institution on the basis of Europass Mobility documents or other certificates issued by the host organisation in the frame of Erasmus+. However, the approach to recognition is entirely at the discretion of IVET providers, with no countrywide coordination. Setting in place a coordinated mechanism or a national framework for the recognition of learning outcomes acquired during mobility periods would be a necessary step ahead. Several other aspects could benefit from future intervention in Cyprus, in this thematic area. The recognition of learning acquired abroad applies only to courses, programmes and potentially to modules, and there is no accreditation body in order to approve credit points / units / qualifications / diplomas / degrees. The recognition process is not bound to a regulatory time limit. The country also lacks a policy to establish dedicated and visible contact points for information on the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad. Of the EU tools for the visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes, only the Europass Mobility document, and in some cases the Europass Certificate supplement, are used in the context of IVET mobility. The NQF has not yet been finalised, while ECVET is in process of implementation and it is not yet used for the purpose of mobility.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

In Cyprus, the creation of partnerships for organising international learning mobility projects in IVET is supported by measures in the frame of Erasmus+.

The National Agency for Erasmus+ (CY NA) provides assistance to training providers, host institutions and enterprises. The CY NA receives training offers from training providers from Cyprus and other EU Member States and disseminates the information to VET schools and institutions. Also, in order to assist the IVET sending schools, the Agency advises them to use the E-twinning platform facilities to create networks for IVET mobility with schools in the EU.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

There is no evaluation approach to assess the effectiveness of actions aimed to support IVET providers in the creation of mobility partnerships and networks.

However, in the frames of Erasmus+, after the completion of mobility periods, the IVET beneficiary institutions and the participants are requested to evaluate the quality of the mobility. This is one way to check if the matching of home and host institutions / organisations was a success or not.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

The country provides IVET learners with financial support for their international mobility through its participation in Erasmus+. The body that coordinates the allocation of Erasmus+ funds in Cyprus is the Foundation for the Management of EU Lifelong Learning Programmes (CY NA).

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Erasmus+ programme has a procedure for the evaluation of the quality of the programme implementation, including the monitoring of the allocation of EU funds.

This monitoring covers all stakeholders involved - the National Authority,

National Agency, beneficiary organisations and participants. It concerns the fairness and transparency of EU fund allocation to beneficiaries, according to set rules and regulations within the Erasmus+ programme.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

In Cyprus, the provision of support to stakeholders involved in organising international IVET mobility projects is ensured through the country's participation in Erasmus+, according to the guidelines of the European Commission.

The Erasmus+ programme provides funds for organising mobility projects, which amount to €350 per participant. It also provides funds for other mobility-related activities, including per diem allowance for travelling. Accompanying persons are entitled to receive funding as well, and extra funds may be approved for persons with special needs.

Stakeholders and staff involved in organising IVET mobility projects are also provided with information, assistance and guidance through the CY NA. Erasmus+ grant beneficiaries are invited to info-days where the CY NA provides documentation and explains how to best manage IVET mobility activities (for example, how to find the right host partners, how to complete the learning/training agreements, etc.).

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

The support offered to stakeholders and staff for organising IVET mobility projects is evaluated as part of the evaluation of Erasmus+ activities.

The CY NA also implements self-evaluation for the support it provides, and it receives feedback from stakeholders and staff for the support provided, through distributed questionnaires. This evaluation helps the CY NA to adjust the support actions if necessary.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

The country's achievements in the thematic area of Partnerships and Funding are related to activities undertaken in the context of the Erasmus+ programme. The Foundation for the Management of EU Lifelong Learning Programmes (CY NA) provides assistance to schools and training providers in the creation of networks for IVET mobility projects. However, there is no evaluation approach to assess the effectiveness of these actions, an aspect that could be considered for improvement in the future. IVET learners are provided with financial support for their international mobility in the context of Erasmus+ and the allocation of Programme funds is monitored according to the Programme rules and regulation. A step ahead would be to make sure that the country's funding policy for IVET mobility is evaluated to ensure that IVET learners benefit from sufficient financial support, and that the results of such an evaluation are used to further adjust the support provided. Stakeholders involved in organising IVET mobility projects benefit from financial support, information and assistance according to Erasmus+ guidelines. These support measures are evaluated internally by CY NA, and the feedback received from project beneficiaries is used to adjust the support provided.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

Cyprus has a mechanism for information and guidance provision on IVET mobility, consisting in career guidance counsellors in IVET institutions and technical schools, along with the services offered by the Foundation for the Management of EU Lifelong Learning Programmes (CY NA). This mechanism is coordinated countrywide at different levels, through cooperation between the responsible institutions. The main suggestion for future consideration in this thematic area is related to the lack of specific improvement actions. Putting in place an evaluated improvement plan would represent a positive step ahead, to ensure the effectiveness of information and guidance provision for the international mobility of IVET learners.

In terms of Administrative and Institutional issues, the main positive aspect in Cyprus is the existence of targets for IVET mobility set by the National Agency for Erasmus+. In order to move closer to the reference profile defined by the indicator, the country is yet to tackle several challenges. Improvements could be made by identifying possible administrative obstacles and putting in place measures to facilitate

international mobility in terms of delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries, reducing administrative burdens, and removing legal obstacles to the mobility of minors. The efforts made by the CY NA and by the Ministry of Education and Culture to promote the outgoing mobility of IVET learners could also be further reinforced by policies aimed to integrate learning mobility periods in the curricula of IVET learners.

Regarding the Recognition of Learning Outcomes, Cyprus could take several steps in the future to better meet the requirements of the *“Youth on the Move”* Recommendation in this thematic area. Learners have easy access to the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad, however a step forward would be to consider putting in place a countrywide coordinated mechanism or a common framework for recognition. The country could consider to extend the scope of recognition, which is currently limited to courses, modules and programmes, and to set a regulatory time limit for the recognition process. Suggestions for improvement could also be made in terms of setting up dedicated and visible contact points for the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad, and expanding the range of EU tools used for the visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes, of which only the Europass Mobility document and the Europass Certificate Supplement are currently used.

In the thematic area of Partnerships and Funding, the measures taken in Cyprus are in the context of the country’s participation in Erasmus+. Stakeholders and staff are provided with financial and non-financial support for organising mobility projects, through evaluated actions carried out by the CY NA. IVET learners are provided with support for their international mobility from Erasmus+ funds, and the allocation of funds is monitored according to the rules set by the European Commission. A step ahead would be to ensure that the funding policy in the country is evaluated to make sure that learners are provided with adequate financial means for mobility. IVET institutions and companies are provided with support in the creation of partnerships and networks, but a suggestion for improvement could be made to put in place an evaluation of these actions.

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IVET levels covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary
- Tertiary

The upper secondary level refers to study programmes of 3-4 years completed either with the vocational certificate or matura examination. The tertiary level refers only to Vyšší odborná škola, which is a tertiary professional, but a non-university institution. The Czech Republic does not have an apprenticeship system.

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

In the Czech Republic, the provision of information and guidance to IVET learners on international learning mobility topics is ensured mainly through the Centre for International Cooperation in Education (DZS – Dům zahraniční spolupráce). This is a semi-budgetary organisation, established and controlled by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. DZS administers a wide range of programmes and activities designed to support all areas of education. It focuses on both institutions and individuals.

Among other responsibilities, DZS provides information and guidance for anyone interested in IVET mobility in the Czech Republic, both for schools and IVET learners. Counselling is provided in individual face-to-face meetings, by phone and by online consultations. DZS regularly collects feedback about all the activities provided to IVET learners and beneficiaries in order to identify their needs and the appropriate ways to guide them. DZS also addresses young people using social media¹⁰², webinars and other IT tools. Another activity organised by the DZS are “project days”. During these days DZS employees meet directly with IVET learners in schools and provide them with guidance on international mobility.

Information and guidance targeted to IVET learners is also provided by the Eurodesk and its regional departments. The Eurodesk is part of the

¹⁰² www.facebook.com/NAERASMUSPLUSCZ

DZS.

Apart from DZS there are also other organisations which provide information and guidance for IVET learners, both intermediary organizations within Erasmus+ and outside this Programme. Among other semi-budgetary organizations of the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport, information and guidance on international mobility for IVET learners is provided by the National Europass Centre (NEC) and the National Youth Information Centre (NICM) which are part of the National Institute for Education (NÚV). NICM has 40 regional centres in the Czech Republic.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

In the Czech Republic, the provision of information and guidance for the international mobility of IVET learners is not coordinated countrywide.

However, there are general objectives and targets concerning the provision of information and guidance for international IVET mobility:

- Deepening cooperation with regional authorities (e.g. regional offices, municipalities, Eurocenters¹⁰³ in the regions);
- The National Institute for Education (NÚV) in cooperation with DZS organises regular meetings of European networks (such as Europass, Euroguidance, Eurodesk, NICM, ECVET, EPALE, Eurydice, Coordination Centre for ECVET, etc.). These meetings are focused on the exchange of good practices and discussions about methodological procedures concerning guidance provision for various target groups, including IVET learners;
- Regular participation of DZS, National Europass Centre and NICM in regional educational fairs;
- Seminars for secondary schools are offered by the National Europass Centre. These seminars are directed toward information on European common tools and networks, and practical work with the Europass tools.

¹⁰³ Eurocentres are information centres located in regions where citizens can turn with their questions about the European Union. They focus on the general and professional public, offering information materials, organizing lectures and seminars. In cooperation with the Ministry of Regional Development the Eurocentres inform among others about European Union funds. There are 13 Eurocentres in the whole country.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

In the Czech Republic, there are several legal provisions that specifically include the objective of promoting international learning mobility in IVET.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, on the basis of management's decision of 21 May 2004 (Ref. no. 16 085 / 04-23) entrusted the National Institute for Technical and Vocational Education with the activities leading to the introduction of Europass (NÚOV, in 2011 renamed – National Institute for Education, NÚV); NÚOV/NÚV set up the National Europass Centre in March 2005¹⁰⁴.

On 16 December 2008 the Czech Government approved the Resolution no. 1586 for the "Action plan to support vocational education"¹⁰⁵. On 5 January 2009, the Czech Government approved the Resolution no. 8 for the "Implementation plan of the Lifelong Learning Strategy (2009-2015)"¹⁰⁶. On 9 January 2013, the Czech Government approved the Resolution no. 8 for "New measures to promote vocational training"¹⁰⁷.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

The country does not have specific policy actions aimed to improve the information and guidance provision on IVET mobility to IVET learners.

However, the information campaign on IVET mobility has become more intensive via the various activities of the ECVET experts Network, administered by DZS. In addition, NÚV in cooperation with DZS regularly organizes meetings of European networks (such as Europass, Euroguidance, Eurodesk, ECVET, EPALE etc.) aimed to improve guidance as well as coordination of information for the IVET learners. These meetings are focused on exchange of good practice and discussions about methodological procedures concerning guidance of various target groups, including IVET learners.

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.msmt.cz/uploads/js/Europass.pdf> (The Decision No 2241/2004/EC 2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004 on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass))

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/stredni-vzdelavani/akcni-plan-podpory-odborneho-vzdelavani>

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/dalsi-vzdelavani/strategie-celozivotniho-uceni-cr>

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.msmt.cz/file/27137/>

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

As there are no specific policy actions aimed to improve the provision of information and guidance for IVET learners, there is no evaluation.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

Information and assistance on IVET international mobility is provided to IVET institutions and companies within the annual Work Programme of the National Agency for Erasmus+ (DZS):

- 1) DZS addresses local and regional authorities with a role in IVET (e.g. seminars in the regions, personal communication with representatives of regional and local authorities);
- 2) DZS addresses educational institutions focused on IVET (secondary vocational schools, training institutions, higher vocational schools);
- 3) DZS addresses enterprises and chambers of commerce;
- 4) Cooperation with the media is a crucial part of the DZS communication plan (press conferences, press releases, printed advertisements, articles, interviews on TV, radio or printed magazines and journals);
- 5) Organization of conferences focusing on mobility in technical education (in compliance with the current priorities of educational policy);
- 6) DZS provides a selection of the best practice projects (award of Quality Label in VET to beneficiaries);
- 7) Communication with the public via information materials and promotional items adapted to various target groups;
- 8) DZS also cooperates with other semi-budgetary organisations, e.g. NÚV, NIDV (National Institute for Continuing Education) and NICM (National Information Centre for Youth). These organisations are in daily contact with pedagogical staff and young people, who are the major target groups.

The activities run by DZS include:

1. Organising events to bring the beneficiaries together to share and exchange their project experience;
2. Contributing to campaigns and events within the whole country;
3. Deepening cooperation with regional authorities (e. g. regional offices, municipalities, Eurocenters in the regions);
4. Offering consultation on financial project management, preparation of interim and final reports, content project management and

- dissemination activities;
- 5. Regular participation in regional educational fairs;
- 6. Regular publication and distribution of information materials;
- 7. Maintaining up-to-date web pages (www.naerasmusplus.cz).

In addition, IVET institutions are supported via the various activities of the ECVET experts Network¹⁰⁸.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

In the Czech Republic, the provision of information and guidance to IVET learners on international mobility topics is ensured mainly through the Centre for International Cooperation in Education (DZS – Dům zahraniční spolupráce), which fulfils the role of National Agency for Erasmus+. Among other activities, DZS provides counselling to IVET learners in individual face-to-face meetings, by phone and by online consultations. The main problematic aspects in this thematic area in the Czech Republic are the lack of countrywide coordination of the information and guidance mechanisms for IVET mobility, and the lack of specific policy actions aimed to improve the information and guidance provision to IVET learners on IVET mobility topics. To move closer to the reference profile for this indicator, the country could consider putting in place an evaluated improvement plan, to ensure that information and guidance on IVET mobility, including personalised advice provided by trained guidance counsellors, is provided to IVET learners in a coordinated manner throughout the country.

¹⁰⁸ This network provides face-to-face guidance to schools. Two movies promoting the attractiveness of mobility were made with involvement of IVET learners. The brochure entitled "Be flexible, be mobile", one of the main outcomes of the project "Mobility in Everyday Teaching", was prepared and disseminated at the beginning of the school year 2014/2015 among secondary technical and vocational schools willing to organise a mobility period for the first time. The brochure is written from the perspective of teachers involved in mobility projects. The bilingual version of the brochure provides a significant benefit to its readers. The brochure also emphasises the importance of European tools for mobility (ECVET, EQF, Europass).

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

In the Czech Republic, international mobility experiences can be integrated in the curricula of IVET programmes.

There are no binding legal acts which would introduce an obligation to integrate international learning mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes. It depends on the voluntary initiative of the particular educational organisation to decide to what extent mobility experiences will be incorporated in the curricula. However, DZS provides guidance on this matter to beneficiaries of the Erasmus+. It is one of the activities of the ECVET Experts Network.

The ECVET Experts from the Network also make different types of leaflets and booklets to inform beneficiaries, e.g. "Questions and Answers on ECVET" or "Instructions to create a unit of learning outcomes". Schools are informed about the advantages of a transparent description of learning outcomes and relevant content of the training period abroad, which leads to better recognition of learning, skills and competences acquired abroad.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

The country has set qualitative targets for international learning mobility in IVET.

Within the national context, the DZS supports Erasmus+ projects that are focused on reducing inequalities in education, projects that facilitate access to participants with disadvantaged backgrounds and fewer opportunities, and projects that facilitate easier transition from school to the labour market.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

No specific measures have been taken to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries¹⁰⁹.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

No specific measures have been taken to reduce administrative burdens that may hinder the international mobility of IVET learners.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

No specific measures have been taken to reduce legal obstacles that may hinder the mobility of minors, however no specific need has been identified so far for such measures. For mobility within Erasmus+, there are no legal obstacles in the Czech legislation that may hinder the mobility of IVET learners below 18 years of age. The legal guardian (in most cases the parents) of the minor signs an agreement for the mobility abroad. Participating organizations are required to obtain prior authorisation from parents or from those acting on their behalf. The status of the "legal guardian" is defined in the Czech Civil Code and mentioned in the Czech Education Act as well. In addition, the sending organisations are encouraged to send an adult to accompany minors abroad.

¹⁰⁹ In June 2013, a project called "Accelerated procedure for granting residence permits for foreigners - foreign students from third countries" was launched, aimed at university students (not IVET learners) from non-EU countries. The benefits of the project include the promotion of student mobility for stays over 90 days / long-term residence-permit for foreigners in the Czech Republic, and the reduction of administrative burdens for applicants. The project, under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, defines the rules and deadlines for accelerated entry of predefined groups of foreigners in the Czech Republic for the purpose of study. Administrative burdens have been tackled also as regards to applications for long-term visa in the frame of Erasmus Mundus and the Fulbright scholarship programme, however these programmes do not apply to IVET learners either.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social security

The Erasmus+ Programme does not define a unique format of insurance, nor does it recommend specific insurance companies. The Programme leaves it up to project organisers to seek the most suitable insurance policy according to the type of project carried out and to the insurance formats available at national level¹¹⁰.

It is strongly recommended that participants in international projects are in possession of a European Health Insurance Card. This is a free card that gives access to medically necessary, state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay in any of the 28 EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, under the same conditions and at the same cost as people insured in that country (free in some countries). Foreign students from non-EU countries coming to the Czech Republic must arrange a health insurance. As far as foreign IVET students and apprentices within the Erasmus+ are concerned, standard employment contracts are not concluded with them and therefore they are not entitled to pensions or maternity leave.

Labour protection

Both EU and non-EU students benefit from the same labour protection as nationals with the same status (IVET learners), through the existing labour legislation. Safety is addressed in the Labour Code (Part II, Chapter V.). Work conditions of minors are regulated by the Decree No. 288/2003 Coll. In addition, students should follow the internal safety guidelines of the receiving organizations.

Within Erasmus+ (IVET mobility), the sending organisation, the receiving organization and the student sign a Learning Agreement. Measures related to workplace safety can be added in this agreement.

¹¹⁰ The following areas must be covered: 1/ Wherever relevant, travel insurance (including damage or loss of luggage); 2/ Third party liability; 3/ Accident and serious illness (including permanent or temporary incapacity); 4/ Death (including repatriation).

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE “ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES” THEMATIC AREA

In the Czech Republic, international mobility periods can be integrated in the curricula of IVET programmes, and this is supported through the work of DZS and the network of ECVET experts who provide advice and guidelines on this matter to Erasmus+ beneficiaries. The country has also set qualitative targets for international learning mobility in IVET, encouraging projects aimed to participants from disadvantaged backgrounds, and projects that facilitate transition from school to the labour market. The main issues that could benefit from future consideration in this thematic area are related to the lack of specific administrative measures to facilitate IVET mobility. A step ahead would be to identify the possible obstacles related to the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries, and possible administrative burdens, for example by conducting surveys or studies on these topics, and by taking measures where necessary. The procedures in place for the mobility of minor IVET learners seem to have been kept as easy as possible, and there are no legal obstacles to the mobility of minor IVET learners within Erasmus+. Although it may be deemed that no measure to facilitate minors' mobility is needed because no difficulty was officially reported, there has not been any fully-fledged investigation targeted at checking the situation on the ground and surveying users' needs and stakeholders' views. In future, a user survey on the ground with respect to this aspect could be a valuable step forward to confirm whether facilitating measures would be useful or not, and open way to appropriate measures if proved necessary.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

In the Czech Republic, the recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility is at the discretion of IVET providers, and may be granted on a case by case basis according to the specific learning agreements between sending and receiving institutions.

IVET learners are involved in international learning mobility mostly as part of European educational programmes (e.g. Erasmus+). The sending organisation and receiving organisation sign an agreement which may also specify issues related to recognition. Usually, the receiving organisation evaluates and assesses the learning outcomes acquired by the IVET learner and the sending organisation (training provider) recognises them. Recognition issues are specified more precisely in mobility projects using the ECVET principles (about 42% of Erasmus+ mobility projects started in 2014). The learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners during their international mobility are part of the learning outcomes of the educational/training programme corresponding with the School Act. There is no specific law regulating recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

IVET learners involved in international learning mobility have easy access to recognition of learning acquired abroad.

The sending organisation recognises the learning outcomes assessed by the receiving organisation. The recognition procedure is easy especially within mobility projects using the ECVET principles, as this procedure is regulated through specific documents – Memorandum of Understanding and Learning Agreement – signed by the representatives of the organisations involved and, in the case of the Learning Agreement, also by the IVET learners.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in the Czech Republic applies to:

- Courses
- Units
- Modules
- Programmes
- Qualifications/diplomas/degrees

Currently, learning outcomes achieved abroad by IVET learners are recognised by the schools that organise the mobility or where the IVET learners are regular students.

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The international mobility of IVET learners is mostly of short-term duration (usually 2 or 3 weeks), i.e. it is shorter than a course or an educational/training programme. The learning outcomes are specified by units of learning outcomes in projects using the ECVET principles or by other means, such as learning modules. These units of learning outcomes and learning modules are usually part of a professional qualification described in the National Register of Qualifications.

The Czech Republic does not use credit points at IVET level (upper secondary education). For the recognition of certified learning outcomes achieved abroad for a whole upper secondary study programme (formal VET qualification), there are offices at the regional government authorities (krajské úřady), which are competent to assess the documents provided and to recognise the qualification if found comparable with the relevant Czech qualification. The recognition (nostrifikace) in primary, secondary and tertiary professional (non-university) education follows the Education Act No. 561/2004 Coll. §108 and Regulation Nr. 12/2005 Coll.

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

In the Czech republic, there is no common national framework or set of common guidelines followed by all VET providers and stakeholders in charge of recognition of learning outcomes acquired during mobility periods.

However, the principles stated within the Erasmus+ programme at European level are followed and applied by the National Agency. IVET international mobility projects organised outside Erasmus+ (mostly as part of regional cross-border cooperation) use similar recognition procedures as those within Erasmus+. The ECVET Coordination Centre, the body for coordination of activities connected with the implementation of ECVET, contributes to the coordination of activities related to the recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners abroad. The Coordination Centre is part of the National Institute for Education, an organisation directly run by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

The learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners abroad are recognised within the mobility projects in which they are obtained, at the end of the mobility period. However, there are no national provisions related to a regulatory time limit for recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

In the Czech Republic, there are no specific policy actions aimed to increase the visibility of contact points for information on recognition.

Information on recognition is provided through several institutions/bodies, such as the Centre for International Cooperation and the National Institute for Education. The Centre for International Cooperation disseminates information on mobility within Erasmus+, including information on recognition, through seminars and information materials. However the target group of these dissemination activities are the representatives of VET providers, and not directly the IVET learners. The VET providers inform their students on recognition issues as part of the preparatory activities for the implementation of mobility projects. The web site of the Centre for International Cooperation is accessible also for the IVET learners.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

As there is no visibility policy for the contact points on recognition, there is no evaluation.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Europass Mobility document is recommended by the Centre for International Cooperation in Education to those who applied for a mobility project within the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 (Leonardo da Vinci Sub-programme) or who submit a project for VET Learning Mobility within Erasmus+. It is used to describe the learning outcomes acquired during a study programme, training period, work experience or voluntary activity for an NGO abroad. Besides the Europass Mobility, a Youth Pass is also used, as well as the Europass CV (especially by individuals who do not participate in community/non-community mobility programmes). The majority of Europass Mobility documents are issued to participants in the LLP or Erasmus+ Programme. In 2014, 2858 documents were issued in the frame of the Leonardo da Vinci programme.

The Europass Certificate Supplement is used for description of learning outcomes as stated in the national curricula of the given programme/qualification. The description of learning outcomes is not personalised, therefore this document is not used for enhancing visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes acquired during mobility periods.

ECVET is used for the transparency, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes. ECVET principles (except for the credit points, as the Czech Republic does not use credit points at secondary level) are used by upper secondary technical and vocational schools which participate in international mobility projects within Erasmus+.

The Czech Republic does not have the comprehensive NQF yet. Nevertheless the country referenced its education/qualification levels in formal secondary and tertiary education and the levels of vocational qualifications in the Register of Vocational Qualifications to the EQF. The 8 EQF levels are used as a reference instrument and allow a quick orientation in terms of levels of learning outcomes.

Core and school curricula are defined in terms of learning outcomes. These learning outcomes must be taken into account when planning the mobility period abroad. The Centre for International Cooperation in Education, which fulfils the role of National Agency for Erasmus+, recommends schools to define the units of learning outcomes within the projects. These units help them to clearly define the goals, the educational content and the assessment of the training period abroad.

The Centre for International Cooperation in Education also recommends schools to implement the principles of EQAVET in their projects.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

In what concerns the Recognition of Learning Outcomes, IVET learners have easy access to recognition of learning acquired abroad, which is facilitated by the roles of sending and host organisations as specified within Erasmus+, and by implementation of ECVET principles. The approach to recognition is not coordinated through a countrywide framework. However, the principles set within Erasmus+ are applied by the National Agency, and the ECVET Coordination Centre contributes to the coordination of activities related to the recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners abroad. The recognition approach

applies to all learning components, except for credit points, which are not used in the Czech Republic at IVET level. Although the learning outcomes acquired abroad are recognised at the end of the mobility period, there is no regulatory time limit for the recognition process. Information on recognition of learning outcomes acquired during mobility periods is made available to students mainly via the VET providers, who participate in seminars and receive information from the Centre for International Cooperation. However, there are no policy actions for the visibility of contact points for information on recognition. The country uses most of the EU tools for the visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes, with the exception of the Europass Certificate Supplement. Although this document is not specifically designed for learning mobility, the experience of some other countries shows that it could be exploited to ensure a “common language” between partner institutions.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

In the Czech Republic, the support of IVET providers and companies in the creation of partnerships for organising international learning mobility projects in IVET is part of the broader Erasmus+ policy.

DZS organizes a large number of seminars with different content and focus for different types of applicants/beneficiaries, so that they can exchange their experiences and create mobility consortia (e.g. VET dissemination conference held every year). The Erasmus+ National Agency also organizes international contact seminars as a useful tool for the creation of partnerships between receiving and sending organisations. Furthermore DZS publishes every year a Compendium with data on approved VET projects.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The actions to support the creation of partnerships for organising international learning mobility projects in IVET are evaluated as part of

the general evaluation of the Erasmus+ Programme. Furthermore, after each seminar, a beneficiary/applicant completes a questionnaire which serves as an important tool for evaluation.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

In the Czech Republic, learners are provided with financial support for their international mobility as part of the Erasmus+ Strategy. For IVET mobility within Erasmus+, travel and subsistence costs are paid to participants from the project budget.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

In the Czech Republic, the actions aimed to provide IVET learners with financial support for their international mobility are subject to evaluation as part of the Erasmus+ evaluation strategy.

This evaluation consists in: financial control (desk-check, on-the-spot-check) and control of compliance with the project plan (monitoring), as well as financial and content control of the interim and final report. The final reports of beneficiaries are checked. IVET learners who participate in mobility projects provide feedback on the financial provision they received. This feedback is evaluated and reported to the European Commission and may lead to adjustments to the funding policy.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

In the Czech Republic, institutions and staff involved in organising international IVET mobility projects are provided with financial and non-financial support.

In the context of Erasmus+, staff involved in the preparation of IVET mobility projects can be paid from the budget item "Organizational support". Accompanying persons are also paid from the project budget.

The placement of students abroad is paid to the intermediary organisation from the project budget (in case the intermediary organisation is involved in the project and mentioned in the application form). The placement of students abroad can be also paid directly to a company or organisation active in the field of VET.

In addition, support in the form of information and assistance is provided by DZS, as detailed in section 1.1.6.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

In the Czech Republic, the measures aimed to provide stakeholders involved in organising international IVET mobility projects with financial and non-financial support are evaluated as part of the project final evaluation within the Erasmus+ Programme.

The means of evaluation are: financial control (desk-check, on-the-spot-check) and control of compliance with the project plan (monitoring), as well as financial and content control of the interim and final report.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

In the Czech Republic, IVET institutions and companies are offered support in the creation of partnerships and networks, as well as financial support and assistance for organising mobility projects in the frame of Erasmus+. These support measures are monitored as part of the general evaluation of the Erasmus+ programme, and, respectively, as part of the project final evaluation according to Erasmus+ regulations. IVET learners are also provided with financial support for their international mobility in the frame of Erasmus+, and the allocation of these funds is subject to evaluation and financial controls. IVET learners who participate in mobility projects provide feedback on the financial provision they received, and the evaluation of this feedback may lead to adjustments in the funding policy.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

The Czech Republic has an information and guidance mechanism on IVET mobility opportunities. This provision is ensured mainly by the Centre for International Cooperation in Education (DZS). The drawbacks in this thematic area are the lack of countrywide coordination of the information and guidance provision for IVET mobility, and the lack of specific improvement actions. To move closer to the reference profile for this indicator, it could be considered to put in place an evaluated improvement plan, to ensure that appropriate information and guidance on IVET mobility is provided to IVET learners in a coordinated manner throughout the country.

In terms of Administrative and Institutional issues, the country supports the integration of international learning mobility in the curricula of IVET programmes, and has set qualitative targets for international learning mobility in IVET, in line with national priorities. The main steps ahead that could be taken in this thematic area are to identify possible obstacles to the mobility of incoming IVET learners from third countries, to minors' mobility, and possible administrative burdens, for example through a systematic survey or study on these topics, and to put in place appropriate measures if necessary.

In the thematic area for Recognition of Learning Outcomes, the main positive aspect in the Czech Republic is that IVET learners have easy access to recognition of learning acquired abroad. A further improvement would be to put in place a countrywide framework for recognition, or a set of common guidelines followed by all players in charge of recognition. The scope of recognition covers all learning components apart from credit points, which are not used at IVET level. There is no regulatory time limit for the recognition process. Another issue that could be considered is to put in place an evaluated visibility policy for the contact points for information on recognition, to ensure that this information is easily accessible to all IVET learners. Most EU tools for the visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes are used in the country, except for the Europass Certificate Supplement. The experience of some other countries shows that this document could also be exploited to ensure a "common language" between partner institutions.

In the thematic area Partnerships and Funding, the country has taken actions to provide IVET institutions and companies with support in the creation of partnerships and networks, as well as financial support and assistance for organising mobility projects, in the frame of Erasmus+. IVET learners are also provided with financial support for their international mobility through Erasmus+. All these support actions are monitored.

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IVET level covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary

In Denmark IVET is organised in a dual system, dividing the framework, content and responsibility between the Ministry of Education, the social partners and the VET institutions. All IVET programmes (EUD in Danish) lead to vocational qualifications providing direct access to the labour market. IVET also includes EUX, a combined form of education, offering both general qualifications that give access to higher education, and vocational qualifications providing direct access to the labour market.

Main schemes for international IVET mobility in Denmark

Mobility scheme	Source funds	of	Target group
Erasmus+	- European		- IVET learners - IVET teachers and trainers and guidance counsellors
Nordplus	- Nordic Council of Ministers		- IVET learners - IVET teachers
DK-USA programme	- National budget		- IVET learners - IVET teachers - IVET managers
PIU (Practical Placement abroad)	AUB – The Employers Reimbursement System		- IVET learners involved in the Main Programme of work-based learning

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Denmark has an information and guidance mechanism. A small part of the guidance provided can be related to the international learning mobility of IVET learners.

This mechanism consists of:

- 1) Youth guidance centres (UU-centres) responsible for guidance in the transition from compulsory school to upper secondary education, and
- 2) Guidance counsellors in Danish VET institutions.

Both groups of professionals inform IVET students about work opportunities abroad. In many VET institutions, international guidance counsellors help IVET students to find study opportunities abroad, often supported by Erasmus+, The Nordic programmes, DK-USA-programme and PIU (Practical Placement Abroad financed by "The Employers Reimbursement System").

The mechanism is supported by the Euroguidance Center - the Danish national resource centre for guidance, within the Danish Agency for Higher Education, in the Ministry of Higher Education and Science. The Euroguidance Centre has a website for communication with VET institutions and other stakeholders¹¹¹. The Euroguidance Centre answers questions about study and training abroad and informs about guidance and counselling events. It also organises conferences and seminars. Through these activities the Euroguidance Centre provides the guidance counsellors with relevant and updated information about the possibilities for international mobility, which in turn leads to providing a good service for IVET learners.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

The provision of information and guidance for international learning mobility of IVET learners is not coordinated countrywide in Denmark.

¹¹¹ www.ufm.dk/euroguidance

The country has 98 municipalities, hosting 51 UU-Centres. Each centre is working according to local needs and demands. Danish VET institutions are organised as self-owned and self-governed institutions, resulting in local autonomy of the guidance system.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

Legal provisions in Denmark do not specifically include the objective of promoting international learning mobility in IVET. However, one of the objectives in the Act on VET (Lov om erhvervsuddannelser §1. Stk 2,5) is that IVET must provide students with knowledge about international issues and knowledge as a basis for work and education abroad.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

Denmark has not taken specific policy measures aimed to improve the provision of information and guidance on international mobility to IVET learners.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

As there are no specific policy measures aimed to improve the provision of information and guidance for IVET mobility, there is no evaluation.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

Euroguidance Denmark participates in the international Euroguidance network, in which national centres promote mobility and exchange information about study and training opportunities throughout Europe. The Euroguidance Centre organises conferences and seminars about international mobility within the Danish National Agency, where they inform about Erasmus+, PIU and the Nordic programmes and DK-USA. They target practitioners from UU-Denmark, 10th grade-centres, the

Danish Production Schools and VET-institutions, and the 50 Placement Centres.

The Euroguidance Centre provides a range of services to VET institutions and companies:

- Answers questions about study and training abroad;
- Provides information in English, digital or printed, on the Danish education and guidance systems and on recent initiatives in Danish guidance;
- Informs about international projects in the field of guidance and counselling;
- Offers further training for guidance practitioners on mobility issues;
- Provides guidance counsellors with information about mobility opportunities and procedures.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

Denmark has an information and guidance mechanism, a part of which is dedicated to the international mobility of IVET learners. This mechanism consists of Youth guidance centres (UU-centres) and guidance counsellors in VET institutions. The guidance counsellors provide information on study opportunities abroad, often supported through Erasmus+, The Nordic programmes, DK-USA-programme and PIU (Practical Placement Abroad financed by "The Employers Reimbursement System"). The Euroguidance Centre within the Danish National Agency for Higher Education provides information and support to guidance counsellors and VET institutions. The main aspects that could be considered in the future in this thematic area are the lack of coordination of the information and guidance provision for IVET mobility, and the absence of specific policy measures aimed to improve the information and guidance provision for the mobility of IVET learners. Positive steps ahead that could be considered would be to ensure convergence of guidance practices through cooperation and dialogue between information and guidance providers, and to put in place regularly evaluated improvement measures.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

In Denmark, the Act on VET (Lov om erhvervsuddannelser §2.2) specifies that "Part of the school education in VET can take place abroad". Therefore, there is a clear intention of the country to promote the integration of international mobility experience in IVET curricula.

This policy intention is further evidenced by the financial support measures dedicated in the country for the mobility of IVET learners. Moreover, the EQF is implemented in the entire educational system, and the Ministry of Education is in the ECVET user group.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

Denmark is supporting the decision of the Council of the European Union on achieving the target of 6% of VET students following part of their education abroad by 2020. However, no specific targets have been set in the country for international mobility in IVET.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

In Denmark, measures have been taken to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits for foreigners, including incoming IVET learners from third countries.

The Danish Government established the International Citizen Service (ISC), comprising of 4 offices in the country and a portal, providing in one place information about moving to, working and studying in Denmark. These measures facilitate the delivery of visas and residence permits to IVET learners from third countries, offering help with the paperwork,

personal guidance and useful information.¹¹²

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

In Denmark, measures have been taken to reduce administrative burdens for incoming foreigners, including incoming IVET learners.

The International Citizen Service (ISC) mentioned above, established by the Danish Government, is a service for foreigners that provides all the information about coming to Denmark in one place. Through its 4 offices and its portal, IVET learners from both EU and non-EU countries can benefit from help with the paperwork, personal guidance and useful information about working and studying in Denmark.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

The country has not taken specific measures aimed to remove legal obstacles to the mobility of minors. In order to send minor IVET learners abroad, parental consent is mandatory.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social security

In Denmark, there is legislation ensuring that IVET students and apprentices involved in international learning mobility have appropriate access to protection in terms of social security.

In general, students are protected during work and study periods by the Law on Workers Compensation, but they have to buy a basic insurance that covers leisure, travel and theft.

Incoming students and apprentices can have the same health insurance as Danish citizens if they acquire the EU Health Insurance Card. Students

¹¹² www.icitizen.dk

from non-EU countries can stay maximum one year and during that year they are covered by the regulations of the social security system.

If an apprentice is sent abroad by a Danish company, then their liability insurance is covered by the sending company. If the apprentice signs a contract abroad, then the company abroad is responsible for the liability insurance. However, there are still pending issues regarding the liability insurance when a VET institution is sending the student abroad.

Labour protection

There is legislation ensuring that IVET students and apprentices involved in international learning mobility have appropriate access to protection in terms of labour standards and safety.

Both EU and non-EU incoming students can benefit from the same labour protection as nationals of same status (IVET learners) through the existing labour regulations.

If an apprentice is sent abroad by a Danish company and the salary is lower than the salary that Danish apprentices are entitled to according to their training contract, then the AUB (PIU) will cover the difference. If the company abroad does not pay any salary, then the reimbursement by AUB to the Danish company will be reduced.

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES" THEMATIC AREA

In the thematic area of Administrative and Institutional issues, Denmark has a clear policy intention to support the integration of IVET mobility periods in the curricula of IVET learners. Another positive aspect is related to actions taken to alleviate administrative burdens and to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits for foreigners, including incoming IVET learners from third countries. The Government established the International Citizen Service, comprising 4 offices and a web portal, offering in one place information on moving to, studying and working in Denmark, help with the paperwork and personal guidance. No specific measures have been taken to facilitate the mobility of minor IVET students. It could be suggested that the country conducts a survey or a study in order to assess the need for such measures. The country supports the EU in achieving the target of 6% of VET students following part of their education abroad by 2020, however no specific targets for

IVET mobility have been set, and this could be suggested as another step for consideration in the future.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

Recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility is at the discretion of IVET providers.

International mobility is an integral part of education in Denmark. If the student is going abroad during their school period, then it is the sending VET institution that is responsible for approving the learning outcomes in close cooperation with the receiving institution abroad. If the apprentice is taking a period abroad during his practical training, it is the trade committee that approves the content of the learning outcomes in close contact with the sending company.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

IVET learners involved in international learning mobility have easy access to recognition of learning acquired abroad.

International mobility is an integral part of VET education, as stated in the VET Law. Therefore it is possible to take part of the education abroad, both the school-based and the work-based part. The responsibility of approving learning outcomes is divided between the VET institutions for the school part and the companies, with the trade committees, for the work part.

For the school-based part of education abroad: the VET institution, the student and the receiving institution write down the knowledge, skills and competences relevant for the period abroad. After the mobility placement the receiving institution assesses the student and provides the student with a certification. The student brings it back to the sending institution, which afterwards validates the learning outcomes as an integral part of

the student's education.

For the practical part of education abroad: the placement abroad is recognised by the trade committees in advance. If everything goes as planned, then the learning outcomes become an integral part of the education.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in the country applies to:

- Units

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

The approach to recognition in Denmark is coordinated countrywide. The overall framework is general for all players in charge of recognition and is agreed upon by the Ministry of Education and the social partners. Within this framework, VET institutions can apply local procedures.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

The recognition process is not bound to a regulatory time limit.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

No specific actions have been taken in the country to make more visible the contact points for information on recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners during mobility periods abroad.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

As there are no visibility measures, there is no evaluation.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

As part of Erasmus+ (VET), the Europass Mobility document is a standard document for documentation of international mobility.

The Europass Certificate Supplement is a useful tool for helping VET institutions and their international coordinators with the right translation. The international coordinators use the Certificate Supplement to ensure that both the sending and receiving partner and the students involved in an international mobility are "speaking the same language".

ECVET is still at the beginning of its implementation in Denmark, however the National Agency and the ECVET Expert Team include it as a topic in different seminars and conferences to ensure that its value is known as much as possible. Many VET institutions use the ECVET documents, in addition to Europass, in international mobility and especially in the context of Erasmus+ KA1¹¹³ for VET.

NQF/EQF is implemented in Denmark. In connection with international mobility, it is used (together with the Certificate Supplement) to secure a common language and an understanding of partner countries' educational systems. International coordinators use it to ensure that their students taking a mobility period in another country are being taught at the correct level. EQF is considered a good tool for comparison between different educational systems in Europe.

The learning outcomes approach is used in the entire educational system in Denmark. Therefore it is an integrated part in international mobility, used to break down the individual learning outcomes for the international mobility period. The Danish National Agency is working with ECVET experts collecting best practices from the work of ECVET in what regards the description of learning agreements and other practicalities related to international mobility and recognition of learning outcomes.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

Regarding the Recognition of Learning Outcomes, IVET learners in Denmark have easy access to recognition of learning acquired during mobility periods abroad. The approach to recognition is within a

¹¹³ Key Action 1 in Erasmus+ refers to projects aimed at the mobility of individuals, including the learning mobility of IVET learners.

countrywide framework agreed upon by the Ministry of Education and the social partners, with decentralised implementation by VET institutions. In addition, the country makes use of the range of EU tools for visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes considered in this review, i.e. the Europass Mobility Document and Certificate Supplement, ECVET, EQF/NQF and the Learning Outcomes approach. Two of the main drawbacks that could be considered in future suggestions for improvement are related to the scope of recognition, which appears to be limited to units, and the lack of a regulatory time limit for the recognition process. Another point that may benefit from future attention seems to be the lack of actions to make more visible the contact points for the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad. It could be ensured that information on recognition is visible to IVET learners, and that the visibility actions are evaluated.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The National Agency for Erasmus+ supports the creation of IVET mobility partnerships through contact seminars. The AUB (The Employers Reimbursement System) also supports companies and international guidance counsellors in VET colleges in finding partners abroad¹¹⁴.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The National Agency for Erasmus+ and AUB are evaluating their actions to promote networking, in general terms, every year. They also work close together to support synergies between their actions.

¹¹⁴ In Denmark, the legal framework (Act on VET §2, 2: "Part of the school periods can take place abroad.") encourages VET institutions to send their students for mobility abroad; however it is up to each VET institution to design its approach. Each VET institution in Denmark has a general policy. Some of these general strategies include aspects related to international activities, while other VET institutions have a specific international approach, depending on their priorities. All VET institutions applying for an Erasmus+ project are bound to create a European Development Plan.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

In Denmark, IVET learners are provided with financial support for their international mobility through a variety of mobility schemes: Erasmus+, Nordplus, DK-USA Programme, PIU (Practical Placement abroad).

All students who receive the Danish Students' Grants Scheme (SU) can take it with them if they go abroad during their VET education. If students have a contract with a Danish company and they undertake a placement abroad, then they can receive support from The Employers Reimbursement Fund (AUB). Students can take their salaries with them abroad, and the company receives a reimbursement. The student can also receive support for the following:

- Travel and expenses for relocation;
- Expenses in connection with a job interview abroad.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The National Agency has the responsibility to inform about the use of AUB funds for mobility actions in the frame of PIU (Practical Placement Abroad). Every year they publish a status report on how the funds are used and by whom. This report is presented to the board of AUB and is evaluated.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

Denmark has taken measures aimed to support stakeholders involved in organising international IVET mobility projects.

The Danish National Agency has the responsibility for the entire Erasmus+, The Nordic Programmes and PIU under AUB and the DK-USA Programme. They have a good connection to the UU-centres, the VET institutions and schools and they have a number of information meetings, seminars and conferences around the country every year, where they

inform about the different schemes and possibilities to send students and apprentices on mobility abroad.

The Danish National Agency is a knowledge centre with a lot of experience and know-how about the possibilities, obstacles and general issues in connection with sending students and apprentices abroad.

A form of financial support is also offered to companies who send apprentices for mobility abroad, who can receive from AUB (the Employer Reimbursement Fund):

- Reimbursement of salary for the apprentice who has been sent abroad;
- Support for seeking new partners so their apprentices can go abroad as part of their education;
- Expenses in connection with finding placements abroad for their apprentices.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

In Denmark, there is an overall evaluation approach for all mobility schemes and programmes.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

In terms of Partnerships and Funding, Denmark has a substantial policy to provide IVET learners with financial support for their international learning mobility through a variety of mobility schemes: Erasmus+, Nordplus, DK-USA Programme and PIU (Practical Placement abroad). These support actions are monitored through regular reporting carried out by the National Agency. A further step could be to make sure that the evaluation of the funding policy is used to further adjust the financial support provided to IVET learners. The Danish National Agency supports the creation of IVET mobility partnerships through contact seminars, while the AUB (The Employers Reimbursement System) supports companies and international guidance counsellors in VET colleges in finding partners abroad. Apart from this support in the creation of partnerships, stakeholders involved in organising international IVET mobility projects receive support from the National Agency in the form of information and know-how transfer on mobility-related issues. Financial support is also available for companies who send apprentices for mobility abroad through AUB. As a future step in this thematic area, it could be considered that

the actions undertaken to support the creation of partnerships and the actions to support stakeholders and staff in organising mobility projects are subject to specific regular evaluation, either within or outside the overall evaluation approach that exists for all schemes / programmes, and that the result of these evaluations are used to further adjust the support provided.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In Denmark, information and guidance on international mobility topics is provided to IVET learners through Youth guidance centres (UU-centres) and guidance counsellors in VET institutions. The aspects that could be considered in the future are the coordination of the mechanism for information and guidance provision for IVET learning mobility, and the lack of specific improvement measures. An appropriate coordination and cooperation mechanism between guidance providers could be considered, to ensure convergent practices in the service that IVET learners receive. Putting in place specific evaluated improvement measures could also be a further step ahead.

In the thematic area of Administrative and Institutional issues, among the positive aspects are a clear policy intention to support the integration of mobility periods in the curricula of IVET learners, and the measures taken to reduce administrative burdens and to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits for incoming foreigners, including IVET learners from third countries. The main issues that could benefit from attention in the future are the setting of targets for IVET mobility, and making sure that the procedures for sending minors abroad do not represent an obstacle to the mobility of minor IVET learners. Identifying and removing possible administrative burdens to the mobility of outgoing students could also be considered. A survey or a study could be conducted on these topics to identify if specific measures are necessary.

In what regards the Recognition of Learning Outcomes, IVET learners have easy access to recognition and the range of EU tools for visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes is well exploited in the context of IVET mobility. The approach to recognition is within a countrywide agreed framework, with decentralised implementation by VET institutions. Possible steps ahead could be suggested in relation to the scope of recognition, which appears to be limited to units, and the lack of a regulatory time limit for the recognition process. The country could also consider putting in place specific measures for the visibility of contact points for the recognition of learning acquired during mobility periods, and an evaluation of these measures.

In terms of Partnerships and Funding, Denmark has taken substantial

DENMARK

measures to provide IVET learners with financial support for their international mobility, and the allocation of funds is subject to regular reporting by the National Agency. A further step in this regard could be to ensure that the results of the reporting procedure are used to further adjust the funding policy. Support is also available for IVET institutions and companies involved in the creation of partnerships and networks. In addition, stakeholders involved in organising international mobility projects are provided with information, transfer of know-how, and financial support. To further improve its performance in this thematic area, the country could consider putting in place an evaluation of the specific support actions for IVET providers, companies and staff, to assess their effectiveness.

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IVET levels covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary
- Post-secondary non-tertiary

Main schemes for international IVET mobility in Estonia

Mobility scheme	Source of funds	Target group
Erasmus+	- European - National budget	IVET learners AND other groups (general)
Nordplus	Nordic Council of Ministers	IVET learners AND other groups (general)
Bilateral mobility projects between schools	Schools	IVET learners

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

In Estonia, there is an information and guidance mechanism for international learning mobility of IVET learners.

In all counties of Estonia, regional youth guidance centres, called Pathfinder centres (Rajaleidja), were established in 2014. They provide career information and counselling, psychological and social support and special education counselling for young people (up to 26 years old), including VET students. One of the tasks of these centres is to provide information about international mobility for students. Students can get information on opportunities for international mobility and guidance on living and learning abroad.

All the information is gathered on the websites of the centres and there is an opportunity to ask questions online or by phone, but one can also go to the nearest centre in the county to get the information he/she is interested in. The network of Pathfinder centres is linked to the

Euroguidance network that promotes mobility, helping guidance counsellors and individuals to better understand the mobility opportunities available in Europe, and to the National Europass Centre that coordinates all activities related to the Europass documents.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

The regional Pathfinder guidance centres (Rajaleidja) are coordinated by the Centre for the Development of Rajaleidja, which is an integral part of the Agency for Lifelong Guidance of the Innove Foundation. The Foundation was established by the Government of Estonia, which exercises its rights as founder through the Ministry of Education and Research.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

The Act for Vocational Education Institutions (§3) defines the functions and obligations related to the organisation of vocational training. Among other functions, the following are stipulated:

- to ensure that learners have access to support services, including career counselling, learning assistance, special needs and social educational and psychological services;
- to cooperate nationally and internationally with other educational institutions, employees, employers, business and professional associations, undertakings and institutions related to the specialty, local governments and other partners in order to identify training demand, improve the quality of education and other relevant purposes.

The Vocational Education Standard, chapter 7, stipulates the principles for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). One of the main objectives of RPL is to increase learning mobility and the opportunities for lifelong learning.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

No specific actions to improve the provision of information and guidance on IVET international mobility have been taken.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

As no improvement actions have been taken, there is no evaluation thereof.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

The Archimedes Foundation is an independent body established by the Estonian government with the objective to coordinate and implement different international and national programmes and projects in the field of training, education and research. The Foundation is the implementing body of Erasmus+ in Estonia, and administers several national and international scholarship schemes for improving mobility.

VET institutions can get help and support from the Archimedes Foundation when completing and submitting a mobility project application. The Foundation informs VET institutions about opportunities for international mobility through various seminars and information events. The information is also available on the website of the Foundation. Companies can also get information and assistance in relation to learners from other countries who come to them to develop work experience.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

In Estonia, the provision of information and guidance on IVET international mobility topics is ensured through the Pathfinder centres (Rajaleidja). Here, students can access information on opportunities for international mobility and guidance on living and learning abroad, as part of a wider range of guidance and counselling services and support. This network of regional centres works in close cooperation with the Euroguidance network and the Europass National Centre. Countrywide coordination is ensured through the Centre for the Development of Rajaleidja, which is an integral part of the Agency for Lifelong Guidance of the Innove Foundation. The main issue that could be further addressed in future is the lack of a dedicated policy for the improvement of the provision of information and guidance on IVET mobility. Future policy

steps ahead could consider taking specific actions to improve the existing provision of information and guidance for IVET mobility, and making sure that these specific actions are evaluated.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

Estonia has a policy intention to integrate international learning mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes. This can be seen from some paragraphs from the Act for Vocational Education Institutions, in particular:

- Paragraph 26, which establishes that in the application of Estonian vocational education credit points, the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training, ECVET, shall be used; and
- Paragraph 22, which stipulates that the Vocational Education Standard sets out the principles for recognition of prior learning and professional experience that is closely connected with learning mobility.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

Although many VET institutions have set quantitative targets for international learning mobility in their development plans, no quantitative or qualitative target has been set at country level for mobility in IVET.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

No specific measures have been taken to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries.

Estonia does not issue a "study visa". All non-EU students should apply

for temporary residence permit for study (TRP) at the nearest Estonian Embassy or Consulate in their home country or their country of residence. When certain conditions are met, then it is possible to apply for C-visa (short term) or D-visa (long term) to travel to Estonia and apply for residence permit after arrival.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

No specific measures have been taken in Estonia to reduce administrative burdens that may hinder the international mobility of IVET learners.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

No specific measures have been taken in Estonia to remove possible legal obstacles to the mobility of minors.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social security

In Estonia, there is legislation ensuring that IVET students and apprentices involved in international learning mobility have appropriate access to protection in terms of health care. Under the Health Insurance Act, IVET learners from EU countries are entitled to free healthcare. The same applies to IVET learners from third countries provided they have a legal basis for temporary stay in Estonia. This gives them access to coverage of costs of health services, medicinal products and medical technical aids, and entitles them to benefits for temporary work incapacity.

Labour standards

The country has legislation to ensure that IVET students and apprentices involved in international learning mobility have appropriate access to protection in terms of labour standards and safety. The Occupational

Health and Safety Act applies also to the work of IVET students during practical training. This Act covers the occupational health and safety requirements for work performed by employees, the rights and obligations of an employer and an employee in creating and ensuring a working environment which is safe for health, the organisation of occupational health and safety in public and private organisations, and the liability for violation of the occupational health and safety requirements. Incoming apprentices and IVET students (whether from the EU or from third countries) are subject to the country's labour law and benefit from labour and safety protection in the same conditions as their counterparts in the country (i.e. local IVET learners at work).

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES" THEMATIC AREA

Estonia has a clear policy intention to integrate international learning mobility in the curricula of IVET programmes, expressed in the Act for Vocational Education. However, although many VET institutions have set quantitative targets for international learning mobility in their development plans, no target for international mobility in IVET has been set at national level. The country has also not taken measures to facilitate the international mobility of IVET learners whether in terms of reducing the legal obstacles to the mobility of minors, reducing administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility, or smoothing the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries. For further progress in this area, it could be considered setting national targets for mobility in IVET, for example through translating / adapting the EU 6% benchmark into the country's IVET policy landscape. It could also be investigated, e.g. users/stakeholders surveys whether there are needs for putting in place support for assisting incoming and outgoing learners (whether EU citizens or not, and including minors) in their process of arranging mobility.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

Recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners is framed by the national rules for recognition of prior learning (RPL) set through the Estonian vocational education standard.

According to the new vocational education institutions act, the volume of VET is expressed in Estonian VET Credit Points (EKAP). The principles of ECVET were utilised to introduce the EKAP. This system makes the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad more transparent.

Within this national framework, recognition is operated by IVET providers, and may be granted on a case by case basis according to the specific learning agreements between sending and receiving institutions. The terms and procedures for recognition are set out in the school's rules for organisation of studies. The decision about recognition is made by a commission at the school.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

IVET learners involved in international learning mobility have easy access to recognition of learning acquired abroad.

For mobility actions, learning outcomes that are to be achieved during the mobility period are described in a contract between the sending institution, the receiving institution and the student. The learning outcomes agreed for the study abroad usually cover a part or all of the learning outcomes of a study module. When the learning outcomes are acquired at the receiving institution, they are recognised by the sending institution as previously agreed. If students want to transfer credits acquired abroad, then VET schools decide on transferring credits case-by-case. Usually students have to start by applying for a programme and then apply for transfer of previous credit after they have been accepted to the school.

In addition to this, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) can be used. The student has to apply for recognition, the application is assessed and a

decision is made by a commission at the school.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in the country applies to:

- Courses
- Credit points (Estonian VET Credit Points)
- Units
- Modules
- Programmes
- Qualifications / diplomas / degrees

Learning outcomes are assessed and they may cover different learning components or parts of them.

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in Estonia is regulated. Implementing is supported on system level. Starting 2016, statistics about RPL will be gathered at Estonian educational statistics database.

The Estonian Vocational Education Standard (Chapter 7) regulates the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). The decisions about recognition of learning acquired abroad are made by schools, but the framework is set countrywide.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

In Estonia, the recognition approach is not bound to a time limit.

The procedure for recognition is described in detail in the Regulations for the Study Process of a particular VET institution. As the learning outcomes and the recognition in case of mobility is usually agreed beforehand between the two VET institutions and the student, the recognition procedure is not time-consuming usually.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

Visibility policy is carried through two channels.

Information about the recognition of learning outcomes and qualifications for students is a part of a wide spectrum of information provided by the regional Pathfinder centres for youth guidance (Rajaleidja). Visibility actions are coordinated by the Centre for the Development of Rajaleidja. Pathfinder centres participate at education information fairs and at skills competitions for VET students to better reach their target group and make the centres more visible and easily accessible. Pathfinder centres also visit schools to provide individual and group counselling and career information services. Visibility is also ensured through the career guidance portal Rajaleidja¹¹⁵ and a Facebook site¹¹⁶.

Visibility of contact points is also ensured in VET institutions through career counsellors and academic affairs specialists who are responsible for providing information about international projects, mobility actions and recognition of learning outcomes.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

The regional Pathfinder centres for youth guidance (Rajaleidja) assess their effectiveness in the form of internal evaluation. To assess the quality of services provided by the Estonian lifelong guidance system, data are gathered from online questionnaires for different target groups (clients, specialists, partners) and analysed.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Europass Mobility document is used to record the mobility experience, and knowledge and skills acquired during the mobility period. It is completed and signed by the partner organisations involved in the mobility project. The students participating in mobility projects conducted by the Archimedes Foundation receive the Europass Mobility document to record knowledge and skills acquired in another European country. The document is completed by the partner organisations involved in the

¹¹⁵ www.rajaleidja.ee

¹¹⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/rajaleidja>

project.

The competences acquired by the student during his/her studies are described in the qualification Certificate Supplement. If the student wants to have the Europass Certificate Supplement for further mobility actions to make the official certificate more easily understood by employers or institutions abroad, the relevant Europass Certificate Supplement can be downloaded and printed in Estonian or English from the homepage of the Europass Centre.

The Estonian vocational education credit point system is based on ECVET principles and technical conditions, and was implemented in September 2013 together with the new Act for Vocational Institutions. The Estonian vocational education credit point system is a framework for describing and recognizing learning outcomes, and also for transferring and aggregating the outcomes, which may be achieved through formal, non-formal or informal learning ¹¹⁷. The Ministry of Education has the overall responsibility of implementing ECVET. In mobility projects, the use of ECVET is one of the quality criteria.

EstQF is a comprehensive framework, consisting of four sub-frameworks for general education qualifications, VET qualifications, higher education qualifications, and occupational qualifications. According to the Occupational Qualifications Act, the EstQF has 8 levels, the descriptions of which are identical with the EQF level descriptions. Occupational qualification levels are comparable to levels of education, and the occupational qualifications system and the education system belong to a common qualification framework which is internationally comparable. The level of occupational qualification is indicated on the school certificate. EstQF is the base for developing national and school curricula. An IVET student participating in international mobility has a definitive goal to acquire certain learning outcomes. The learning outcomes are defined in curricula that relay on EstQF that is connected to EQF. That makes the learning outcomes acquired abroad more easily comparable and the recognition process easier and more transparent.

The aim of a mobility action is described in learning outcomes that match with the learning outcomes of the Qualification, curriculum and the particular unit. The sending institution describes the learning outcomes that are relevant for the study abroad, and discusses them with the receiving institution and the student.

¹¹⁷ Educational Institutions Act

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

IVET students involved in international mobility have easy access to recognition of learning acquired abroad, usually on the basis of the contract drawn between the sending institution, the receiving institution and the student. The decisions on recognition are made by schools, but the framework is set at national level, ensuring countrywide coordination. The recognition approach applies to all learning components considered in this review, i.e. courses, credit points, units, modules, programmes, qualifications / diplomas / degrees. The recognition procedure is described as not usually time-consuming, however there is no regulatory time limit established at system level for the recognition process (although it may be regulated at school level), which might be an aspect to consider in future. The country has a policy for the visibility of contact points for information on recognition, and this policy is subject to some monitoring. The existing EU tools relevant for visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes are used in the country, i.e. the Europass mobility Document and Certificate Supplement, ECVET, the EstQF/EQF and the Learning Outcomes approach. Further steps for progress in future could include considering a regulatory time limit for the recognition process (or at least checking through surveys that the current situation fully meets the needs and expectations of users); and putting in place a full-fledged evaluation procedure for the visibility policy, making sure that the monitoring activities translate into recommendations that are implemented and improve the next generation of actions. Regarding the Europass Certificate Supplement, although this document is not specifically designed for learning mobility, the experience of some other countries shows that it could be exploited to ensure a "common language" between partner institutions.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

Estonia has put in place measures to support IVET providers and companies for the creation of partnerships for international learning mobility projects.

The Archimedes Foundation is an independent body established by the Estonian government with the objective to coordinate and implement international and national programmes and projects in the field of training, education and research. It is the implementing body of Erasmus+ and administers several national and international scholarship schemes to improve mobility.

To create new partnerships, the Foundation participates actively in the Transnational Cooperation Activities (TCA) of the National Agencies for Erasmus+. In cooperation with other countries a wide range of activities are organised, such as workshops, training courses, contact seminars and partnership building activities. They also mediate cooperation offers directly to companies, depending on the field of activity and the content of the offer.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

Specific information on whether/how the support to creating partnerships and networks is evaluated is not known. Yet, as a general rule, the general activity of the Archimedes Foundation is monitored through audits and an annual report.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

The Programme for VET of the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy provides guidelines for VET for the period 2015-2018. The development of international cooperation, international mobility and use of EU tools for mobility is foreseen. Financial means under Erasmus+ and other mobility programmes, as well as from the state budget, are allocated for these actions. IVET learners whose schools apply successfully for an Erasmus+ or Nordplus grant get support for mobility. The coordinating body is the Department for Vocational Education of the Ministry of Education and Research.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Department for Vocational Education of the Ministry of Education and Research compiles an annual report on the use of mobility funds from the state budget and ESF. The conclusions are analysed and can lead to changes in the next generation of national funding policy.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

Stakeholders involved in organising international IVET mobility projects are offered support in the form of information and assistance through the Archimedes Foundation, according to the contract between the Foundation and the EC, and its work plan. The Foundation has a contact person for each mobility project, who provides support and helps when necessary. Workshops, training courses, seminars and other activities are organised.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

As a general rule, the general activity of the Archimedes Foundation is monitored through audits and an annual report. On the specific support policy for organising mobility projects, the evaluation is in the form of capturing participants' feedback after each workshop, training course and seminar, and taking the conclusions into account when planning next activities.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

In the area of Partnerships and Funding, Estonia has taken measures to support IVET learners for their international mobility with financial means under Erasmus+ and other mobility programmes. The Archimedes Foundation, the national agency for Erasmus+, supports the creation of mobility partnerships and networks, in particular through a wide range of activities organised for this purpose. Stakeholders involved in organising international IVET mobility projects are also provided with information, assistance and training through the Archimedes Foundation. While the

work of the Foundation is monitored and audited on a regular basis, the country could also in future make sure that – and clarify how – all the specific support policies in this area undergo full-fledged evaluation, including translating monitoring into recommendations that are implemented and improve the next generation of actions.

5. SYNTHESIS – POLICY SUGGESTIONS

Estonia provides IVET learners with information and guidance on IVET international mobility. Countrywide coordination of this provision is ensured through the Centre for the Development of Rajaleidja. The main issue that could be further addressed in future is the lack of a dedicated policy for the improvement of the provision of information and guidance on IVET mobility. Future policy steps ahead could consider taking specific actions to improve the existing provision, and making sure that these specific actions are evaluated.

In the thematic area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, Estonia has a clear policy intention to integrate international learning mobility in the curricula of IVET programmes, expressed in the Act for Vocational Education. However, although many VET institutions have set quantitative targets for international learning mobility in their development plans, no target for international mobility in IVET has been set at national level. The country has also not taken measures to facilitate the international mobility of IVET learners whether in terms of reducing the legal obstacles to the mobility of minors, reducing administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility, or smoothing the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries. For further progress in this area, it could be considered setting national targets for mobility in IVET, for example through translating / adapting the EU 6% benchmark into the country's IVET policy landscape. It could also be investigated, e.g. users/stakeholders surveys whether there are needs for putting in place support for assisting incoming and outgoing learners (whether EU citizens or not, and including minors) in their process of arranging mobility.

Regarding Recognition of Learning Outcomes, IVET students involved in international mobility have easy access to recognition of learning acquired abroad, usually on the basis of the contract drawn between the sending institution, the receiving institution and the student. The decisions on recognition are made by schools, but the framework is set at national level, ensuring countrywide coordination. The recognition approach applies to all learning components considered in this review, i.e. courses, credit points, units, modules, programmes, qualifications / diplomas / degrees. The recognition procedure is described as not usually time-

consuming, however there is no regulatory time limit established at system level for the recognition process (although it may be regulated at school level), which might be an aspect to consider in future. The country has a policy for the visibility of contact points for information on recognition, and this policy is subject to some monitoring. The existing EU tools relevant for visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes are used in the country, i.e. the Europass mobility Document and Certificate Supplement, ECVET, the EstQF/EQF and the Learning Outcomes approach. Further steps for progress in future could include considering a regulatory time limit for the recognition process (or at least checking through surveys that the current situation fully meets the needs and expectations of users); and putting in place a complete evaluation procedure for the visibility policy, making sure that the monitoring activities translate into recommendations that are implemented and improve the next generation of actions. Regarding the Europass Certificate Supplement, although this document is not specifically designed for learning mobility, the experience of some other countries shows that it could be exploited to ensure a “common language” between partner institutions.

In the area of Partnerships and Funding, Estonia has taken measures to support IVET learners for their international mobility with financial means under Erasmus+ and other mobility programmes. The Archimedes Foundation, the national agency for Erasmus+, supports the creation of mobility partnerships and networks, in particular through a wide range of activities organised for this purpose. Stakeholders involved in organising international IVET mobility projects are also provided with information, assistance and training through the Archimedes Foundation. While the work of the Foundation is monitored and audited on a regular basis, the country could also in future make sure that – and clarify how – all the specific support policies in this area undergo full-fledged evaluation, including translating monitoring into recommendations that are implemented and improve the next generation of actions.

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IVET level covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary

Main schemes for international IVET mobility in Finland

Mobility scheme	Source of funds	Target group
Erasmus+ (and the final phase of Leonardo da Vinci Programme)	European budget	IVET and CVET students and recent graduates, as well as staff/teachers/trainers (also in companies when in training roles)
Nordplus Junior	Nordic Council of Ministers	IVET and staff / teachers / trainers
National Board of Education - State Funding for Internationalisation	National budget, Ministry of Education and Culture	IVET students and staff / teachers / trainers (mainly with focus on non-European countries)
Institutions own funding for mobility (covers ca 40% of all IVET mobility according to national CIMO statistics)	National budget, Ministry of Education and Culture	IVET students and staff / teachers / trainers

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Finland is actively promoting the international learning mobility of students, teachers, guidance counsellors and other experts. The number of Finnish exchange students in vocational education institutions has been increasing in the past decade.

At national level, CIMO, the Centre for International Mobility - acting as the National Agency for Erasmus+, Nordplus Junior as well as hosting the ECVET Expert Team - supports international learning mobility in vocational education through information and promotional activities related to the implementation of these programmes.

At institutional level, IVET learners are provided with personalised guidance services. All information and guidance mechanisms in IVET follow a decentralised model in Finland. The institutions have a high level of autonomy relating to most matters, including guidance support. It is the strategic choice of the Finnish government to maintain that autonomy, also in relation to issues pertaining to international mobility and cooperation.

In the Finnish vocational upper secondary education, the provision of guidance is prescribed in the Vocational Education and Training Act (630/1998 and 787/214 from 1.8.2015 onwards; in Finnish) which governs the organisation of curriculum-based upper secondary vocational education and training for both young and adult students. An initial qualification in VET includes about 60 hours of guidance and counselling.

Within the vocational institutions, the responsibility for providing guidance is shared by teachers, guidance counsellors and the international services/international office of the institution. There are variations in services from provider to provider, as it is a local and/or regional decision on how exactly to organise them, but all providers assist their students, according to the law, in clarifying their interests and values, identifying their skills, reflecting on their experience, understanding the options available to them, formulating individual study plans, and making career-oriented decisions. This type of support is provided also in relation to international learning mobility in IVET.

Furthermore, CIMO also offers some nationally available, personalised

information and guidance services on international mobility directly to individuals, including IVET learners. CIMO's information services provide information on study, practical training and youth activities abroad, as well as information on other international options. The phone and online guidance services help learners to map various international opportunities and assist them in finding relevant information, as well as guiding them to sources of further information.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

Finland has a decentralised model for implementing VET and education providers have a large extent of local autonomy to develop policies, as demanded by local business, working life and societal needs. However, there is a certain level of coordination from the Ministry of Education and Culture (at policy level), the National Board of Education (Qualification Requirements) and the Centre for International Mobility CIMO (internationalisation and related programmes). This applies also to guidance on learning mobility.

At institutional level, all guidance providers assist their students, according to the legal provisions. Most IVET providers identify development needs and outline them in their own internationalisation strategies and plans. A crucial part of the quality assurance of IVET providers consists of opportunities for exchange of information, cooperation and dialogue among the stakeholders, provided and supported by CIMO and the National Board of Education, for example via the yearly internationalisation days and other training events. This work has resulted in guides and common materials for all stakeholders.

Therefore, the provision of information and guidance on mobility to IVET learners is implemented in a decentralised manner, but it is coordinated countrywide through common standards and guidelines, minimum requirements, cooperation and dialogue.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

Finland is actively promoting the international learning mobility of students, teachers, guidance counsellors and other experts by e.g. national support structures (CIMO), national funding (National Board of Education) and local funding (the IVET institutions themselves).

There is clear legal base for international learning mobility in Finnish

IVET. Based on the Vocational Education and Training Act (630/1998 and 787/2014 from 1.8.2015 onwards; in Finnish) which governs the organisation of curriculum-based upper secondary vocational education and training for both young and adult students, the new National Qualification Requirements include clear and consistent references to international labour market skills, globalising business and the need for international skills that can be gained through learning mobility. This gives a solid legal basis for the IVET providers to arrange learning mobility periods as part of their offerings.

Furthermore, it is also an obligation for the education provider to draw up a personal study plan for each student during the guidance sessions, taking into account among other things also their interest for an international learning mobility period. The student has the right to receive teaching and guidance that enables him/her to reach the necessary professional skills in their own field. Thus indirectly, according to the needs of global work life and the general objectives in the Vocational Education and Training Act, the promotion of international learning mobility and its benefits are included also in the guidance work of vocational institutions.

Finally, the Centre for International Mobility CIMO Act (981/2008; in Finnish) stipulates that CIMO provides services on international mobility for Finnish individuals as described in section 1.1.1. This takes place particularly through the programmes and funding schemes run by CIMO and mainly by training and supporting the VET providers in their tasks.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

Finland has taken policy actions aimed to improve the provision of information and guidance to IVET learners, including on matters related to IVET mobility.

In 2014, the Finnish National Board of Education has produced criteria for good quality guidance (Hyvän ohjauksen kriteerit, 2014). This policy consists of recommendations on guidance for basic education, secondary education and vocational education and training. The aim is to support the high quality and versatile provision of guidance as well as to offer tools for developing guidance. Matters related to international learning mobility are to be taken into account in the implementation of this policy. The national recommendation is, furthermore, that these criteria should be integrated as part of the evaluation and quality approach of education providers.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

The country has a procedure to regularly assess the improvement of information and guidance provision through quality assurance.

The quality assurance system is nationally evaluated according to unified criteria, and its results are published. CIMO and the National Board of Education support the evaluation process.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

CIMO - as the National Agency of Erasmus+ and Nordplus Junior, as well as hosting the ECVET Expert Team - supports international learning mobility in vocational education through information and promotional activities related to the implementation of these programmes. This work is mainly focused on the IVET institutions, or VET providers, as main actors in the programmes and includes networking, training and support activities both before applying for funding and while running the projects. CIMO has also invested heavily in training for VET providers before, during and after mobility arrangements as well as, in recent years, training on drawing up internationalisation strategies, including the management of mobility and internationalisation.

CIMO also acts as the Euroguidance Centre in Finland. As a member of the Euroguidance network, it promotes European guidance cooperation linked to international mobility. For Euroguidance, the key target group are the Finnish guidance practitioners in all educational institutions and employment offices. In the context of guidance and learning mobility in Europe, Euroguidance Finland contributes to the work and professional development of Finnish guidance practitioners and the national and international networking of guidance practitioners. In its training, information and communication activities, Euroguidance Finland raises awareness on international learning mobility possibilities among guidance practitioners, by using different methods and a variety of information channels. Guidance practitioners use the web services, maintained by CIMO's Information Services, as a source of information and a tool in guiding their clients in what regards learning mobility.

The Finnish National Board of Education acts as the Finnish National Europass Centre. The Centre manages and develops Europass documents and gives information services on Europass.

Finally, in the work to revise the national qualification structures and the consequent full introduction of ECVET into Finnish VET, the ECVET Expert

Team (12 experts from the sector), funded by Erasmus+, has worked to enhance the knowledge and understanding of ECVET among different players within VET, working life and social partners in Finland, and thereby supported the implementation of ECVET at national level. The ECVET Experts have also worked to increase knowledge on using ECVET among mobility coordinators and international managers. This impact is to be noticed especially when it comes to the guidelines and instructions related to ECVET-documentation, assessment, recognition of learning outcomes, individual learning pathways etc. in the area of learning mobility.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

Finland has a well-developed mechanism for information and guidance for IVET mobility. The provision to IVET learners is ensured by teachers, guidance counsellors and the international services/offices of VET institutions. At national level, the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) acts as the National Agency for Erasmus+ and Nordplus Junior, and also hosts the Euroguidance Centre. CIMO supports mobility through information and promotional activities in the frame of these programmes, and it offers information and guidance on mobility opportunities to both individuals and guidance practitioners. Furthermore, in 2014, the country has taken policy measures to improve the information and guidance provision, including on matters related to IVET learning mobility, through the criteria for good quality guidance (Hyvän ohjauksen kriteerit, 2014) set by the Finnish National Board of Education. The quality assurance system is nationally evaluated according to unified criteria, and its results are published. The provision of information and guidance on mobility to IVET learners is implemented in a decentralised manner, but it is coordinated countrywide through common standards and guidelines, minimum requirements, cooperation and dialogue. The coordination is facilitated by the Ministry of Education and Culture, the National Board of Education and by CIMO.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

The Finnish Government Development Plan 2011-2016 for Education and Research sets specific targets in relation to internationalisation of VET that support, both directly and indirectly, the integration of international learning mobility in the curricula of IVET learners and the implementation of Erasmus+, Nordplus and similar mobility actions in Finland¹¹⁸, in particular:

- Increasing, over the whole period, the long-term student mobility with 30% and teacher mobility with 20%; and
- Implement ECVET and increase the validation and accreditation of studies abroad.

The Development Plan 2011-2016 also set targets for a revision of VET qualifications. Accordingly the Parliament has taken the decision in October 2014 on revising the VET qualification structures¹¹⁹. Based on this, new Act of the Finnish National Board of Education has revised the National Qualification Requirements, which detail also learning outcomes related to international and global skills as well as learning outcomes that can be obtained during mobility periods. These matters have also been dealt with in previous decrees, but as a part of this process also the European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) in the form of competence points/credits has been introduced, and will be in use, with consequent impacts on the system. This will further aid the validation of mobility periods, and especially ease the process and increase the quality of validation. Legislation covering the creation of a NQF has also been prepared but has so far not yet been adopted by the parliament. Hence the NQF has not been aligned with the EQF yet.

¹¹⁸ For more information:

<http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2012/liitteet/okm03.pdf> (pages 39-41)

¹¹⁹ Vocational Education and Training Act (630/1998 and 787/214 from 1.8.2015 onwards; in Finnish)

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

As described in previous section, the Finnish Government Development Plan 2011-2016 for Education and Research sets specific targets in relation to internationalisation of VET that directly support the provision of international learning mobility opportunities, arrangements within VET providers for support and guidance, and also the implementation of Erasmus+, Nordplus and similar mobility actions in Finland.

The two quantitative targets set are that of increasing, over the whole period, the long-term student mobility for IVET with 30% and any form of teacher mobility within IVET with 20% (however these quantitative targets have not been achieved).¹²⁰

There are also qualitative targets set, especially in relation to further improving and making more effective the accreditation processes by introducing the ECVET-principles in full into the VET-qualifications from August 2015 onwards, and also by focusing student mobility not only within Europe but also beyond (both qualitative targets have been reached).

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

No specific measures have been taken to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries.

Visa and residency measures are in accordance with the normal provisions of the Finnish government with respect to different countries. They apply to all IVET learners in the same way as to any other persons with a similar status. In most instances these matters are the duty of the sending body/country to settle before arrival. However, incoming student mobility from third countries is not hindered by visa or residency permit issues to any large degree, according to the national statistics for international learning mobility in VET collected by CIMO every year: for the latest year (2013) of available data the statistics show that 12,8% of the incoming student mobility comes from third countries, which is a very high number if compared to other European countries¹²¹.

¹²⁰ For more information:

<http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2012/liitteet/okm03.pdf> (pages 39-41)

¹²¹ The statistics can found online:

http://www.cimo.fi/services/statistics/international_mobility_of_students

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

The country has measures in place to alleviate the administrative burdens that may hinder the international learning mobility of IVET learners.

In most vocational colleges (training providers) there are international coordinators and other staff responsible for international activities - often at the provider's international office – supporting both outgoing and incoming IVET learners. They coordinate the administration of student mobility when it is organised by the vocational college, also providing administrative support, guidance and mentoring. Additionally they provide the students with information, guidance and support when the student organises his mobility period himself. The role of the international coordinators in the vocational colleges is crucial for successful mobility numbers and functions, as a major measure to alleviate the administrative burdens for students.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

No specific measures have been needed in Finland to remove legal obstacles that may hinder the mobility of minors, as there are no legal obstacles preventing IVET students or learners aged below 18 to participate in international learning mobility periods.

Parental consent is needed in case of participation and it is an easy formality, usually coordinated by the international coordinators or teachers in the vocational institutions.

However, the national statistics for international learning mobility in VET for the year 2013¹²², show that only 4,2% of the outgoing Finnish students for a mobility period of minimum of two weeks are aged below 18. Interestingly enough, though, the rather low number is not due to legal obstacles, but rather to the fact that most IVET institutions see it as more pedagogically fit to send students in their later years of studies (when they are usually already over 18), as they can then utilise the learning mobility period better to enhance, for example, their employment prospects upon return to Finland.

¹²² The statistics can found online:

http://www.cimo.fi/services/statistics/international_mobility_of_students

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social security

In Finland, there is legislation ensuring that IVET students and apprentices involved in international learning mobility have appropriate access to protection in terms of social security.

The Act 1318/2002¹²³ states that each training provider must ensure the social security, labour standards and safety of their students by taking appropriate actions and insurance. The Finnish vocational colleges sending IVET learners for mobility periods have accident insurance for their students based on this law. The accidents and occupational diseases of their students are covered if they occur under learning circumstances due to the qualification requirements (workshops, on-the-job learning, skills demonstration etc.). Furthermore, outgoing students covered by the Finnish social insurance also take the European Health Insurance Card. The card is available to everyone covered under the Finnish health insurance system. It can be ordered free of charge and it is valid in all EU countries.

For incoming students from EU countries the sending institutions are responsible for ensuring sufficient insurance coverage. Incoming EU students usually have a European Health Insurance Card from their sending country. For incoming students from non EU-countries the sending body, according to their national laws, or the Finnish work places, according to Finnish labour laws, are responsible for social security

Labour protection

In Finland incoming EU and non-EU students involved in international learning mobility in Finnish workplaces have appropriate access to protection in terms of labour standards and safety, according to Finnish labour protection and work safety regulations.

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES" THEMATIC AREA

In the thematic area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, there is a clear policy intention of the Finnish Government to support the integration

¹²³ "Laki opiskeluun liittyvissä työhön rinnastettavissa olosuhteissa syntyneen vamman tai sairauden korvaamisesta" (in Finnish)

of learning mobility periods in the curricula of IVET programmes, expressed in The Development Plan 2011-2016 for Education and Research. The country has also set quantitative and qualitative targets for international mobility and, more generally, for the internationalisation of VET. Another positive aspect in this thematic area refers to the measures taken to alleviate the administrative burdens that may hinder the mobility of IVET students - international coordinators appointed in vocational colleges play a crucial role in this regard. No specific measures have taken in Finland to remove legal obstacles to the mobility of minors, but it appears that no such measures are needed, as the procedure for sending minors abroad is simple. One issue that may need to be considered in the future is related to the lack of measures to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries. The national statistics for international learning mobility in VET collected by CIMO show that the percentage of incoming students from third countries is high compared to other European countries, however it could be made sure that there are no obstacles to mobility in this respect, for example by conducting a study or survey on this topic.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

Recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility is regulated by law.

The matter of recognition of learning outcomes is prescribed in the Vocational Education and Training Act (630/1998 and 787/2014 from 1.8.2015 onwards; in Finnish) which governs the organisation of curriculum-based upper secondary vocational education and training for both young and adult students. In this area, the most significant positive development during 2014 has come through the Parliamentary decision to revise the qualification structures and the consequent full introduction of ECVET into Finnish VET. The implementation of ECVET takes place as part of the current reform on the qualification system and revision of the national qualification requirements. This includes a strengthening of the competence based approach and the introduction of competence points to describe the scope of qualifications and qualification units.

A work and learning outcomes based approach have formed the bases of

Finnish vocational education and training for a couple of decades. This approach supports very well the recognition of learning outcomes, including those acquired from international learning mobility. The aim of all reforms affecting curricula and competence-based qualification requirements has been to further the learning outcomes based approach. This will lead to an improved and increased accreditation of studies abroad, especially when it comes to also non-vocational skills and key skills. However, vocational skills and competences have been recognised very well also presently - in the case of learning mobility funded by the Leonardo da Vinci programme, where data is collected on this matter, the recognition is nearly 100%.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

Based on the existing laws and decrees, the local training provider is the competent authority on matters of recognition of learning outcomes of mobility periods.

IVET learners have relatively easy access to recognition. Before the mobility period, the learner discusses all aspects of the planned mobility period, plans his studies with a teacher in the sending institution, and signs the Learning Agreement. By signing the Learning Agreement, the learner and the home institution agree on learning goals and the content of the mobility period.

The host institution must provide the learning activities preparing for the learning outcomes identified in the Learning Agreement. It assesses the learning outcomes achieved by the learner and ensures that they are documented in a clear and transparent manner. During the mobility period the learner must demonstrate achievement of the targeted learning outcomes as part of the formal assessment process. At the end of the mobility period the relevant documentation is handed over to the learner and the home institution.

After the mobility period when the learner has returned to the home institution, the teacher will check whether the learning outcomes achieved are in line with the Learning Agreement. If this is the case, the learning outcomes achieved are validated and recognised. The learner receives official confirmation of the fact that the knowledge, skills and competence acquired abroad have been accepted as part of the intended qualification.

A student's learning outcomes are assessed by comparing them with those defined in the national qualification requirements or the local core

curriculum. On the basis of this assessment, each unit of learning outcomes is graded. The assessment scale for learning outcomes is issued by Government decree.

Students are entitled to receive information on how assessment criteria are applied in the evaluation of their learning outcomes. If the student has failed in his/her demonstration of learning outcomes, the education provider must arrange an opportunity for reassessment. If necessary, the education provider must reserve the student an opportunity to otherwise demonstrate a skill level that enables the continuation of his/her studies.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in the country applies to:

- Courses
- Credit points
- Units
- Modules
- Programmes
- Qualifications/diplomas/degrees

For courses, competence points/credits, units or modules, there is a broad recognition of learning outcomes in place in Finnish IVET, and it is in the responsibility of the IVET provider to arrange and take this into account when planning the training. For the recognition of whole IVET qualifications, this is in the responsibility of the Finnish National Board of Education¹²⁴.

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

According to the legal base for international learning mobility in Finnish IVET¹²⁵ which governs the organisation of curriculum-based upper secondary vocational education and training for both young and adult students, the new National Qualification Requirements (previously national core curricula for IVET) include common requirements and guidelines followed by all VET providers and stakeholders in charge of recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners during mobility abroad. This gives a solid legal basis for the IVET providers to arrange the recognition of learning outcomes.

¹²⁴ More information: <http://www.oph.fi/english/services/recognition>

¹²⁵ The Vocational Education and Training Act (630/1998 and 787/214 from 1.8.2015 onwards; in Finnish)

The easy and fast recognition of learning outcomes is supported by the fact that the competent authority lies very close to the student in Finland, as the country has a decentralised approach to implementing VET. This means that despite coordination actions from the Ministry of Education and Culture (policy), the National Board of Education (Qualification Requirements) and the Centre for International Mobility CIMO (internationalisation and related programmes), education providers also have a large degree of local authority to carry out IVET provision, within the framework of existing laws and decrees. This applies also to recognition of learning outcomes, and this is a conscious policy choice by the Finnish government.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

In Finland, the recognition process is bound to a time limit.

For the recognition of qualifications there is a time limit of four months for handling applications. The statutes on good governance regulate the recognition of courses, credit points, units and modules. The length of the recognition process is not allowed to hamper the situation of the student.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

The recognition of learning outcomes (courses, competences points/credits, units or modules) in IVET takes place in the vocational institutes, i.e. very close to the users of these services, the students. The teachers and guidance counsellors are the immediate contact points for information on recognition. This has been the situation since 1998, and in this sense, the “contact points” are immediately visible to the students on a daily basis. Hence, there has been no need to put in place any visibility policies.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

Visibility actions are not needed in Finland, so no direct evaluation has been carried out. However, in Finland, IVET training providers carry out continuously quality assurance measures both internally and externally, to

evaluate and improve their functions, including the services related to the recognition of learning outcomes.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Europass Mobility is widely used to record mobility periods: the National Europass Centre expects that a Europass Mobility document is filled in for the mobile learner within the Erasmus+ programme, but it is often used in other programmes too. The document is primarily intended for the individual to use as a record of his/her learning period abroad.

The Europass Certificate Supplement is available to all the VET qualifications in Finland. Graduates can receive the document from their education provider upon graduation or download it themselves from a central web source. The document is managed by the Finnish National Board of Education. Graduates have the right by law to receive the document. Education providers are encouraged to use the document as a support tool when planning the mobility periods of their students and/or staff, but for this purpose it is not mandatory. The document follows the internationally agreed model: it is not a personal document and it does not record mobility periods; it is intended to help explain the content and learning outcomes of a VET qualification and to facilitate the recognition of the said qualification.

The most significant positive development during 2014 has come through the parliamentary decision to revise the qualification structures and the consequent full introduction of ECVET into Finnish VET. The main impact has been that all VET qualifications have been now re-described in terms of learning outcomes (also previously in use, but revised) and the competence points will be introduced for all students. This will lead to improved and increased accreditation of studies undertaken abroad, especially when it comes to non-vocational skills and key skills (vocational skills and competences have been recognised very well also presently). The ECVET Expert Team (12 experts from the sector), funded by Erasmus+, has worked to enhance knowledge and understanding of ECVET among different players within VET, working life and social partners in Finland, and thereby supported the implementation of ECVET at national level. The ECVET Experts have also worked on increased knowledge on using ECVET among mobility coordinators and international managers. This impact is to be noticed especially when it comes to the guidelines and instructions related to ECVET-documentation, assessment, recognition of learning outcomes, individual learning pathways etc. in the area of learning mobility. The ECVET Toolkit¹²⁶, developed by Finnish

¹²⁶ www.ecvet-toolkit.eu

experts among others, has played a major role in spreading the message of recognition of learning mobility.

The Government Proposal for an Act on the Finnish National Framework for Qualifications and Other Learning was given to the Parliament in May 2012 and it is currently being discussed in the Finnish Parliament. Preparation of the National Framework was part of the process of linking Finnish qualifications to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). Another aim for preparing the National Qualifications Framework was to improve the effectiveness and transparency of the Finnish qualifications system. The NQF has not been used yet because the final approval of the proposal in the Parliament has not yet taken place.

A work and learning outcomes based approach have formed the basis of Finnish vocational education and training for a couple of decades. When the national core curriculum of vocational qualifications was reformed in 1993, the former syllabuses, study units and subjects were replaced by vocational study modules and competence-based objectives and assessment criteria that are based on the operational entities of working life. At the same time, a competence-based qualification system was introduced in adult education. Since those years, the aim of all reforms affecting curricula and competence-based qualification requirements has been to further the learning outcomes based approach.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

According to the indicator for Recognition of Learning Outcomes, the Finnish system has several strong points. IVET learners have easy access to the recognition process, as this takes place on the basis of learning agreements between the home and host institution, and the learner. The recognition approach is implemented by IVET providers within a countrywide coordinated framework - the new National Qualification Requirements include common requirements and guidelines followed by all VET providers. The scope of recognition is broad and it applies to all learning components. There is also a regulatory time limit for the recognition of qualifications. The range of EU tools for visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes is well exploited in the country, with the exception of the NQF, which has not been used yet, as the Government proposal on this is still pending approval by the Finnish Parliament. The country has no specific measures for the visibility of contact points for information on recognition of learning outcomes acquired during mobility periods. Such a visibility policy seems to be unnecessary as the first contact point for the learner is represented by the

teachers and guidance counsellors in IVET institutions. However, in future, it should be made sure (e.g. through user surveys) that the mechanism actually works as expected, and that in practice learners know where to get and manage to get the recognition-related information they need.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

In Finland, there are several actions aimed to support the creation of partnerships for organising international learning mobility projects in IVET.

The Finnish government Development Plan 2011-2016 for Education and Research sets specific objectives in relation to the internationalisation of VET. Among these are the objectives to:

- Further the possibilities of education providers to partake in international peer learning and peer review activities;
- Increase network-based cooperation with countries outside the EU.

CIMO, as the National Agency of Erasmus+, Nordplus Junior and also hosting the ECVET Expert Team, supports the providers and companies that want to get involved in mobility projects.

Concrete actions are, for example, LLP/Erasmus+ thematic seminars and contact seminars coordinated by the CIMO. The Agency also transmits partnership inquiries to the Finnish IVET institute network, though their broad e-mail lists covering all providers. It offers also partnership contact possibilities during ECVET seminars.

The Finnish National Board of Education provides support and funding for international networks of IVET providers on a global level through yearly, national calls. For example, in 2015, 19 international networking projects for one or two years were supported, covering over 50 Finnish education providers. The National Board of Education awarded one million euros for these projects.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The actions to support IVET providers and companies in the creation of mobility partnerships and networks are not subject to evaluation in Finland.

The Erasmus+ and Nordplus Junior Programmes and the work of the ECVET Expert Team undergo yearly evaluations, but there is no evaluation of specific support actions. The government programmes and developments plans are not subject to evaluation.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

In Finland, IVET learners are provided with financial support through the Erasmus+, Nordplus Junior, the National Board of Education government subsidies, and other similar mobility schemes. One of the objectives of the Finnish government, through the Development Plan 2011-2016 for Education and Research, is to increase long-term student mobility with 30%.

In addition, a large proportion of the financial support for the international mobility of IVET learners comes from the VET institutions themselves, using the government funding shares. In 2013, 38% of all IVET mobility was funded in this way, while the LLP/Erasmus+ programmes funded some 45%, and other mobility schemes contributed with a small percentage per programme.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The actions aimed to provide IVET learners with financial support for their international mobility are subject to evaluation.

The main form of evaluation is represented by the yearly mobility statistics for IVET. CIMO collects every year the national statistics for international learning mobility in VET covering all incoming and outgoing student mobility and teacher/staff mobility irrespective of funding source. These data are used to evaluate the development of mobility activities,

and the yearly targets for the Erasmus+ and the Nordplus Junior, as well as for the national funding schemes, are influenced by this analysis¹²⁷. In addition, the Erasmus+ and Nordplus Junior Programmes also undergo yearly evaluations.

For the support offered by IVET providers, the evaluation is ensured through the quality assurance system. There are quality criteria covering all project work and financial support. The matter of international cooperation is covered as a horizontal issue.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

Finland has taken actions to provide institutions and staff with financial and non-financial support for international mobility.

CIMO, as the National Agency of Erasmus+, Nordplus Junior and also hosting the ECVET Expert Team, supports the providers and companies that want to get involved in mobility projects through information and promotional activities related to the implementation of these programmes. As a part of CIMO, the Euroguidance Centre Finland offers training for guidance practitioners across sectors on the international dimension of guidance. In the training activities, international mobility and its benefits are approached through statistics, results of different surveys and the significance of mobility to individual competence development and employability.

According to the national statistics for international learning mobility in VET collected by CIMO, for the year 2013, 4001 teachers and other staff participated in outgoing staff mobility, which gives a total of 25% of the staff of vocational institutions in Finland. Staff mobility is a significant factor in internationalising Finnish VET.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

The actions to provide institutions and staff with financial and non-financial support for international mobility are subject to evaluation.

¹²⁷ See for the latest details:

http://www.cimo.fi/nakokulmia_kansainvalisyyteen/tietoa_ja_tilastoja (in Finnish) and for translations into English: <http://www.cimo.fi/services/statistics>

The main measure for the success of the support activities is the yearly mobility statistics for IVET. CIMO collects every year the national statistics for international learning mobility in VET covering all incoming and outgoing student mobility and teacher/staff mobility irrespective of funding source. These statistics are used to evaluate the development of mobility activities. The qualitative and quantitative yearly targets for Erasmus+ and Nordplus Junior, as well for the national funding schemes are influenced by the analysis. Also the plans for seminars, trainings, further studies and guides are influenced by the analysis of statistics.

The Erasmus+ and Nordplus Junior Programmes, the work of the ECVET Expert Team and the work of Euroguidance undergo yearly evaluations.

In addition, for the support offered by IVET providers themselves, the evaluation is ensured through the quality assurance system. There are quality criteria covering all project work and financial support, as well as criteria covering matters related to staff support. The matter of international cooperation is covered as a horizontal issue.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

Regarding the thematic area Partnerships and Funding, the objectives set in the Finnish Government Development Plan 2011-2016 for Education and Research show a clear commitment to support international mobility in IVET. Specific functions in this thematic area are fulfilled by the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO), who supports IVET providers and companies in the creation of partnerships and networks, for example through contact seminars. The Finnish National Board of Education also provides support and funding for the participation of IVET providers in international networks. A step for consideration in the future would be to put in place an evaluation of these support actions, to ensure their effectiveness. IVET learners are supported financially through a variety of mobility schemes such as Erasmus+ and Nordplus Junior, but also directly by IVET providers, from government funds. Financial and non-financial support is also available for stakeholders and staff involved in organising IVET mobility projects. This is in the form of information, assistance and training, and also financial support for the mobility of staff. The actions aimed to support IVET learners financially and those aimed to support stakeholders and staff are subject to evaluation. The main form of evaluation is based on the annual statistics collected by CIMO. The analysis of these statistics is taken into account in setting qualitative and quantitative yearly targets and objectives for the main international mobility schemes in the country - Erasmus+ and Nordplus Junior - and for

the national funding schemes.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

Finland performs very well in the thematic area for Information and Guidance. The provision to IVET learners is ensured by teachers, guidance counsellors and the international services/offices of VET institutions. At national level, the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) offers information and guidance on mobility opportunities to both individuals and guidance practitioners. Improvement actions for information and guidance provision have been taken in 2014, through the criteria for good quality guidance set by the Finnish National Board of Education. The quality assurance system is nationally evaluated and its results are published. The provision of information and guidance on IVET mobility is implemented in a decentralised manner, but it is coordinated countrywide through common standards and guidelines, minimum requirements, cooperation and dialogue.

In the thematic area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, Finland has a clear policy intention to support the integration of learning mobility periods in the curricula of IVET programmes and also quantitative and qualitative targets for international mobility and, more generally, for the internationalisation of VET. The country has measures in place to alleviate the administrative burdens that may hinder the mobility of IVET students, and no specific measures appear to be needed to facilitate the mobility of minors, as the existing procedure for sending minors abroad is simple. The main point that could be suggested for consideration in this thematic area is to make sure that there are no obstacles in the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries, for example by conducting a survey or a study on this topic.

In terms of Recognition of Learning Outcomes, the Finnish system has several strong points. IVET learners have easy access to the recognition process, and the recognition approach is implemented within a countrywide coordinated framework, with common requirements and guidelines followed by all VET providers. The recognition applies to all learning components, and there is a regulatory time limit for the recognition of qualifications. Of the range of EU tools for visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes, only the NQF/EQF are not yet in use, as the Finnish NQF is pending approval by the Parliament. However, the country has no specific measures for the visibility of contact points for information on recognition of learning outcomes acquired during mobility periods. Such a visibility policy seems to be un-necessary as the first contact point for the learner is represented by the teachers and guidance counsellors in IVET institutions. However, in future, it should be made

sure (e.g. through user surveys) that the mechanism actually works as expected, and that in practice learners know where to get and manage to get the recognition-related information they need.

In the thematic area Partnerships and Funding, IVET learners receive financial support through a variety of international mobility schemes, but also directly from IVET providers. Financial and non-financial support is also available for stakeholders and staff involved in organising IVET mobility projects. These actions are subject to evaluation, mainly on the basis of annual statistics collected by CIMO. The analysis of these statistics influences the setting of qualitative and quantitative yearly targets for mobility. IVET providers and companies are also supported in the creation of partnerships and networks by CIMO and by the Finnish National Board of Education. The main drawback in this thematic area is the lack of evaluation of these support actions, which could be considered in the future.

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IVET levels covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary
- Tertiary
- Apprenticeship

Main schemes for international IVET mobility in France

Mobility scheme	Source of funds	Target group: IVET learners
Erasmus+	European	General
Programme de mobilité franco-suédois	National: Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Pupils
Bourses pour les lycées français de l'étranger		Pupils
Programme Jeunes ambassadeurs		Pupils
Bourse individuelle de mobilité pour le Royaume-Uni		Pupils
Bourses de voyages Zellidja		Pupils
Programme Voltaire		Pupils
Échanges franco-allemands de jeunes et d'adultes en formation professionnelle		Pupils
Réseau des projets scolaires franco-allemands		Pupils
Réseau des projets scolaires franco-allemands		Pupils
Assistant(e) de français à l'étranger		Students
Assistant de langue française aux États-Unis: bourses Fulbright		Students
Bourses d'études "Entente Cordiale"		Students
Others: one-off activities, decided and managed by regional councils or professional networks as consular chambers	Regional or sectoral	General

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

France has a large number of guidance structures but none is dedicated to international mobility. That's why guidance centres have among their general activities, the function to provide information and guidance on international learning mobility of IVET learners. They also make the promotion of mobility.

To facilitate their mobility guidance activity, guidance counsellors can find information or tools with European networks as Euroguidance, Eurodesk, Eurodyssée as well as the French Erasmus agency.

The national policy falls within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research. It is rooted in legislation such as the August 2011 Circular when regulating and structuring mobility in lower and higher secondary schools¹²⁸. Further to that Circular, mobility is promoted through a variety of structures (the National Agency ONISEP, advisors in the Information and Guidance Centres, or CIOs – centres d'information et d'orientation) and tools (Web sites, paper media, etc.).

ONISEP¹²⁹, a national agency working in cooperation with the European and International Division of the Academy of Strasbourg's Information and Guidance Centre, has set up together with AGEFA PME¹³⁰ an information website on mobility for young people in vocational programmes¹³¹.

Thirty-four of the Information and Guidance Centres that make up the CIO network are considered "Relais Europe", bringing information to the Academies directly at the local level. They are in charge of providing advice, information and incentive for mobility and offer information about educational opportunities in the 28 countries that make up the European Union, Community programmes, scholarship opportunities, internships, language-learning stays, and so on. This service is offered free of charge to learners.

The International Centre for Pedagogical Studies (Centre international d'études pédagogiques – CIEP) also helps promote international mobility, in particular for incoming mobility participants. It provides information about working in a regulated profession in France, as well as on the procedure for having a foreign degree recognised¹³².

Also at the national level, the Erasmus+ France Education Formation Agency promotes several different programmes and plans, in particular Erasmus+¹³³. The agency informs the public about mobility programmes both directly, through specially-developed and actively deployed

¹²⁸ http://www.education.gouv.fr/pid25535/bulletin_officiel.html?cid_bo=57077

¹²⁹ Office national d'information sur les enseignements et les professions - National Office for Information on Education and Careers.

¹³⁰ The Association for Alternance Training Programmes in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises.

¹³¹ <http://mavoieproeurope.onisep.fr>

¹³² <http://www.ciep.fr/presentation-ciep/ciep-cooperation-education>

¹³³ www.agence-erasmus.fr

electronic media, and indirectly, through specialised media¹³⁴.

At ground level, some organisations confident in the benefits of mobility often participate in spreading information and advice about mobility. One example is the Compagnons du Devoir, which have a long-standing tradition of mobility, and which promote European mobility to the apprentices they train using a variety of tools, including a blog.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

Coordination is ensured in both strands of information and guidance.

On the information side, a Standing Committee on European and International Mobility for Young People (Comite permanent des opérateurs de la mobilité internationale et européenne des jeunes) was set up on 9 October 2013. The Committee operates at country level. It comprises five thematic working groups composed of institutional representatives of the Central Government and its decentralised services, the Regional Governments, mobility structures and associations. The role of the working groups is to suggest concrete actions and new avenues for exploration, including regarding information on IVET mobility.

The setting of the national Standing Committee was complemented in 2015 through the creation of COREMOBs ("Regional Committees on European and International Mobility for Young People"). Jointly chaired by regional representatives of the Central Government (Regional Prefect and Rector) and the President of the Regional Government, the Coremob is the body in charge of implementing at regional level the national guidelines set by the Standing Committee. It designs the mobility policy and strategy at regional level. It comprises all stakeholders involved in mobility, whether through formal education, informal education, vocational training or the business world. The Coremob draws up a joint diagnostic of the situation of mobility at regional level and develops a three-year mobility development plan. Its mission includes informing on mobility. Assessed annually, the plan may be revised¹³⁵.

¹³⁴ Erasmus+, 2014 annual activity report. See also: a new Erasmus+ webseries "Un bagage en plus" premieres
<http://etudiant.lefigaro.fr/international/actu/detail/article/la-webserie-decalee-sur-erasmus-11249/>

¹³⁵ 23 February 2015 Circular
http://circulaire.legifrance.gouv.fr/pdf/2015/02/cir_39281.pdf

On the guidance side, a National Council¹³⁶ and Regional Councils¹³⁷ for Employment, Training and Guidance were instituted in 2014 to coordinate policies in this area at national and regional levels. A national framework agreement was signed also in 2014 between all stakeholders in the area of guidance in order to ensure the provision of a "Regional Public Service of Guidance".

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

The more important and latest legal provisions that specifically mention the objective of promoting international learning mobility in IVET are:

- The Guidance and Planning Law 2013-595 ratified on 8 July 2013, that has made promoting greater openness to Europe and the world one of its objectives;
- Law 2013-660 ratified on 22 July 2013 regarding Higher Education and Research setting a new public service responsibility in higher education: "developing pathways that include periods of study and work abroad", (Article L. 123-7 of the Educational Code);
- Ministry of Education Circulars for the purpose of promoting mobility, in which some articles deal with advice and information¹³⁸;
- The Circular for the creation of "regional committees for European and international mobility for young people" (Corémob)¹³⁹.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

Two major strands of improvement actions were implemented in recent past. Firstly, the creation of a National Standing Committee and Regional Committees on European and International Mobility for Young People as well as the setting of the nationwide "Regional public service of guidance" were targeted at improving coordination of mobility policy, including information and guidance.

¹³⁶ Conseil national de l'emploi, de la formation et de l'orientation professionnelles - CNEFOP

¹³⁷ Conseils régionaux de l'emploi, de la formation et de l'orientation professionnelles - CREFOPs

¹³⁸ http://www.education.gouv.fr/pid25535/bulletin_officiel.html?cid_bo=57077

<http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid49724/menc0913416c.html>

¹³⁹ 23 February 2015 Circular

http://circulaire.legifrance.gouv.fr/pdf/2015/02/cir_39281.pdf

Secondly, actions to improve information and guidance also took the form of additional financial support. A call for projects titled "Mobility Platforms" was launched by the Experimentation Fund for Youth early 2014 with the aim of endowing the regional committees (Coremobs) with a tool enabling them to implement concrete action, dealing in particular with information. In parallel, structures such as the Franco-German Office for Youth (Office franco-allemand pour la jeunesse - OFAJ) or the Franco-German Secretary (Secrétariat franco-allemand - SFA) were endowed with significant budgets, in particular to develop information about Franco-German mobility. The OFAJ budget (€2 millions) is allocated equally by the French and German governments¹⁴⁰.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

A range of studies on mobility have been carried out, in which information and advice are addressed briefly. To wit, early 2012, the agency Europe Education Formation France (actually Erasmus+ agency) financed two studies carried out by the CEREQ¹⁴¹. The assessment is primarily qualitative. It highlights the benefits of mobility in learning self-confidence and communication. Another study dealt with international mobility for disadvantaged learners.

In 2011, a report by the Economic, Social and Environmental Council noted that among the challenges regarding international mobility is that of multiplicity of information and guidance sources. This multiplicity creates a complexity in access to information, which turns out to be a real source of discouragement for young people.

This report also pointed out however a lack of research that would make it possible to take into account the phenomenon of mobility in young people and its various challenges in their wholeness¹⁴².

¹⁴⁰ http://www.jeunes.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/CIJ_Rapport_2014_V2_partie1_BD5c.pdf

¹⁴¹ *A study on the impact of international mobility for apprentices*, <http://www.agence-erasmus.fr/page/etudes-impact>

¹⁴² http://www.lecese.fr/sites/default/files/pdf/Avis/2011/2011_13_mobilite.pdf

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

ONISEP provides information to training organisations (upper secondary schools, apprentice training centres, etc.)¹⁴³. Various sectoral entities also support companies' and institutions' mobility activities, for example:

- CCCA-BTP (Comité de concertation et de coordination de l'apprentissage du bâtiment et des travaux publics) supports mobility projects of apprenticeship training centres ;
- In 2014, the construction and public works sector, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, created an "accredited" teaching unit for study abroad during mobility¹⁴⁴;
- The ANFA (automotive services sector) has developed mobility guide books for learners, teachers/trainers, and project leaders¹⁴⁵;
- The APCMA (network of Professional and Craft Chambers) has developed a network of over 250 relevant agencies, intermediary institutions and providers of vocational education and training to support the mobility of apprentices¹⁴⁶;
- CCI France (network of Chambers of Commerce and Industry) supports mobility projects of chambers¹⁴⁷.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

France provides IVET learners with information and guidance on international learning mobility. The existing provision is channelled through a variety of institutions (ONISEP, CIOs, Erasmus+ National agency, Regions). Coordination of the provision is ensured countrywide through a national Standing Committee and Regional Committees on European and International Mobility for Young People, and a nationwide "Regional public service of guidance". The creation of this framework along with increases in budgetary support to information and guidance providers is part of the improvement actions undertaken in recent past. A study/research activity is also in place to analyse the mobility policy including information and guidance.

¹⁴³ <http://www.onisep.fr/Espace-pedagogique/LP-CFA/Ressources-lycee-pro-CFA/Mobilite-europeenne-des-equipes-educatives/Developper-la-dimension-europeenne-via-des-jumelages-et-des-formations>

¹⁴⁴ <http://www.ccca-btp.fr/mobilite-des-jeunes-et-des-formateurs.html>

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.anfa-auto.fr/Centres-de-formation/Favoriser-la-mobilite-europeenne>

¹⁴⁶ <http://www.euroapprenticeship.eu/fr/les-partenaires.html>

¹⁴⁷ <http://www.cci.fr/web/apprentissage/apprendre-en-europe/-/article/Le+programme+MOVIL%60APP>

However, review of recent development suggests that information on mobility on the one hand and guidance on the other hand have been addressed separately. It could be made sure in future that the guidance provision also covers the topic of international mobility.

The evaluation process could be improved too. Currently, it appears as a series of random studies and reports, lacking however a systematic and regular approach to monitoring the information and guidance provision, issuing recommendations, and translating these recommendations into readjustments and reforms of the provision of information and guidance on international mobility year after year.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

Decree 2014-725 ratified on 27 June 2014 modifying the regulatory framework of the vocational Baccalaureate establish an optional mobility unit in the vocational Baccalaureate. On an experimental basis, an optional "mobility" unit provides credit for results achieved during training completed in a Member State of the European Union, the European Economic Area or the European Free-Trade Association, with the aim of earning the aforementioned degree. The optional unit is open to students enrolled in a secondary learning institution, apprentices enrolled at an apprentice training centre, and interns in continuing vocational training in a public establishment¹⁴⁸.

Regarding IVET in Higher Education, Law 2013-660 on Higher Education¹⁴⁹ and Research, ratified on 22 July 2013, sets a new public service responsibility for higher education: "developing pathways that include periods of study and work abroad", (Article L. 123-7 of the Educational Code). Higher Education Institutions may develop cooperation agreements with foreign or international institutions. Should they choose to do so, they must establish, within the degree programmes offered to students, which periods are eligible for study abroad as well as specify the

¹⁴⁸ http://www.education.gouv.fr/pid25535/bulletin_officiel.html?cid_bo=81157

¹⁴⁹ Unless otherwise specified, Higher Education in this fiche includes tertiary VET.

related procedures. Under such cooperation programmes, the law now allows for higher education courses to be taught in a foreign language, where specific conditions are fulfilled. These exceptions to the rule of French as sole teaching language have been inserted into Article L. 121-3 of the Educational Code: "where courses are taught under an agreement with a foreign or international institution, as provided for by Article L. 123-7 or under programmes benefiting from European funding".

Other circulars have been issued by the Ministry of Education with the aim of promoting mobility¹⁵⁰.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

There are currently no target figures regarding mobility, whether in percentage or numerical terms. Likewise, there is no "target audience" for mobility. Ultimately, it is the institution promoting mobility that makes it possible for a target or policy to be established. The network of Family and Rural Centres (Maisons familiales et rurales), for instance, promotes mobility for young people working at their structures, and has incorporated mobility into the association project of each of its Family Centres¹⁵¹.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

The Guidance Law on Higher Education and Research does away with the so-called Guéant Circular, which restricted access to higher education for foreign students¹⁵². This applies also to IVET in Higher Education. In concrete terms, the requirements for securing a "student" temporary stay permit have been simplified for non-European and Swiss students¹⁵³.

Where apprenticeship is concerned, work permits are granted by right of law to any foreigner holding a stay permit in France for the purpose of concluding an apprenticeship contract.

¹⁵⁰ http://www.education.gouv.fr/pid25535/bulletin_officiel.html?cid_bo=57077
<http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid49724/menc0913416c.html>

¹⁵¹ <http://www.mfr.asso.fr/education-pedagogie/pages/education-en-mfr.aspx>

¹⁵² <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/pid29481/l-ouverture-europe-international.html>

¹⁵³ <http://www.interieur.gouv.fr/A-votre-service/Mes-demarches/Etranger-Europe/Etrangers-en-France/Titres-documents-de-sejour-et-de-circulation-des-etrangers-non-europeens/Etudiants-et-stagiaires-etrangers/Conditions-d-attribution-du-titre-de-sejour-etudiant>

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

France has instituted simplified administrative procedures. In particular the agency Campus France manages mobility for foreign students and interns – including IVET learners – having received scholarships, so that they can study in France or abroad. The Agency also provides support for French students going abroad to study. It is structured as a "one-stop shop" offering a full-fledged welcome line to foreign students, with everything from orientation services to scholarship disbursement or even personalised tracking throughout their studies if required: in short, a single contact point covering all contract items. It has set up a special website in this regard for students wishing to start or continue their studies in France, where they can also complete the entire visa application process before coming to France¹⁵⁴.

In addition, basic universal health insurance (CMU) has been instituted. Lastly, a website for foreign students has been set up. It can be used to register for university courses online¹⁵⁵.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

Where apprenticeship is concerned, foreign minors are exempt from the requirement to hold a valid residency permit and are consequently eligible for apprenticeship contracts¹⁵⁶. More generally, where foreign minors are legally present on French soil, no distinction is allowed between them and students of French nationality when it comes to access to public education.

Regarding outgoing French minors, the system of authorisation certificates has been lifted. Mobility within the Schengen area does not require more than the minor's identity card along with a simple parental consent, for example in the form of a signed letter¹⁵⁷.

¹⁵⁴ <http://www.campusfrance.org/fr/page/procedure-cef-creez-votre-dossier>

¹⁵⁵ <http://vosdroits.service-public.fr/particuliers/R19176.xhtml>

¹⁵⁶ DGEFP Letter dated 3.3.10, Art. L5221-5 of the Labour Code Law 2009-1437 ratified on 24.11.09, Art. 35 (25.11.09 Official Gazette)

¹⁵⁷ Circular No. 2013-106 of 16 July 2013 on the simplification of administrative procedures http://www.education.gouv.fr/pid25535/bulletin_officiel.html?cid_bo=72758

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Students from EU countries (less than 28 years) have access to public health insurance included in their HE institution tuition fees.

This also applies to other foreign students. Non-EU students whose stay is shorter than 3 months must be insured in their home country or have subscribed a private insurance in France.

Students over 28 years old may have access to the basic universal health insurance¹⁵⁸. In order to facilitate access to healthcare and reimbursement for those residing in France under a mobility programme incorporated into training, an exemption has been instituted, such that those enrolled in a learning institution are not required to show proof of stable place of residence in France¹⁵⁹.

Individuals on mobility as part of their training benefit from the same Labour Code provisions as those of French nationality. This proceeds from the principle of territoriality: any individual working, serving as intern or involved in training in France are subject to and benefit from French law. Employees under age of eighteen benefit from the protection for young workers¹⁶⁰.

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES" THEMATIC AREA

France has a clear policy intention to integrate mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes. It has taken measures to facilitate mobility through smoothing entry of students from third countries, alleviating the administrative burdens (Campus France) induced by arranging mobility, and easing the mobility of minor learners. These measures apply to all students including IVET learners.

Lack of targets for international learning mobility in IVET could be observed. So far, targets – if any – are set at institutional level. In future, outlining national qualitative or quantitative target could help raise the

¹⁵⁸ Couverture mutuelle universelle – CMU, for more information <http://www.cmu.fr>

¹⁵⁹ Article R380-1 of the Social Security Code <http://www.ameli.fr/assures/soins-et-remboursements/cmu-et-complementaires-sante/cmu-de-base-une-assurance-maladie-pour-tous/les-conditions-pour-en-beneficier.php>
http://www.urssaf.fr/employeurs/dossiers_reglementaires/dossiers_reglementaires/stages_en_milieu_professionnel_03.html

¹⁶⁰ Article L3161-1 of the Labour Code

awareness of users and stakeholders on the issue of mobility and the need to further enhance it.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

Except for the higher education system for which the ECTS system is totally implemented, the recognition process in upper secondary level and in apprenticeship is just emerging in France. French legislation has not really instituted any specific procedure for recognising qualifications earned elsewhere than on national soil. Recognition is thus left to the training organisations, which describe the skills to be developed in the training reference documents which they develop and which is their sole responsibility. Similarly, the procedures by which training reference documents are recorded in the reference bases, such as the RNCP¹⁶¹, do not take this aspect into account. There is no legal equivalence between the degrees and diplomas earned abroad and French degrees. The ENIC-NARIC Network (European Network Information Center / National Academic Recognition Information Center) is the information centre dedicated to degree recognition by academic and professional authorities. It draws up comparability certificates for a degree, studies completed, or training certification earned abroad. It informs about the procedures required in order to serve in a regulated profession. It provides information about recognition of French degrees abroad¹⁶².

Recognition for apprenticeships completed is nonetheless starting to come into place. The European ECVET project managed by the Ministry of Education (2011-13 – ‘MEN-ECVET’) led this ministry adopt different regulatory texts concerning the vocational baccalaureates (EQF4) and international mobility, and taking into account the ECVET principles. It should be specified that there are 90 vocational baccalaureates, covering different sectorial fields. A ‘Décret’¹⁶³ published in June 2014 states that part of the training leading to obtain a vocational baccalaureate can be

¹⁶¹ Répertoire national des certifications professionnelles - National Register of vocational certifications

¹⁶² <http://www.ciep.fr/enic-naricfr/comparabilite.php>

¹⁶³ Decree 2014-725 ratified on 27 June 2014 modifying the regulatory framework of the vocational Baccalaureate

performed in a European country, which implies that the assessment of the learning outcomes (LO) achieved abroad can be recognised and taken into account in France for validation. An “Arrêté” (ministerial ruling)¹⁶⁴ published in June 2014 creates an “optional mobility unit” common to all existing 90 vocational baccalaureates. It covers general and professional LO which should be achieved through a training period in a European country. Those LO are described and assessment specifications are also defined: the professional LO must be assessed abroad, and the general LO will be assessed in France. The ECVET experts’ team has designed information materials in order to inform the educational actors and sectors about these texts.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

There is no assessment yet of the easiness / user-friendliness of the emerging “optional mobility unit” mechanism of vocational baccalaureates.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in the country applies to:

- Credit points
- Units
- Qualifications/diplomas/degrees

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

There is no countrywide coordination of the recognition process to date. A national regulatory framework for recognition of learning acquired abroad by IVET learners is just being put in place. The ENIC-NARIC network, the nation-wide body in charge of issuing comparability certificates for foreign degrees, is an element of coordination, but of limited extent as it only deals with issuing comparability certificates and only for qualifications obtained after training longer than 6 months.

¹⁶⁴ “Arrêté” of 27 June 2014 establishing an optional mobility unit in the vocational Baccalaureate

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

There is no regulatory time frame for the processing of requests for recognition of learning acquired abroad.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

The role of the International Centre on Pedagogical Studies (CIEP) is to help promote international mobility through a specific department within the ENIC-NARIC agency network, i.e. ENIC-NARIC France Centre. It is in charge of issuing comparability certificates for foreign degrees, containing an assessment of the degree submitted compared to the French system. Only degree programmes can be considered. The comparability certificate issued for a degree earned abroad does not itself constitute a degree. The Centre provides information about working in a regulated profession in France, as well as on the procedure for having a foreign degree recognised. The ENIC-NARIC Centre has set up a partner network with which it communicates through a variety of channels, including a newsletter that informs about new areas of activity and projects underway, every four month¹⁶⁵. The ENIC-NARIC Centre has been referenced by the main websites regarding education, such as that of Ministry of Higher Education¹⁶⁶. CIOs, also responsible for providing information about mobility, inform about the existence of the ENIC-NARIC Centre. Guidance counselors also know about ENIC-NARIC and can inform their counselees. All these visibility channels are targeted to all student groups, including IVET learners.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

The actions taken in France to increase the visibility of contact points for recognition are not evaluated.

¹⁶⁵ <http://www.ciep.fr/lettres-dinformation>

¹⁶⁶ <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid20949/la-reconnaissance-des-diplomes-dans-l-union-europeenne.html>

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

18,650 Europass Mobilité passes (Europass Mobility Document) were issued in 2013 (making for an 18.63% increase as compared to 2012). Since the Europass was first launched, in 2005, 98,430 Europass Mobilité passes have been issued¹⁶⁷. This is a tool highly-valued by such institutions as secondary schools and CFAs (centre de formation des apprentis – apprenticeship training centre), which are its most frequent users. Upper secondary schools account for 45 to 52% of users, while CFAs account for 23 to 28% depending on the year. Higher Education Institutions may also issue the pass, but remain somewhat on the sidelines, as they account for only 8% of the institutions involved. In general, institutions consider Europass Mobilité a helpful and easy-to-use document¹⁶⁸.

The Europass Certificate Supplement (“supplement au certificat”) is used in IVET institutions, programmes and qualifications (e.g. in such programmes as the “BEP”, “CAP”, and “Baccalaureat professionnel”). Its descriptors are based on the national classification of vocational qualifications (“Repertoire national des certifications professionnelles”).

ECVET is still in the experimental stage, and there are no statistical data on the experiments underway. The team at ECVET France is composed of eight members, representing the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Youth and Sport, as well as members of Consular Chambers and the National Commission on Vocational Certification. Some organisations use ECVET or promote it but it’s still difficult to understand and to implement for training institutions. Nevertheless ECVET is the object of a European project managed by the Ministry of education. This project led this ministry adopt different regulatory texts concerning the vocational baccalaureates (EQF4) and international mobility, and taking into account the ECVET principles.

The EQF/NQFs are used in France, but the link with mobility is difficult to establish. Building on its qualifications culture, France chose to use the existing national qualifications framework (based on its 1967/1969 framework) and to link each level to the EQF. France referenced relatively early in the process and was in fact one of the few countries which referenced their national qualifications framework to the EQF within the

¹⁶⁷ Appendix to the 2015 Finance Law, regarding continuing vocational training. http://www.performance-publique.budget.gouv.fr/sites/performance_publique/files/farandole/ressources/2015/pap/pdf/jaunes/jaune2015_formation_professionnelle.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/more_info/evaluations/docs/education/europass2013_en.pdf

¹⁶⁸ http://www.2e2f.fr/docs/20120709_bilan-europass-2005-2012.pdf

deadline set in the EQF Recommendation (by 2010). Regarding the second implementation deadline, France is one of the countries that already indicate EQF levels in the Europass Certificate Supplement.

The Learning Outcomes approach is used in France, but the link with mobility is difficult to establish. France, as a country with an older tradition of competence-based curricula, is making reforms to cope with EU developments and new requirements, preserving its own understanding of learning outcomes and competences. One of the major reasons for using learning outcomes in curricula is the expectation that this will strengthen the link between VET and the labour market. This motivation has been a driver of curriculum reforms as early as the 1980s in some countries and it has led to the development of genuine national approaches to competence-based education in France. The focus has been both on new methods of curriculum development (new methods of work analysis, involvement of social partners) and competence-based approaches on teaching practices and learning environments (work-based learning, action-oriented learning, combination of theoretical knowledge and professional skills).

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

France has limited mechanisms for the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET learners. The mechanisms in place apply to credit points, units and qualifications. They are not coordinated countrywide and are not subject to regulatory time frame as regards requests processing. The country has taken actions for the visibility of contact points for information on recognition, but these actions are not evaluated. The EU tools for transparency, mobility and recognition (i.e. the Europass Mobility Document, the Europass Certificate Supplement, ECVET, the EQF/NQF and the Learning Outcomes approach) are in use in the country, but it is unclear whether this use extends to IVET international mobility. Addressing the drawbacks in this area could help enhance the international learning mobility of IVET learners in future. It could be considered putting in place a general and systematic approach to recognition of IVET learning outcomes acquired abroad; extending the range of learning components taken into account in the recognition process (i.e. including courses, modules and programmes); ensuring that the recognition mechanisms are nation-wide coordinated, user-friendly and time-framed. Putting in place a regular evaluation procedure for the visibility policy regarding contact points for information on recognition would be a progress too. Finally making sure that the EU tools are in use also in the context of IVET international mobility could be considered too.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

All secondary education institutions are invited to develop school partnerships: contact is facilitated between one or more institutions from France, Europe and abroad, drawing upon one or more educational cooperation projects. The Ministry of National Education has published a circular specifying the procedures by which partnerships are to be concluded ¹⁶⁹. Since 1997, Academic Delegates for international cooperation have been facilitating the development of the Ministry's international policy and the setting of bi- and multi-lateral cooperation projects in the areas of European cooperation ¹⁷⁰. At regional level, ministry representatives help training institutions in such issues as:

- How to find a partner ?
- Models of partnership's agreement
- Support grants
- Personalised accompaniment of learners
- Technical assistance, information on European programmes and tools for mobility, etc.

Partnerships can be organised also outside the framework of the Ministry of education. For example, in 1982, France and Québec concluded a governmental agreement enabling young professionals from both communities to gain professional experience across the Atlantic ¹⁷¹. Mobility agreements of this kind can also be concluded by regions, e.g., the mobility agreement between the Guadeloupe Region and Quebec ¹⁷². The resulting agreements may, on a case by case basis, receive funding and, consequently, be subject to assessment, as the 2015 Draft Finance Law states ¹⁷³.

¹⁶⁹ http://www.education.gouv.fr/pid25535/bulletin_officiel.html?cid_bo=57077

¹⁷⁰ <http://eduscol.education.fr/cid65923/politique-academique-et-interlocuteurs.html>

¹⁷¹ <http://www.ofqj.org/book/les-accords-de-mobilit>

¹⁷² <http://www.ofqj.org/book/r-gion-guadeloupe>

¹⁷³ http://www.jeunes.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/PLF_2015_DP_OK.pdf

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The support to the creation of partnerships and networks is not evaluated.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

In higher education, financial assistance for international mobility is available from the Ministry of Higher Education, for students wishing to take part in higher education abroad as part of their degree programme or complete an apprenticeship at the international level. Special scholarships for study in Europe are also available¹⁷⁴. The Regions may institute special mobility grants for young people from their territory¹⁷⁵. For bilateral cooperation projects, in particular Franco-German projects, funding is also available through the OFAJ and SFA, for teaching and vocational training. Point I.2.6.1 of the Circular on field trips and longer educational trips in lower and upper secondary schools lists the other sources of funding available for optional educational trips. These can also be applied for by individuals wishing to take part in mobility. The DAREIC (délégués académiques aux relations européennes et internationales) in each Academy is a source of support for establishments; it informs and guides them with regard to grant opportunities¹⁷⁶.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

There are some data and statistics at national, even at regional level, sometime some studies, but there's no real evaluation.

¹⁷⁴ <http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000019498876>

¹⁷⁵ See the French euroguidance website <http://www.euroguidance-france.org/financer-sa-mobilite/les-aides-regionales/>

¹⁷⁶ http://www.education.gouv.fr/pid25535/bulletin_officiel.html?cid_bo=57077

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

The Ministry of Education provides a whole range of information about mobility, specifically for education professionals. The programmes are presented by user type. They provide professionals with information about the target populations for mobility, the length of the programmes, the aims, funding, operators and reference documents¹⁷⁷. In addition, a portal run by each "Academie" (education district) sets out a policy and action plan to develop its European and international dimension and runs a full-fledged cooperation policy built on core concepts such as mobility for all players and openness to the international community by institutions

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

There is no evaluation of this policy.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

France has actions to support IVET providers and companies in the creation of partnerships. It also has actions to fund learners and provide companies, institutions and staff with financial and non-financial support. However no evaluation of these policies is in place. Addressing the issue of policy evaluations in this area could be considered in future, in order to better enhance the policies for the international learning mobility of IVET learners.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

France provides IVET learners with information and guidance on international learning mobility. Coordination of the existing provision is ensured countrywide. The creation of coordination framework along with increases in budgetary support to information and guidance providers is part of the improvement actions undertaken in recent past. A

¹⁷⁷ <http://eduscol.education.fr/pid24438/liste-des-programmes-de-mobilite-par-public.html>

study/research activity is also in place to analyse the mobility policy including information and guidance. For future progress, it could be considered linking the coordination system for information with that for guidance thus making sure that the guidance provision also covers the topic of international mobility in a coordinated way. Putting in place a regular evaluation procedure for the improvement of the provision could be considered as well.

In the thematic area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, France has a clear policy intention to integrate mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes. It has taken measures to facilitate mobility through smoothing entry of students from third countries, alleviating the administrative burdens (Campus France) induced by arranging mobility, and easing the mobility of minor learners. These measures apply to all students including IVET learners. However, the country lacks targets for international learning mobility in IVET. In future, outlining national qualitative or quantitative target could help raise the awareness of users and stakeholders on the issue of mobility and the need to further enhance it.

Regarding Recognition of Learning Outcomes, the existing mechanisms for the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET learners have limited scope. The mechanisms in place apply to credit points, units and qualifications. They are not coordinated countrywide and are not subject to regulatory time frame as regards requests processing. The country has taken actions for the visibility of contact points for information on recognition, but these actions are not evaluated. The EU tools for transparency, mobility and recognition (i.e. the Europass Mobility Document, the Europass Certificate Supplement, ECVET, the EQF/NQF and the Learning Outcomes approach) are in use in the country, but it is unclear whether this use extends to IVET international mobility. Addressing the drawbacks in this area could help enhance the international learning mobility of IVET learners in future. It could be considered putting in place a general and systematic approach to recognition of IVET learning outcomes acquired abroad; extending the range of learning components taken into account in the recognition process (i.e. including courses, modules and programmes); ensuring that the recognition mechanisms are nation-wide coordinated, user-friendly and time-framed. Putting in place a regular evaluation procedure for the visibility policy regarding contact points for information on recognition would be a progress too. Finally making sure that the EU tools are in use also in the context of IVET international mobility could be considered too.

Finally, in the area of Partnerships and Funding, France has actions to support IVET providers and companies in the creation of partnerships. It also has actions to fund learners and provide companies, institutions and staff with financial and non-financial support. However no evaluation of

these policies is in place. Setting policy evaluations in this area could be considered in future, in order to better enhance the policies for the international learning mobility of IVET learners.

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IVET levels covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary
- Post-secondary non-tertiary

The following information covers to a very large extent initial VET on upper secondary level (ISCED 4). Only a few apprentices and VET-students are in parallel enrolled in tertiary courses (ISCED 5).

A study¹⁷⁸ published in 2011 by the National Agency at the BIBB showed that from 2007 to 2009, about 23.500 apprentices and full-time VET students were transnationally mobile every year. The most relevant subgroups from about 40% each where the learners funded by the European education programme (Leonardo da Vinci) and those financed by private funds only, mostly by the enterprises. The following two mobility schemes covering both 8% of the mobile learners were bilateral federal programs funded by the Ministry of Education and Research and a set of mobility programs financed by chambers and foundations. The missing percent to 100 were covered by ESF and other smaller initiatives.

Main schemes for international IVET mobility in Germany

Mobility scheme	Source of funds	Target group
Erasmus+	European	Initial VET Continus VET VET-Staff
Deutsch Französisches Sekretariat (German-French)	National	Initial VET
Chambers, Fondations, others	Mostly private	Initial VET and others

¹⁷⁸ Friedrich, Werner; Körbel, Markus 2011: Verdeckte Mobilität in der beruflichen Bildung https://www.na-bibb.de/service/publikationen/detailansicht.html?tt_products%5BbackPID%5D=82&tt_products%5Bproduct%5D=49&cHash=3d1eef2bbc0d51b2a02075134e55d915

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

There is a mechanism to provide information and guidance to IVET-learners (apprentices in the Dual System and full-time students in VET-schools): The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) has established about 25 years ago an office providing transparent information and guidance to IVET-learners on opportunities for learning abroad, i.e. the Information and Guidance Service for International Mobility in VET (IBS)¹⁷⁹. The IBS is located at the National Agency Education for Europe at the Federal Institut for VET (Nationale Agentur Bildung für Europa beim Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, NA at BIBB). NA at BIBB is also in charge of implementing Erasmus+ in the VET sector in Germany.

IBS covers VET-learners individual information and guidance, connecting individuals to regional or sectorial counsellors for further in depth guidance on mobility opportunities, guidance in finding financial support and an internet database for programmes supporting VET-learning abroad. The service is provided to all VET learners in initial and continuous VET as well as to employees looking for an international CVET opportunity. The office supports also employers and schools looking for advice with respect to their international VET-activities. The service is provided by internet, e-mail, telephone and on education fairs.

About 40% of all transitional IVET mobility in Germany is funded by the Erasmus+ programme. Complementary to the IBS, the Erasmus+ programme provides information and guidance to IVET learners directly. Therefore a website dedicated to IVET learners was launched in 2015¹⁸⁰.

Complementary to the activities funded by the BMBF, the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) funds the initiative "Training without Borders", a structure of about 35 mobility counsellors located since 2009 at the different regional chambers of craft as well as at the

¹⁷⁹ Informations- und Beratungsstelle für Auslandsaufenthalte in der Berufsbildung, IBS: http://www.na-bibb.de/wer_wir_sind/aufgaben_und_leistungen/ibs_informations_und_beratungsstelle_fuer_auslandsaufenthalte_in_der_beruflichen_bildung.html

¹⁸⁰ <http://www.machmehrausdeinerausbildung.de/> , only in German

chambers of industry and commerce¹⁸¹. The mobility counsellors support enterprises as well as apprentices in initiating and realizing their international training activities. The services are focused on enterprises and apprentices but address partly also VET-schools and VET-students in full time IVET. The support is given in meeting, by internet, e-mail and phone.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

Countrywide coordination of the IVET information and guidance mechanism is ensured. The National Agency at BIBB provides the service (IBS and Erasmus+) under the direct supervisory control of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. NA at BIBB is member of the advisory board of the initiative "Training without Borders", which enhances coordination between the three main providers of information and guidance for IVET mobility, i.e. IBS, Erasmus+ and Training Without Borders.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

Support to international mobility is expressed in the federal act on VET in §2 and §76¹⁸². §2 (3) states: "Parts of initial training may be completed abroad if this serves the purpose of training. The total duration of such training abroad shall not exceed one fourth of the duration of training specified in the initial training regulations". §76 (3) says: "Initial training undergone abroad pursuant to §2 subsection (3) shall be supervised and supported by the competent body in an appropriate manner. If the duration of a period of initial training abroad exceeds four weeks, a plan agreed with the competent body shall be required."

The general objective of the federal act to support international mobility in VET has been specified by a recommendation of the Deutsche Bundestag in 2013 defining a national benchmark for mobility in IVET: In 2020 at least 10% of all apprentices graduating in the Dual System should have had a learning experience abroad¹⁸³.

The Coalition treaty between CDU/CSU and SPD issued in February 2014 states: "Our apprentices and trained specialists should be able to move

¹⁸¹ <http://www.mobilitaetscoach.de/>

¹⁸² http://www.bmbf.de/pubRD/BBiG_englisch_050805.pdf

¹⁸³ http://www.bmbf.de/pubRD/BBiG_englisch_050805.pdf , page 5

successfully in international markets and develop intercultural skills. As a result, we want to double the proportion of young people who spend time abroad during their training”¹⁸⁴.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

An initiative regarding the quality of guidance of apprentices consisted in amending in 2009 the Instructor Aptitude Ordinance¹⁸⁵. The reform required instructors to have the competence to assess whether parts of a vocational training can be realized abroad (see § 3 (2) 6.). This extension aimed at giving more advice on international mobility to apprentices directly from the instructor in charge and not only from external experts.

A persistent complaint of apprentices is however that they did only hear by chance that learning abroad is possible and supported. In order to further strengthen information for potential participants, a new website co-funded by Germany and the European Union and dedicated especially to apprentices and VET students was launched in 2015. It shows how they can find individual access to the Erasmus+ VET mobility, the by far largest programme for VET mobility¹⁸⁶.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

The newly launched website for apprentices will be subject to a customer survey. The Instructor Aptitude Ordinance has been evaluated in several studies since 2009 but the aspect of internationalization was not subject to these studies.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

Information on international mobility in IVET is largely spread via internet, newsletters, publication of best practice, press, information events, education and HR fairs and co-operation with relevant

¹⁸⁴ http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_36853-544-2-30.pdf?140820093605 , page 20

¹⁸⁵ Ausbildereignungsverordnung –AEVO, http://www.bmbf.de/pubRD/aevo_banz.pdf , available only in German

¹⁸⁶ <http://www.machmehrausdeinerausbildung.de/> , only in German

stakeholders. The information is adapted to the specific target groups. To a limited extent enterprises and VET schools are also addressed directly. Guidance is provided via internet, handbooks, e-mail, telephone and mobility meetings.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

Germany provides information and guidance on IVET learners' international mobility. The provision system is coordinated countrywide. Initiatives have been taken to improve the existing system, in particular in the form of a new information website that will be subject to monitoring through a user survey. Putting in place in future systematic and regular monitoring (including through user surveys), formulating recommendations, implementing them and assessing the results, could be considered for further progress.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

There is a clear marked policy intention to integrate international mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes. This policy intention is expressed in the federal act on VET, the instructor aptitude ordinance and the national benchmark for international mobility mentioned in Sections 1.1.3 and 1.1.4 above. Based on this legislation, regulations and recommendations, there are further political initiatives supported by the relevant stakeholders in VET. Three of these initiatives can be mentioned here:

(a) The Vocational Education and Training Innovation Circle (Innovationskreis Berufliche Bildung) set up by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research formulated in its "10 Guidelines for Modernizing VET" (2007) the need for including international competences in the training regulations. The circle was composed by all relevant stakeholders

of VET in Germany¹⁸⁷. Recommendation 8 mentions the objective of doubling the volume of IVET mobility by 2015. This objective was already reached in 2012, based on the mobility figures 2007, when the recommendation was issued.

(b) The Internationalization Strategy of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research published in 2014 shows how the different initiatives for internationalization in Education and research are embedded into a national Strategy¹⁸⁸.

(c) The Bundesländer, being responsible for the VET schools in Germany, play an active part in supporting international mobility and internationalization of VET curricula. For example, the Ministry for education and cultural affairs of Lower Saxony gives VET schools the possibility to develop an international profile, including the curricula. This process within the schools is supported by a practical handbook provided by the regional ministry¹⁸⁹.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

A recommendation of the Deutsche Bundestag in 2013 defined a national benchmark for mobility in IVET: In 2020 at least 10% of all apprentices graduating in the Dual System should have had a learning experience abroad¹⁹⁰. On the qualitative side, the increased use of learning outcomes and ECVET are the main targets for IVET mobility. ECVET is implemented in Germany with a focus on international mobility and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research funds a national coordination centre for ECVET. It advises all programmes funding international mobility as well as VET providers active in mobility in how to use ECVET principles as a tool for quality assurance¹⁹¹.

¹⁸⁷ http://www.bmbf.de/pub/mitglieder_arbeitsverfahren_innovationskreis.pdf , http://www.bmbf.de/pub/leitlinien_innovationskreis.pdf , recommendation 8, page 10, document only in German

¹⁸⁸ http://www.bmbf.de/pub/International_Cooperatin_Action_Plan.pdf , e.g. page 99

¹⁸⁹ http://www.google.de/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CCEQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.mk.niedersachsen.de%2Fdownload%2F72758%2FInternationalisierung_als_Strategie_berufsbilden-der_Schulen.pdf&ei=dR1SVdz_Gof9ywPCqIDADA&usg=AFQjCNGnn_dICDNPtRH1QAPJ79vJt6peaQ , available only in German

¹⁹⁰ http://www.bmbf.de/pubRD/BBiG_englisch_050805.pdf , page 5

¹⁹¹ <http://www.ecvet-info.de/>

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

The measure put in place is a website providing transparent information for the criteria applied when deciding whether a visa should be issued to learners from third countries or not. The website is combined with a personal telephone hotline for personal advice¹⁹².

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

The federal act on VET regards learning abroad as a rule, not as an exception. Therefore no administrative request by the apprentice, the enterprise or the school is necessary. The need for paperwork comes to a large extent from qualitative aspects of the training (e.g. Memorandum of understanding with host institution, definition of learning outcomes, learning contract with participant, insurances). NA at BIBB and other sources provide learners¹⁹³ and VET institutes¹⁹⁴ with information on how to cope with these qualitative aspects in an efficient way.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

In Germany, the average age of apprentices when starting their training is 19,8 years. In 2012 27% of the apprentices starting a training were below 18 years. In most cases, the international part of the training activity takes place in the 2nd or 3rd year of training, as the learner needs to have already a set of relevant professional skills. In Erasmus+ VET about 5% of the learners are minors.

The school laws of the Bundesländer define the preconditions for minors to take part in activities outside the premises, which cover also international mobility. The most relevant preconditions are (a) parents' approval; and (b) close monitoring and guidance. Therefore the most

¹⁹² <http://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/for-qualified-professionals/training-learning/training/five-steps-to-working-in-germany/practice>

¹⁹³ <http://www.machmehrausdeinerausbildung.de/>

¹⁹⁴ <http://www.google.de/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CCgQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.dihk.de%2Fressourcen%2Fdowloads%2Fhandbuch-mobilitaet.pdf&ei=gjRSVdn4AcGysgGxuoCgBg&usq=AFQjCNG6SMUAS37nsNhu6EK9kMIQ-IOm9A>

relevant European and national programs provide financial support for accompanying persons in order to overcome this obstacle.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social security

Incoming apprentices and IVET students from the EU benefit from medical care through the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). Apprentices benefit from social security of employees¹⁹⁵.

Outgoing IVET-students benefit from social security coverage through the EHIC (as regards medical care), and parents or school insurance.

Labour protection

The relevant act for all employees is the working condition act¹⁹⁶. In addition, for minors, the Youth Health and Safety at Work Act¹⁹⁷ applies. Both acts are applied regardless of whether the person is an employee, an apprentice or a VET student realizing an internship and regardless of whether he or she is an EU or non-EU national.

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES" THEMATIC AREA

Germany has a clear and marked policy intention to integrate international learning experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes. It has also set quantitative and qualitative targets for international mobility in IVET. The country has also in place measures for facilitating the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries, reducing the administrative burdens generated by mobility

¹⁹⁵ - Health insurance: <http://www.sozialgesetzbuch-sgb.de/sgbv/5.html> , § 5 (1)

- Accident insurance: <http://www.sozialgesetzbuch-sgb.de/sgbvii/1.html> , § 10 (1) 2. As the training abroad is covered by the federal training act, the accident insurance covers also the international mobility

- Pension insurance: <http://www.sozialgesetzbuch-sgb.de/sgbvi/1.html> , §1 (1)

- Long term care insurance: <http://www.sozialgesetzbuch-sgb.de/sgbxi/1.html> , §1 (2)

- Unemployment insurance: <http://www.sozialgesetzbuch-sgb.de/sgbiii/1.html> , §24 (1)

- The legislation concerning maternity leave is regulated in the protection of mothers law: <http://www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/gesetze,did=3264.html>

¹⁹⁶ <http://www.bmas.de/DE/Service/Gesetze/arbschg.html>

¹⁹⁷ <http://www.bmas.de/DE/Service/Gesetze/jarbschg.html>

arrangements, and removing the obstacle to the movement of minors. Steps for further progress in future could consist in ensuring that the information services provided to learners to help them cope with the administrative burdens are felt by users as effective and sufficient.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

Recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility is regulated by law at national level.

Recognition is a prerequisite which has to be fulfilled ex ante sending an apprentice abroad. The federal act on VET supports learning periods abroad "if this serves the purpose of training". This imposes the obligation to the enterprise or training body to make sure that this relevance requirement is met.

As for the whole training the relevance and quality is supervised by the chambers: "Initial training undergone abroad pursuant to §2 subsection (3) shall be supervised and supported by the competent body in an appropriate manner. If the duration of a period of initial training abroad exceeds four weeks, a plan agreed with the competent body shall be required."

The training is supervised by the chambers and in case of a stay abroad the sending institution has to assure that competences relevant for the qualification (Beruf) are acquired throughout the whole training regardless whether it takes place in Germany or abroad. The stay abroad is integral part of the whole training. The assessment and recognition of learning outcomes is subject to the holistic final examination at the end of the training which covers the whole training regardless whether parts of it were realized abroad or not. Therefore in Germany a separate recognition process for competences acquired abroad does not exist.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

IVET learners involved in international learning mobility have easy access to recognition of learning acquired abroad. Easiness comes from the sending institution ensuring that competences relevant for the qualification are acquired during the mobility stay, so recognition is guaranteed (see Section 3.1.1.1 above).

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in the country applies to:

- Courses
- Credit points
- Units
- Modules
- Programmes
- Qualifications/diplomas/degrees.

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

The approach to recognition that applies in Germany is regulated by law and is countrywide coordinated.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

The recognition approach that applies in Germany is based on the principle the sending institution ensures that competences relevant for the qualification are acquired, so recognition is guaranteed (see Section 3.1.1.1 above). There is therefore no recognition process, and no need for a time limit to process recognition requests.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

In the approach that applies in Germany, recognition ensues from the sending institution ensuring that competences relevant for the qualification are acquired during the mobility stay (see Section 3.1.1.1 above). The learner does not have to request recognition, so there is no need for contact points and visibility policy thereof.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

There is no visibility policy, so no evaluation of it.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Europass Mobility document is widely used in Germany. About 24.000 documents are issued every year. Within Erasmus+, almost every participant receives a Europass mobility document. The specific value of the Europass Mobility document is twofold. On the one hand it is important for the mobile IVET learner to make transparent which learning outcomes in the context of his qualification (Beruf) were acquired abroad. This is relevant although the recognition is assured as described above. These descriptions of learning outcomes are interesting for potential future employers or further training institutions. On the other hand learners acquire very often competences which go beyond the defined qualification they aim to achieve. Especially in this case, the Europass Mobility is the relevant instrument to make these additional competences visible and transparent.

The Europass Certificate Supplement has been developed in Germany for all 330 qualifications (Berufe) defined on the basis of the federal training act. In addition about 50 full time qualifications provided under the auspices of the different Länder are finalized. There are mainly four different situations in which the Supplement is helpful:

- For guidance, as a short standardized description of a qualification;
- As a multilingual document to enable professionals and learners to display in brief the core of a qualification;
- It is essential for graduates preparing to be mobile on the labour market;

- It contains essential information for institutions abroad who are in charge of recognizing foreign qualifications.

In 2012, about 74.000 Europass Certificate Supplements were downloaded from the dedicated server.

ECVET is largely used for IVET mobility as a tool for quality assurance. The ECVET instruments as ECVET Memorandum of Understanding and ECVET Learning agreement increase the quality of preparation and implementation in IVET mobility. In addition these documents are essential as they are a good basis for a precise and detailed Europass Mobility document at the end of the mobility stay. ECVET is used by many enterprises and VET providers. In Erasmus+ in 2014, about 70 promoters with a total of about 5.000 participants in IVET used ECVET.

EQF/NQF and its paradigm of learning outcomes and the descriptors of competences is the basis for visibility. In May 2012 the German Qualification Framework (DQR) was established¹⁹⁸. For VET institutions and IVET Learners, the orientation provided by the EQF /NQF approach is essential as they are able to display and understand on which level a specific qualification is located. For mobility promoters the framework is essential for the setup of Memorandum of Understanding and Learning agreements.

EQAVET, DEQAVET: The increasingly marked shortage of skilled staff in the German labour market makes it necessary to reach agreement with other European Union member states on a shared culture of quality assurance in vocational training. Therefore Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQUAVET, DEQAVET) is of general importance also for international mobility. Nevertheless this European process is not yet of practical relevance for the process of visibility and recognition.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

Germany utilises a countrywide coordinated mechanism that ensures recognition of learning acquired during mobility. The approach ensures easiness of access to learners. It avoids needing a time-frame for processing requests after the mobility stay, and carrying out actions for the visibility of contact points. Recognition in Germany applies to all types of learning components (courses, credit points, units, modules,

¹⁹⁸ <http://www.dqr.de/index.php>

programmes and qualifications / diplomas / degrees). The country makes use of all five EU tools considered in this review (i.e. Europass Mobility Document, Europass Certificate Supplement, ECVET, EQF/NQF and the learning outcomes approach) for the visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The federal ministry in charge of the federal act on vocational education and training is the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). Based on the international dimension of this act, the national benchmark for mobility in VET and the internationalization strategy of the BMBF, it has established a central Information and Guidance Service for International Mobility in VET (Informations- und Beratungsstelle für Auslandsaufenthalte in der Berufsbildung, IBS). One of their tasks is to support VET institutions in finding partners for international mobility.

Complementary to this service, the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) has established a network of counsellors for international mobility. They are located at the chambers and among other tasks they support enterprises in finding international partners for international mobility activities. Coordination between the BMBF and BMWi initiative is realized as a representative of the National Agency at BIBB is a member of the steering committee of this network.

Germany has clearly an objective to increase the number of enterprises and VET institutes starting to be active in international VET mobility. The support in finding a partner is important to realize this objective. Within this frame, institutions starting or enlarging their international network are given access to the existing database supported by the EU¹⁹⁹. Furthermore the institutions are guided to verify if they could build on existing international contacts in their institutional context (e.g. town twins, sectorial or regional contacts). This approach leads often to better and quicker results than internet databases. There are different institutions providing support in partner finding which focus on different

¹⁹⁹ e.g. http://llp.teamwork.fr/partner_search/home.php ; <http://www.euroapprenticeship.eu/en/home.html>

target groups as described above. The aim is to realize a one stop shop and avoid the redirections of customers. The main achievements are the increasing mobility figures and the increased number of VET institutions having international partners and cooperation.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The institutions participating in the policy for supporting partnerships and networks have internal evaluations concerning the services they provide. These cover also the information and guidance concerning the support of partner finding. Some of the institutions also have evaluations based on customer surveys. The results of evaluations and surveys are used to improve the offered service.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

The strategy to support learners in finding financial support for their learning period abroad is threefold. Firstly, financial support is provided through European and national programs (e.g. Erasmus+ and Deutsch Französisches Sekretariat). Secondly, IBS provides transparent information about approximately 50 different small programmes from public and private bodies offering financial support to IVET learners. Finally there is the strategy to inform enterprises about the advantages and results of sending IVET learners abroad in order to encourage them to finance transnational mobility on their own. About 40% of all motility stays abroad are financed directly by the enterprises.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The institutions mentioned in answer 4.1.2.1.1 have internal evaluations concerning their services. These cover also the actions to provide IVET learners with financial support. Some of the institutions also have evaluations based on customer surveys. The results of evaluations and surveys are used to improve the offered service.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

The Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) has established a network of counsellors for international mobility. They are located at the chambers and especially dedicated to enterprises, their trainers and apprentices. Coordination between the BMBF and BMWI initiative is ensured through a representative of the National Agency at BIBB participating in the steering committee of this network.

VET professionals, enterprises and VET schools also receive tailor-made information on international mobility via internet, especially a database for individuals and institutions to find financial support provided by projects and programmes. Individual support and assistance is also provided via e-mail, telephone, and on education fairs.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

The institutions mentioned in answer 4.1.2.2.1 have internal evaluations concerning their services. These cover also the support for organizing mobility projects. Some of the institutions also have evaluations based on customer surveys. The results of evaluations and surveys are used to improve the offered service.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

Germany has a policy for providing companies and VET institutions with support in the creation of partnerships and networks for international mobility activities in IVET, and in organising mobility projects. Actions for funding learners' mobility are also in place. All these policies are evaluated.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

Germany provides information and guidance on IVET learners' international mobility. The provision system is coordinated countrywide. Initiatives have been taken to improve the existing system, in particular in the form of a new information website that will be subject to monitoring through a user survey. Putting in place in future systematic and regular monitoring (including through user surveys), formulating recommendations, implementing them and assessing the results, could be considered for further progress.

In the thematic area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, Germany has a clear and marked policy intention to integrate international learning experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes. It has also set quantitative and qualitative targets for international mobility in IVET. The country has also in place measures for facilitating the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries, reducing the administrative burdens generated by mobility arrangements, and removing the obstacle to the movement of minors. Steps for further progress in future could consist in ensuring that the information services provided to learners to help them cope with the administrative burdens are felt by users as effective and sufficient.

Regarding the area of Recognition of Learning Outcomes, Germany utilises a countrywide coordinated mechanism that ensures recognition of learning acquired during mobility. The approach ensures easiness of access to users. It avoids needing a time-frame for processing requests after the mobility stay, and carrying out actions for the visibility of contact points. Recognition in Germany applies to all types of learning components (courses, credit points, units, modules, programmes and qualifications / diplomas / degrees). The country makes use of all five EU tools considered in this review (i.e. Europass Mobility Document, Europass Certificate Supplement, ECVET, EQF/NQF and the learning outcomes approach) for the visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes.

Finally, in the area of Partnerships and Funding, Germany has a policy for providing companies and VET institutions with support in the creation of partnerships and networks for international mobility activities in IVET, and in organising mobility projects. Actions for funding learners' mobility are also in place. All these policies are evaluated.

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IVET level covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary
- Post-secondary non-tertiary

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

In Greece, IVET mobility opportunities are provided in the frame of Erasmus+, which inspires mobility actions for all groups of young people. The Programme promotes widespread mobility and encourages networking between the relevant organisations in order to ensure a coordinated approach to motivating young people. In the framework of Erasmus+ there are tools aimed to inform and motivate IVET learners.

The Erasmus+ Hellenic National Agency²⁰⁰ provides information to IVET learners indirectly, via the schools and vocational training centers that implement mobility projects.

Apart from the training providers, IVET learners receive information and guidance for IVET mobility also from EOPPEP (the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance)²⁰¹, which hosts the National Euroguidance Center and is responsible for vocational guidance in Greece. In this framework, IVET learners receive information, guidance and counselling to make international mobility decisions in relation to their careers. The Euroguidance Center within EOPPEP has also published the “Mobility Guide to Europe for students, youth and anyone looking for opportunities to study and work”, a self-help tool about international learning mobility opportunities that is distributed to IVET learners and other potential stakeholders.

²⁰⁰ IKY - The State Scholarships Foundation: <https://www.iky.gr/en/>

²⁰¹ <http://www.eoppep.gr/index.php/en/> EOPPEP is an all-encompassing statutory body investing on better quality and more efficient and reliable lifelong learning services in Greece. According to the law 3879/21-09-2010, it operates as the national statutory body representing Greece in European Networks concerning skills, European transparency and mobility topics. EOPPEP is responsible for the National Qualifications Framework, the National Europass Centre and the National Reference Point for Quality Assurance.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

The mechanism for information and guidance provision on IVET mobility to IVET learners is not coordinated in Greece.

However, the provision of information for mobility opportunities within Erasmus+ is coordinated by the Erasmus+ Hellenic National Agency. The Erasmus+ Hellenic NA helps VET organisations to integrate their work with that of stakeholders in learning mobility in order to ensure a clear, coherent and simple flow of information. It cooperates with the European Commission to further develop learning mobility opportunities by increasing the number of national information resources that citizens can directly access, for example through web portals and other web services and by supporting the beneficiaries with all the information and counselling services needed through events and conferences that take place at national level.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

The Official Government Gazette 2769/2-12-2011 refers to young people in Europe in all learning and training contexts, at school and in vocational training (school-based or apprenticeships). This document includes the objective of promoting international learning mobility in IVET. In addition, based on law 4186/17-09-2013, IVET curricula can link learning outcomes with credits, in implementation of the National Qualifications Framework and ECVET. The acquisition of credits allows both the equivalence of qualifications and mobility between different educational systems and the various European Union countries.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

The country has a multi-faceted set of initiatives to internationalise vocational education and training. However, there are no specific policy actions aimed to improve the information and guidance provision on international learning mobility for IVET learners. It is expected that the new strategic framework for VET that is currently underway will include specific guidelines on this subject.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

As there are no specific policy actions to improve the information and guidance provision on international learning mobility for IVET learners, there is no evaluation thereof.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

Information and assistance on IVET mobility is provided to companies and IVET institutions by the Erasmus+ Hellenic National Agency. IVET providers, host companies, and coordinating organisations (from the sending and host countries) are informed through thematic and technical meetings and conferences, and publications that bring together the know-how and experience of organisations that have worked together as partners in projects.

Erasmus+ Hellenic National Agency offers information and assistance that draws on the management of such projects and the experience of all life cycle of projects, as well as the contacts that it has with the world of work and potential beneficiaries and stakeholders, for instance through thematic seminars.

Among the actions taken by The Hellenic NA to provide information and assistance are the following:

- Info Days and seminars all over Greece, from the city centres to the islands, with the aim of informing and engaging the local community about the opportunities and the benefits of Erasmus+ programmes on IVET learning mobility;
- Monitoring visits in the frame of mobility projects that are in course of implementation;
- Synergies between stakeholders and social partners to encourage involvement in IVET mobility and apprenticeships.

Information and assistance to IVET providers and companies is also provided by other organisations such as EOPPEP, and through Erasmus+ promoters appointed by the Regional Directorates of Education.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE “INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE” THEMATIC AREA

In Greece, IVET learners receive information and guidance on international learning mobility opportunities through their schools and training providers, who in turn receive information and assistance from the Erasmus+ Hellenic National Agency. In addition, the Euroguidance Center within EOPPEP (the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance) also provides career-oriented information, guidance and counselling on mobility to students. Although the information provision for mobility opportunities within Erasmus+ is coordinated by the Erasmus+ Hellenic National Agency, there is no mechanism to coordinate all the IVET mobility related information and guidance mechanisms that may exist across the country. Although Greece has taken a set of initiatives for the internationalisation of VET, the country has not taken specific policy actions aimed to improve the provision of information and guidance on IVET mobility for learners. In the future, it could be considered putting in place an evaluated improvement plan to ensure that IVET learners receive substantial information and guidance on IVET mobility; and coordinating countrywide the overall provision of information and guidance.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

The institutional framework for ECVET development in Greece is defined very accurately in the Law 3879/2010 on the “development of lifelong learning and other provisions”. Among other objectives, the law supports adult vocational training and general education as two equal important pillars of lifelong learning. It provides for the establishment of means and standards for the development and quality upgrade of lifelong learning through the establishment of a coherent national assessment and validation framework for all types of adult training and general education. Also, it provides for the establishment of a national framework for the recognition of qualifications and for the validation of knowledge, skills and

competences.

In the context of the previous Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) and its successor Erasmus+, work-based learning (WBL), apprenticeships and company placements can be carried out abroad through mobility projects. There is an ongoing effort and a tendency to integrate key elements of IVET mobility in the curricula of vocational programmes, and to make these programmes more company-oriented. The curricula are top-down oriented and defined by the Ministry of Education, but there is some small flexibility and vocational schools and institutions can integrate and enrich their curricula with such elements. The new strategic framework for VET will include specific guidelines on this.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

In Greece, qualitative targets for IVET mobility are set by the National Agency for Erasmus+. Some of these targets are:

- the implementation of projects that adopt key elements of work-based learning and promote work-based learning activities;
- projects that integrate mobility in the curricula of IVET programmes;
- projects that promote apprenticeship actions and company-oriented projects that promote innovative VET methodologies.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

Information not available at this time.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

The country has not taken measures to reduce administrative burdens that may hinder the international mobility of IVET learners²⁰². Based on

²⁰² Other types of supporting measures have been taken however. According to the Erasmus+ Programme Guide, VET learners with special needs or disadvantaged backgrounds may be accompanied by a person that will support them during the mobility period. There is usually one accompanying person per group of learners carrying out a traineeship in the same receiving organisation.

the experience of the National Agency for Erasmus+, some measures that would be needed in the future are the following:

- The existence of a national data-base of host organisations;
- The need for a clear, flexible framework with directives regarding the financial management of international mobility, at national level;
- The establishment of offices for information on European Programmes at the level of VET providers and stakeholders. There are some VET providers (Erasmus+ beneficiaries) that hold such offices.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

No specific measures have been taken so far to remove the legal obstacles to the mobility of minors. Some obstacles to the mobility of minor IVET learners are:

- according to the law, vocational schools have to follow a specific procedure in order to book air tickets or pay for other related services for groups of IVET learners by making a declaration at first, choose the most economical offer from the travel agents, and inform the Regional Directorate of Education;
- the European Health Insurance Card for IVET learners is connected to some conditions and provisions of the Social Insurance Institution (IKA) and this can give rise to extra bureaucracy.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social security

The legal acts applicable to the social security of IVET learners involved in international learning mobility are the following:

- The Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the coordination of social security systems;
- The Regulation (EC) No 987/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 September 2009 on laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems;
- The Regulation (EC) No 988/2009 amending Regulation (EC) No

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883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems, and determining the content of its Annexes; and

- The Circular No 28/2010 of the Social Insurance Institute (IKA – ETAM) on guidelines for the implementation of Community provisions of Regulations (EC) No 883/2004 and 987/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council (entry into force 1 May 2010).

Labour protection

Information not available at this time.

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE “ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES” THEMATIC AREA

Limited information is currently available on the topics covered in the thematic area of Administrative and Institutional Issues. The country appears to have a policy orientation towards integrating international learning mobility periods in the curricula of IVET learners. The curricula are defined by the Ministry of Education, but there is some flexibility and VET providers can integrate elements of IVET mobility in the curricula. The country also has qualitative targets for IVET mobility set by the National Agency for Erasmus+. In the future, Greece could consider identifying the possible obstacles to mobility, for example by conducting a systematic survey or study. Where necessary, measures could be taken to facilitate the incoming mobility of IVET learners from third countries, to address the legal obstacles to the mobility of minors and to reduce administrative barriers for all groups of IVET learners, both outgoing and incoming.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

The methods and processes to establish the extent to which a learner has attained particular knowledge, skills and competence on the basis of a determined set of learning outcomes have not been officially adopted yet. There is no official credit point system in place.

However, in practice, some ECVET principles and documentation are used in mobility projects, such as the learning agreements, and the Memoranda of Understanding.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

Learning acquired abroad by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility may be recognised, but the process is felt by users as somewhat difficult.

The learning agreement is a document that sets the conditions for a concrete period of mobility. It specifies, for each learner, which learning outcomes need to be achieved and how these will be assessed, and recognised. The learning agreement is signed among the sending organisation, the host organisation and the IVET learner that participates in the project, before the mobility activities take place.

After the completion of the training programme abroad, the IVET learner receives a certificate of attendance from the host organisation for the training period abroad. The Europass Mobility document is also used for the recognition of the competences acquired during the mobility period.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in the country applies to:

- Qualifications/diplomas/degrees
- Programmes
- Modules
- Units

- Credit points
- Courses

The process of attesting achieved learning outcomes through the awarding of units or qualifications is not officially applicable yet, although the National Agency tries to promote and familiarise the VET providers/stakeholders with ECVET terminology.

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

The approach to recognition is not coordinated countrywide in Greece.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

The recognition process is not bound to a regulatory time limit.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

No actions have been taken for the visibility of contact points for information on recognition.

The main contact point for information on recognition is EOPPEP (the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance).

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

As there are no visibility actions, there is no evaluation.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Europass Mobility is a personal document that records the individual's participation in a mobility experience in another country of the European Union, through mobility programmes such as Leonardo da Vinci, Erasmus+ etc. The document certifies the mobility period of the participant abroad, for example for a work placement in a company, for a period of education or training in a vocational institute etc. The Europass Mobility document is issued by the National Europass Centre within EOPPEP (the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance).

The Europass Certificate Supplement is provided to people who hold a vocational education and training qualification. The Certificate Supplement provides additional information regarding the skills and competences acquired, the level of the certificate and access opportunities to the next level of education. This way, the qualification can be better understood by employers and institutions outside the issuing country. It is issued by EOPPEP.

ECVET is considered to be the central tool for quality assurance. In the context of mobility projects, some ECVET principles and documentation are used, such as the Learning agreements, and the Memoranda of Understanding.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

In the thematic area Recognition of Learning Outcomes, several issues should be further clarified and several steps ahead could be suggested for Greece. Although learning acquired abroad by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility may be recognised, the process may be difficult. It appears that all learning components achieved during learning mobility abroad can be recognised, however this aspect is yet to be confirmed. The main contact point for information on the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad is EOPPEP (the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance), but it appears that no actions have been taken to make this contact point visible. Other aspects that could be considered in the future are the countrywide coordination of the recognition approach, and setting a regulatory time limit for the recognition process. From the range of EU tools for visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes, only the

Europass Mobility document and ECVET seem to be used in the context of mobility. Better exploiting the other tools – the EQF/NQF, the Europass Certificate Supplement, and the learning outcomes approach – could be a way to further enhance the recognition of learning obtained during mobility periods and to increase the attractiveness of mobility actions among IVET learners.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

Information not available at this time.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

Information not available at this time.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

Information not available at this time.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Information not available at this time.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

Information not available at this time.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

Information not available at this time.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE “PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING” THEMATIC AREA

Analysis could not be carried out due to the lack of country information in this area.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

Greece has mechanisms for information and guidance provision on international learning mobility for IVET learners. This provision is ensured through schools and training providers participating in mobility projects, and through the Euroguidance Center within EOPPEP (the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance). The main points for future consideration in this thematic area are related to the coordination of information and guidance provision and the lack of specific policy actions aimed to improve information and guidance provision on IVET mobility for learners. In the future, Greece could consider putting in place a well-defined and evaluated improvement plan, to ensure that IVET learners receive substantial information and guidance on IVET mobility, in a countrywide coordinated manner.

Limited information is currently available on the topics covered in the thematic area of Administrative and Institutional Issues. The country appears to have a policy orientation towards integrating international learning mobility periods in the curricula of IVET learners, as VET providers have some flexibility to integrate elements of IVET mobility in the curricula. The country also has qualitative targets for IVET mobility set by the National Agency for Erasmus+. In the future, Greece could

consider identifying the possible obstacles to mobility, for example by conducting a systematic survey or study. Where necessary, measures should be taken to facilitate the incoming mobility of IVET learners from third countries, to address the legal obstacles to the mobility of minors and to reduce administrative barriers for all groups of IVET learners.

In the thematic area Recognition of Learning Outcomes, several issues should be better clarified and several steps ahead could be suggested for Greece. Learning acquired by IVET learners during learning mobility periods may be recognised, but the process may be difficult. It should be further confirmed whether or not all learning components achieved during learning mobility abroad can be recognised. Some aspects that could be considered in the future are the countrywide coordination of the recognition approach, and setting a regulatory time limit for the recognition process. Making the system easier to use by learners could be considered as well. The country has a contact point for information on recognition of learning acquired abroad, but a step ahead would be to make sure it is visible to all target groups. In addition, better exploiting the full range of EU tools, including the EQF/NQF, the Europass Certificate Supplement, and the learning outcomes approach, in the context of IVET mobility could be a way to further enhance the recognition of learning obtained during mobility periods.

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IVET levels covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary
- Post-secondary non-tertiary

In Hungary upper secondary, post-secondary and tertiary level VET all play a significant part both in formal school education and in adult training. In full time school-based education, 29,610 students received a vocational qualification at upper secondary level (in vocational schools), 22,268 at post-secondary level (in secondary vocational schools) and 8820 in higher education VET in 2012²⁰³. Vocational practice is part of the curricula at all levels. Thus, in theory, work placements abroad can be relevant with regard to all three levels. However, information presented in this fiche will only cover upper and post-secondary VET.

Mobility opportunities at upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary level

A significant part of IVET mobility is carried out within the framework of the Erasmus+ Programme and its predecessors. Around 2300 IVET learners per year benefit from EU funded mobility grants, amounting to around EUR 4.5-5 million in total. Mobility projects are also organised outside the framework of Erasmus+, typically by VET schools, foundations, and national or foreign individual initiatives. However, due to a lack of comprehensive information, this will not be addressed in detail in this fiche.

Mobility opportunities at tertiary level

Higher education VET is a new type of training programme introduced in 2013, which is different from its predecessor 'higher level VET' in that it can only be provided in a higher education institution and the awarded qualification is no longer one listed in the National Qualifications Register. It also includes a mandatory one-semester-long external vocational practice. However tertiary level VET will not be covered in this fiche as information on it is not available: vocational practice abroad has seldom been organised in the previous 'higher level VET' programmes, and no students have yet graduated from the new HE VET programmes

²⁰³ Statistical Yearbook of Education 2012/2013,
http://2010-2014.kormany.hu/download/c/93/21000/Oktat%C3%A1si_%C3%89vk%C3%B6nyv_2012.pdf

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

A significant part of IVET mobility is organised within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme. The Erasmus+ programme itself is supervised by the Hungarian National Authority (Ministry of Human Resources, responsible for school education and higher education) in cooperation with the Ministry of National Economy (responsible for IVET and CVET). The National Agency for the Erasmus+ Programme is the Tempus Public Foundation (TPF). TPF is a non-profit organization established in 1996 by the Hungarian Government; its main task is to manage international cooperation programmes and special projects in the field of education, training and EU-related issues. TPF is coordinating 4 fields of the Erasmus+ Programme (i.e. school education, VET, higher education and adult learning. The Youth and sport sector is run by another national agency). It supports initiatives aiming at the modernization and quality improvement of education, training and human resources development; encouraging international cooperation and mobility; and strengthening the European dimension in the fields above.

The Erasmus+ programme serves as a mechanism for information on and assistance in IVET mobility. The National Agency's primary target groups are VET schools, organisations active in the field of VET and companies. For IVET learners, TPF organises "mobility classes" targeted at secondary school students. In parallel, the National Europass Centre holds annual consultation sessions for the same target group. In addition, the NA participates in education and job fairs, and publishes online guidelines for IVET learners that contain practical information on the most important aspects of the mobility experience.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

There is no countrywide coordination of the provision of information on international mobility. The Erasmus+ Programme is supervised by a National Authority (Ministry of Human Resources) and is coordinated by a National Agency (TPF), however several other mobility schemes exist outside this frame and operate independently from it.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

There is no legal provision for promoting international learning mobility in IVET.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

The National Agency annually revises and renews its information activities according to the target group's needs and the Programme's directives. Based on feedbacks given via online evaluation forms after each event, the NA modifies its information and assistance activities where necessary, for example by sharing more good practices, applying new methods in events, publishing and distributing handbooks, etc.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

The Erasmus+ Programme as a whole is supervised by the Ministry of Human Resources. Annual monitoring reports are prepared on the progress of the programme, according to the guidelines and forms provided by the European Commission. The implementation of LLP / Erasmus+ (including information and assistance services as well) in Hungary is reviewed annually both by the European Commission and the National Authority (the latter involving also an independent audit body, besides its Internal Control Department). The checks have confirmed that the national authority acts in accordance with EC requirements, and fulfils the information and assistance tasks as required. In addition, the National Agency TPF has regular internal evaluations according to the ISO criteria. TPF also occasionally orders studies to evaluate specific parts of the programme and its effectiveness.

The evaluators of the reports (mostly EC and/or external audit body) draw up improvement actions where necessary, and the National Agency takes steps to incorporate these recommendations into its work programme (e.g.: increasing the number of information days in under-represented regions).

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

There are arrangements within the Erasmus+ Programme to give information on IVET international mobility to VET providers and/or companies. Provision of information and assistance is an important aspect of TPF's annual work plan and is carried out through information days, running stands at different educational fairs and events, and organising the special Tempus Café for Companies that tries to reach and involve companies via tailor-made events.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

Hungary provides IVET learners with information on international learning mobility. However, this provision does not comprise a systematic coverage of personalised advice, counselling and guidance for mobility. The existing provision is also not coordinated countrywide. However, the National Agency for Erasmus+ (TPF) has an evaluation procedure to review annually its information events and improve them on an ongoing basis. For further progress in this area, it could be considered enhancing a mechanism for the provision of personalised advice, counselling and guidance to IVET learners for their international mobility. Developing a complete knowledge of all mobility schemes existing in the country, and coordinating countrywide their provision of information, advice and guidance to IVET learners for international mobility could be a first important step forward. Finally, extending the existing evaluation principles to the whole country provision of information and guidance for IVET learners' mobility would certainly bring Hungary closer to the full achievement of the "*Youth on the move*" Recommendation in this thematic area.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

There is no visible policy intention in Hungary to integrate international learning mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes. Nevertheless, such integration might and sometimes does happen in specific instances at institutional level (in local curricula) as a result of mobility projects and other international cooperation. It is to be noted, however, that the national framework curricula allow only limited space for freedom: only 10% of the local curriculum can be designed by the school itself and the other 90% must follow national regulations.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

Hungary has adopted the Council's recommendation on the benchmark for learning mobility in IVET, which means that by 2020 an EU average of at least 6% of 18-34 year olds with an initial vocational education and training qualification should have had an initial VET-related study or training period (including work placements) abroad lasting a minimum of two weeks, or less if documented by Europass. The LLP/Erasmus+ National Agency TPF also sets its own targets regarding IVET mobility every year in its work programme, based on its annual budget. According to that, the target is 2300 beneficiaries of IVET mobility funds for 2015, which can increase up to 3000 until 2020 provided that the grant amount planned for that activity remains as set before.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

Act II of 2007 on the Admission and Right of Residence of Third-Country Nationals and its modifications regulates the delivery of visas and residency permits also to IVET learners from third countries.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

No formal measures have been put in place, however one specific informal arrangement can be mentioned. Since the State became the maintainer of all schools (previously maintained by local governments) in 2013, there has been close communication and cooperation between TPF and the Klebelsberg Institution Maintenance Center IMC – the government agency through which the State exercises its maintainer rights – to find practical solutions for various administrative problems related to international mobility. One of the results of this cooperation is a guide for schools operated by Klebelsberg IMC that provides guidelines and recommendations on how to organise mobility activities (what type of contracts schools should use, the procedure of ordering travel documents, etc.). These guidelines were worked out in cooperation with TPF, and, as a result, they take into account international mobility granted from Erasmus+ funds as well.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

According to Hungarian legislation, minors are not restricted when travelling abroad. Only parental permission is necessary.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social security

Through the European Health Insurance Card, IVET students from EU countries involved in international mobility projects receive the same medical care as their counterparts in Hungary.

Labour protection

The VET Act (Law CLXXXVII. / 2011) defines rules on safety and labour standards. Incoming apprentices and IVET students benefit from the same labour and safety protection as their counterparts in the country (i.e. local IVET learners).

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE “ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES” THEMATIC AREA

Hungary has targets for IVET international mobility. It has taken steps to reduce the administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility abroad. Also, the constraints to the mobility of minors have been kept sufficiently low to avoid hampering their learning mobility. However, although it may be deemed that no measure to facilitate minors' mobility is needed because no difficulty was officially reported, there has not been any fully-fledged investigation targeted at checking the situation on the ground and surveying users' needs and stakeholders' views. In future, a user survey on the ground with respect to this aspect could be a valuable step forward to confirm whether facilitating measures would be useful or not, and open way to appropriate measures if proved necessary. A step that could also be considered for improvement in future consists in developing a clear policy intention to support the integration of mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes. It could also be made sure, e.g. through a users/stakeholders survey, whether the existing process for delivering visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries is easy enough or instead requires putting in place support for assisting incoming learners in their application process.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

Recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility is at the discretion of IVET providers.

According to the VET Act (Law CLXXXVII. / 2011, 27. §), it is the school principal's right to recognise learning outcomes from any formal, non-formal or informal prior learning. However, there are no centrally defined guidelines and recognition takes place at institutional level and might therefore vary case-by-case. In the case of Erasmus+ mobility, the sending and the host institution and the student use the model contract and its annexes provided by the European Commission.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

Most of IVET mobility takes place during summer, and IVET learners involved in international learning mobility usually have no problem with having the learning acquired abroad recognized towards the completion of (the whole or a part of) the compulsory summer practice. Schools may also recognise participation in a mobility project by giving marks in relevant subjects, and these are taken into account when the final marks at the end of the school year are given. However, national tests - in particular the final complex vocational exam that awards the vocational qualification - must be taken and passed under the same conditions as for regular (i.e. "non-mobile") IVET learners. Mobility cannot provide exemption from (any part of) any exam.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in Hungary applies to:

- Units
- Qualifications/diplomas/degrees

Since units can be defined at mobility level as well, schools tend to use and recognise units. It is to be noted, however, that Hungarian standards and exam regulations do not use the term, therefore a formal, nationally approved recognition of "a unit" is impossible. Training providers and host institutions might use this term in contracts and may regulate the local, school level recognition process by units, but this is their own decision and rarely happens. As an example, the compulsory summer practice can be considered as a unit.

It should be noted that any formal qualification obtained abroad can be recognised, regardless whether it was obtained via IVET mobility or any other way. Recognition of a vocational qualification received abroad follows a regulated procedure (naturalisation) and is supervised by the Educational Authority²⁰⁴. It provides exemption from taking the national vocational exam.

²⁰⁴ Recognition of qualifications and diplomas obtained abroad is a nationally regulated process, carried out by the Hungarian Equivalence and Information Centre (Magyar Ekvivalencia és Információs Központ), a department of the Education Authority (Oktatási Hivatal, OH)
http://www.oktatas.hu/kepesitesek_elismertetese/meik_oldalak

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

Recognition is only partially countrywide coordinated. The recognition of units takes place at institutional / school level, so it is not coordinated countrywide. However, the recognition of qualifications and diplomas obtained abroad is a nationally regulated process, carried out by the Hungarian Equivalence and Information Centre.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

There is no national regulation, so processes and time frames might differ from school to school.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

The issue of the visibility of contact points for information on the recognition of IVET learning outcomes acquired abroad has not been addressed in Hungary. An ECVET contact point was established in 2011 hosted by the former National Institute for Vocational Education (NIVE). However, due to institutional changes over the past years, there have been no developments since then. IVET students can obtain information from the school, from the Educational Authority or the National Office of VET and Adult Learning (the successor of NIVE).

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

There is no visibility policy, so no evaluation of it.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Europass Mobility Document is widely used. It enhances the visibility of mobility, but it cannot promote the transfer and recognition of learning outcomes, since there is no countrywide policy for that. Europass Mobility is used by the sending institutions and the participants. The former can use the document as a certificate of attendance when reporting on

mobility, the latter use it on the labour market to prove their skills acquired during mobility. TPF as the National Europass Centre in Hungary promotes the Europass documents, but has no evidence-based information on the actual use of Europass Mobility by companies. There are success stories, good practices, but the real significance of Europass Mobility document is unknown.

The Europass Certificate Supplement is not personalised; rather, it provides detailed information on the qualification in general. As it does not specify the student's learning outcomes acquired in a mobility project, it can only help to enhance visibility but not the transfer and recognition of LOs. The document is not used separately for IVET mobility, it serves to give information on the whole training/learning period.

Since the NQF reference to EQF has just been approved in Hungary, it is not surprising that at the moment only experts and some schools know about ECVET. Although awareness and use of ECVET elements in mobility projects is gradually growing, there are only a handful of schools that understand and try to use the concept of learning outcomes. More and more mobility promoters use MoU and LAs but it needs more time until their use will become widely spread. The National ECVET Experts' Team was established in early 2012 by TPF and it is still working on understanding and promoting the introduction of ECVET elements into the Hungarian VET system. The ECVET experts' team has found that ECVET is used only in (Erasmus+) mobility projects in Hungary at the moment.

The Hungarian NQF reference to EQF was approved in February 2015, therefore dissemination of developments and information will only start now. All national qualifications will have a reference to the EQF level in future. The learning outcome approach is known and used by some Erasmus+ mobility promoters.

Due to the increasing visibility and promotion of ECVET (and hence LOs), the use of the learning outcome approach has begun in mobility projects. In practice, it is usually the sending institution that develops the LOs of the mobility period with the approval – but not necessarily the active contribution – of the host.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

Hungary has mechanisms for the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET learners. The recognition process is seen as easy, and several relevant EU tools that exist for the visibility, transfer

and recognition of learning outcomes have been introduced in the country, i.e. Europass Mobility Document, Europass Certificate Supplement, ECVET, and the Learning Outcomes approach.

Steps for future improvement in the area of recognition include extending the range of types of learning components that can be used (beyond units and qualifications, it could be considered recognising as well courses, credit points, modules and/or programmes for more flexibility and attractiveness). Standardising the concept of units countrywide could also be considered. Putting in place countrywide coordination / framework of the recognition process, and setting a regulatory time frame for the competent bodies to process applications for recognition would help enhancing the recognition policy. Alike, putting in place a policy for the visibility of contact points where learners can get information on recognition, and arranging a regular evaluation process for this policy, would be a positive step forward. Finally, integrating in future the Hungarian NQF among the tools used for visibility, transfer and recognition would help enhance IVET mobility.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The Erasmus+ National Agency TPF assists the setting up of partnerships by financing participation at contact seminars and/or organising such events. Nevertheless, due to high costs there have only been a few instances of these events.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The implementation of the Erasmus+ programme in Hungary is annually evaluated as a whole, including (communication) activities to support the creation of partnerships. There has not been any special audit or monitoring focusing on the creation of partnerships and networks.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

The Erasmus+ programme carries out the following funding actions at IVET student level:

- Contribution to the travel costs of participants, including accompanying persons, from their place of origin to the venue of the activity and return;
- Costs directly linked to the subsistence of participants, including accompanying persons, during the activity;
- Additional costs directly related to participants with disabilities and accompanying persons.

The programme also includes other types of funding schemes at institutional level (organisational costs which are directly linked to the implementation of mobility activities, additional costs to support the participation of learners with fewer opportunities, linguistic support where applicable).

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The implementation of the Erasmus+ programme in Hungary is monitored, including the financial support to IVET learners.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

In addition to the compulsory tasks required in the Erasmus+ programme (organising information days, thematic activities, maintaining a website), the National Agency carries out the following activities to support stakeholders:

- Setting up stands at educational expos and fairs,
- Maintaining a facebook page for teachers and trainers,
- Publishing a monthly e-newsletter,

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- Organizing workshops for school leaders,
- Organizing a 'business café' to bridge education and the world of work,
- Maintaining special websites for the different target groups.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

The implementation of the Erasmus+ programme, including the support to organising mobility projects, in Hungary is annually evaluated as a whole. Based on the results, the EC and/or internal/external audit bodies make recommendations which the National Agency takes efforts to implement as part of its work programme.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

Hungary has actions to support the creation of partnerships and networks, support companies and institutions that organise mobility projects, and fund the mobility of learners. However, while the support to organising mobility projects is evaluated, the policies for supporting the creation of partnerships and networks, and for funding learners' mobility, rather seem to be subject to some indirect and partial monitoring, the details of which remain to be clarified, and which does not seem to systematically translate into implementation of improvement recommendations from year to year. Steps for further improvement could include making sure that fully-fledged evaluation is in place for all policies in this area. It could also be made sure that the support to companies, institutions and their staff for organising mobility projects actually fits the needs of beneficiaries in this respect.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In the thematic area of Information and Guidance, Hungary provides IVET learners with information on international learning mobility. However, this provision does not comprise a systematic coverage of personalised advice, counselling for mobility. The existing provision is also not coordinated countrywide. However, the National Agency for Erasmus+ (TPF) has an evaluation procedure to review annually its information events and improve them on an ongoing basis. For further progress in

this area, it could be considered enhancing a mechanism for the provision of personalised advice, counselling and guidance to IVET learners for their international mobility. Developing a complete knowledge of all mobility schemes existing in the country, and coordinating countrywide their provision of not only information but also advice, counselling and guidance to IVET learners for international mobility could be a first important step forward. Finally, extending the existing evaluation principles to the whole country provision of information and guidance for IVET learners' mobility would certainly bring Hungary closer to the full achievement of the *"Youth on the move"* Recommendation in this thematic area.

In the thematic area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, Hungary has targets for IVET international mobility. It has also taken steps to reduce the administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility abroad. Also, the constraints to the mobility of minors have been kept sufficiently low to avoid hampering their learning mobility. A step that could be considered for improvement in future consists in developing a clear policy intention to support the integration of mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes. It could also be made sure, e.g. through a users/stakeholders survey, whether the existing processes for delivering visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries, and for the mobility of minors, are easy enough or instead require putting in place support for assisting learners in their application / mobility processes.

Regarding Recognition of Learning Outcomes, Hungary has mechanisms for the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET learners. The recognition process is seen as easy, and several relevant EU tools that exist for the visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes have been introduced in the country, i.e. Europass Mobility Document, Europass Certificate Supplement, ECVET, and the Learning Outcomes approach.

Steps for future improvement in this area include extending the range of types of learning components that can be used (beyond units and qualifications, it could be considered recognising as well courses, credit points, modules and/or programmes for more flexibility and attractiveness). Standardising the concept of units countrywide could also be considered. Putting in place countrywide coordination / framework of the recognition process, and setting a regulatory time frame for the competent bodies to process applications for recognition would help enhancing the recognition policy. Also, putting in place a policy for the visibility of contact points where learners can get information on recognition, and arranging a regular evaluation process for this policy, would be a positive step forward. Finally, integrating in future the Hungarian NQF among the tools used for visibility, transfer and

recognition would also help enhance IVET mobility.

Finally, in the area of Partnerships and Funding, Hungary has actions to support the creation of partnerships and networks, support companies and institutions that organise mobility projects, and fund the mobility of learners. However, while the support to arranging mobility projects is evaluated, the policies for supporting the creation of partnerships and networks, and for funding learners' mobility, rather seem to be subject to some indirect and partial monitoring, the details of which remain to be clarified, and which does not seem to systematically translate into implementation of improvement recommendations from year to year. Steps for further improvement could include making sure that fully-fledged evaluation is in place for all policies in this area. It could also be made sure that the support to companies, institutions and their staff for arranging mobility projects actually fits the needs of beneficiaries in this respect.

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IVET level covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary

Main schemes for international IVET mobility in Iceland

Mobility scheme	Source of funds	Target group
Erasmus+	European	All, including IVET learners
Nordplus	Nordic	All, including IVET learners

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Iceland has an information and guidance mechanism for international learning mobility of IVET learners.

The Icelandic Centre of Research (Rannís) is in charge of both the European Union's Erasmus+ programme, which offers mobility grants in Europe, and the Nordplus Programme, which offers similar grants for mobility between the Nordic countries. In both cases, the VET providers must apply for grants for their students and therefore the main target group for Rannís in providing information are the schools. Several methods are used: advertising in the press, direct emails to former applicants, courses for VET providers (both in initial and continuous VET) interested in applying (which are advertised in the press), the internet and direct contact with possible candidates, as well as public information meetings both in Reykjavík and in the countryside. In recent years, there has been an increased emphasis on offering meetings online, which is extremely useful for VET providers from remote places.

The most common elements of guidance to students are:

- Introductory information meetings where all students are informed about the possibilities open to them;
- Individual consultations with those who show an interest; and

- Assistance with completing a learning agreement and a work programme.

From final reports of individual students, it can be seen that most students are satisfied with the information, guidance and support they have received.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

The information and guidance which IVET providers give to their users is not coordinated even though they are informed about the necessity to give their users all the information and guidance they may need to take an informed decision about mobility and draw as much benefit from it as possible.

However the provision of information and assistance to schools and other institutions applying for an Erasmus+ grant for IVET learning mobility is uniform countrywide. Not all IVET providers have participated in mobility projects (e.g. a few small schools in the countryside have not done so on a regular basis), but those who have participated receive very similar information, even though it may be personalised in each case.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

Legal provisions in Iceland do not specifically include the objective of promoting IVET international learning mobility.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

The institutions which receive a grant are responsible to inform their students about the possibilities for grants. It varies between them how this is done, through emails, public announcements or open meetings. No major change has taken place on this topic in recent years.

However, Iceland has taken steps to improve the provision of information and assistance to IVET providers on international learning mobility for IVET learners. An increased emphasis will be placed on offering e-services which has benefitted the schools in the countryside even more than the

ones in and around Reykjavík. Specific webinar sessions are already on offer and the plan is to increase this type of service, offering institutions the chance to both participate on the spot and/or to listen later to the recording of the meetings.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

No policy was set to improve the direct provision of information and guidance to IVET learners, so there is no evaluation of it. The actions taken to improve the provision of information and assistance to IVET providers are not subject to evaluation.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

The Icelandic Centre of Research (Rannís) is in charge of both the European Union's Erasmus+ programme, which offers mobility grants in Europe, and the Nordplus Programme, which offers similar grants for mobility between the Nordic countries. In both cases, IVET providers must apply for grants for their students and therefore the main target group for Rannís in providing information are the schools. Several methods are used:

- Advertising in the press;
- Direct emails to former applicants;
- Courses for VET providers (both in initial and continuous VET) interested in applying (which are advertised in the press);
- Internet and direct contact with possible candidates, as well as public information meetings both in Reykjavík and in the countryside.

In recent years, there has been an increased emphasis on offering meetings online, which is extremely useful for VET providers from remote places.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

The Icelandic Centre of Research (Rannís), in charge of the Erasmus+ Programme and the Nordplus Programme, provides IVET institutions that apply for mobility grants with information and assistance. Institutions in turn provide personalised and direct information, advice and guidance on international learning mobility to IVET learners. Although IVET institutions receive from Rannís similar information, the information and guidance service that they provide directly to learners is not coordinated countrywide. Over the recent years, Iceland has not taken measures to improve the provision of information and guidance directly offered to IVET learners. The support to IVET institutions has been improved however, through increasing e-services (e.g. webinars), which are considered useful especially for VET providers based in remote locations. Yet, these improvement actions are not subject to evaluation. In future it could be considered putting in place coordination mechanisms for the provision of information and guidance on international learning mobility to IVET learners, and setting an evaluated mechanism for regular improvement of this provision.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

In Iceland, there is no policy intention at national level to integrate mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes. VET institutions have complete autonomy in the matter and it is not seen as the mandate of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture to interfere in their work.

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2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

There are no targets for IVET international mobility set at national level.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

No specific measures have been taken in Iceland to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

Iceland has not taken measures to reduce the administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility. Yet, it happens that the national agency receives complaints over administrative burdens from VET institutions which find the application procedure and reporting far from easy. In the past, this may have related to some tools (the E+ link and the Mobility Tool) launched before they were functioning properly, which has often taken months to fix.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

No specific measures have been taken to remove the legal obstacles to the mobility of minors.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social security

European citizens who have the European Health Insurance card have the same rights to health-care in Iceland as Icelandic citizens. On the other hand, the rights to parental leave (in Iceland this is for both parents, not only for the mother) and pension depend on the participation on the labour market and on the status of paid employee.

Labour protection

The Act on Safety in the Workplace covers all persons in a work place and the employers must ensure that security rules are strictly followed. However, foreign trainees are usually not members of staff and therefore they are not insured by the company in question. Therefore, foreign students must buy their own insurance.

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES" THEMATIC AREA

Iceland has no policy intention to integrate mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes and has not set targets for IVET international mobility at national level. Developing policies in those directions may bring the country closer to the requirements of the "*Youth on the Move*" Recommendation. The country has not taken measures to ease the international mobility of IVET learners. In future, it could at least be checked (e.g. through users / stakeholders survey) whether there are needs for measures to smooth the access of IVET learners from third countries to visas and residence permits, alleviate the administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility, and remove the possible obstacles to the mobility of minor IVET learners. Relevant measures could then be considered / taken accordingly.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

Recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility is at the discretion of IVET providers.

According to the Upper Secondary School Act, the principal of any school has the full power to recognise (or not) any prior learning outcomes of a student. A survey carried out for the ECVET project in 2013 shows that the overall approach is very positive and headmasters tend to validate any training possible. For schools sending their students on an

international mobility, it is decided beforehand how the training will be recognised, provided that the student accomplishes all he/she set out to do. The ECVET validation tool is seen as an excellent instrument in this respect, by defining thoroughly before the mobility what the student is supposed to complete, and stating this in the learning agreement. It is therefore easy to assess, once the student returns, whether or not the learning objectives have been achieved. Usually, stays abroad are relatively short (a few weeks).

At practical level, there is great variation between learning providers as to how many members of staff take part in the administration of a learning mobility. In the biggest institutions, the following people are involved:

- An international liaison officer who finds the hosts for each mobility period, applies for funding, signs any agreement on individual stay etc.;
- The teachers of relevant subjects who define what it is that each student should learn during the stay;
- The principal who is formally responsible for the validation of the credits the students have acquired.

In smaller institutions the same person can perform several or even all of these roles.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

As the recognition process is handled at institution level, IVET learners involved in international learning mobility have easy access to recognition of learning acquired abroad.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in the country applies to:

- Credit points

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

The recognition approach is not coordinated in Iceland. According to the Upper Secondary School Act, the principal of each school is responsible for the validation of any credits acquired abroad by the students in that school.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

The recognition process is not bound to a regulatory time limit. In practical terms however, as far as is known, the process takes place immediately after the student's return.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

There is no visibility policy. In Iceland, each school that received an Erasmus+ grant for their students is responsible for providing such information to their students.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

There is no visibility policy, so no evaluation of it.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

All VET students who undertake a mobility period supported by the Erasmus+ receive the Europass Mobility Document. This is the only documentation required by the Erasmus+ programme to certify that the learning has indeed taken place.

The Europass Certificate Supplement is available online for between 60 and 70 professions, both in English and Icelandic.

Most of the ECVET tools are used, especially the memorandum of understanding and the learning agreement.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

In the thematic area for the Recognition of Learning Outcomes, Iceland meets one of the six reference criteria of the indicator: IVET learners have easy access to recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad. Several aspects may need to be tackled in future to improve the conditions for IVET learning mobility. The scope of recognition is currently limited to credit points, and any recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad is entirely at the discretion of training providers, the main responsible being the principal of each school, with no countrywide coordination of the process. The recognition process is not bound to a regulatory time limit. Addressing these drawbacks in future could represent a step forward: Iceland could consider extending the range of learning components that can be recognised (not only credit points but also courses, units, modules, programmes or qualifications); putting in place a countrywide framework / mechanism for recognition; and setting a time limit for processing recognition requests. Currently, each school involved in Erasmus+ is responsible for providing information on recognition to its students, and no visibility policy is in place. In future, it could be checked whether all potential users know whom to contact for information on recognition, and putting in place an appropriate (and evaluated) policy could be considered accordingly. With regard to the use of EU tools for the visibility, transfer and recognition of the learning outcomes acquired abroad, the Europass Mobility document, the Europass Certificate Supplement and ECVET are used at least to some extent. Extending the tool box to EQF/NQF and the Learning Outcomes approach could also be considered in future.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

In Iceland there are no policy initiatives or actions aimed to support IVET providers and companies in the creation of mobility partnerships and networks.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

There is no policy to support the creation of partnerships and networks, so no evaluation thereof.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1 STRATEGY / ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THEIR INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

The Icelandic National Agency (Rannís) provides funding both through the Erasmus+ and the Nordplus programmes. IVET students are also entitled to take subsidized study loans from the Icelandic Study Loan Fund, whether they study in Iceland or abroad.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The National Agency for Erasmus+ and Nordplus (Rannís) has not undertaken any evaluation of past utilisation of the funding for mobility.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

There is no policy to support companies and institutions that organise mobility projects. Companies that receive international students for training do not receive any compensation for doing so, which partly explains why it is difficult to find companies which are willing to do so. According to the largest organisation organising the stay of foreign IVET students in Iceland (Iðan), the companies find it especially difficult to organise shorter stays, where the student may not have learned enough to benefit the company before he or she leaves. In the case of longer stays, there however can be a valuable asset to the company and bring in an international aspect which all the workers benefit from. This is especially the case in the tourist sector, where many foreign students are trained in hotels and restaurants.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

There is no support for organising mobility projects, so no evaluation of it.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

Iceland has in place actions to fund learners' mobility, however the Erasmus+ and Nordplus grants do not cover all the extra expenses the students must meet while staying abroad. Students must therefore somehow save up or borrow the additional funding. The learner funding policy is also not evaluated. In order to encourage the international mobility of IVET students, the country may be suggested to consider putting in place support measures to help IVET providers and companies in the creation of mobility partnerships and networks, and in the organisation of mobility projects. Putting in place regular and systematic evaluation for all policies in this area could also be considered.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In the area of Information and Guidance, Icelandic IVET institutions involved in Erasmus+ provide IVET learners with personalised and direct information, advice and guidance on international learning mobility. However this provision is not coordinated countrywide. Over the recent years, Iceland has also not taken measures to improve the mechanism of direct provision to learners. In future it could be considered putting in place a coordination mechanism for the direct provision of information and guidance on international learning mobility to IVET learners, and setting an evaluated mechanism for regular improvement of this provision over time.

Regarding the area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, Iceland has no policy intention to integrate mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes and has not set targets for IVET international mobility at national level. Addressing these aspects would bring the country closer to the requirements of the "*Youth on the Move*" Recommendation. The country has also not taken measures to ease the international mobility of IVET learners. In future, it could at least be checked (e.g. through users / stakeholders survey) whether there are needs for measures to smooth the access of IVET learners from third countries to visas and residence permits, alleviate the administrative burdens induced by arranging

mobility, and remove the possible obstacles to the mobility of minor IVET learners. Relevant measures could then be considered and taken accordingly.

In the area of Recognition of Learning Outcomes, Iceland provides IVET learners with easy access to recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad. However, several other aspects may need to be tackled in future to improve the conditions for IVET learning mobility. The scope of recognition is currently limited to credit points. The recognition process is not coordinated countrywide and is not bound to a regulatory time limit. In future, Iceland could consider extending the range of learning components that can be recognised (i.e. introducing recognition for courses, units, modules, programmes or qualifications); putting in place a countrywide coordination framework / mechanism for recognition; and setting a time limit for processing recognition requests. Also no visibility policy for contact points for information on recognition is in place. In future, it could be at least checked whether all potential users know whom to contact for information on recognition. Putting in place an appropriate (and evaluated) policy could be considered if proved necessary. EU tools (the Europass Mobility document, the Europass Certificate Supplement and ECVET) are used at least to some extent for the visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad, and extending this toolbox to EQF/NQF and the Learning Outcomes approach could also be considered in future.

Finally, in the area of Partnerships and Funding, Iceland has in place actions to fund learners' mobility. However these actions are not evaluated. In order to encourage the international mobility of IVET students, the country may be suggested to consider putting in place support measures to help IVET providers and companies in the creation of mobility partnerships and networks, and in the organisation of mobility projects. Putting in place regular and systematic evaluation for all policies in this area could also be considered.

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IVET level covered in this fiche:

- Post-secondary non-tertiary

VET in Ireland is primarily concentrated in the post - secondary non-tertiary sector, with some IVET provision also at tertiary level.

Main schemes for international IVET mobility in Ireland

Mobility scheme	Source of funds	Target group
Erasmus+	- European - National budget	IVET learners and other groups; some IVET teachers/tutors

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Ireland has an information and guidance mechanism for international learning mobility of IVET learners.

Léargas is a not-for-profit organisation, wholly owned by the Department (Ministry) of Education and Skills. Léargas oversees two bodies that support international mobility in VET:

- Eurodesk, which is based in Léargas, and is a free information service on EU funding and opportunities to work, study, volunteer and travel in Europe. It is intended for young people and those who work with them.
- The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE), which was established under the aegis of Léargas and which supports international exchange and collaboration in the youth sector. The NCGE is part of the Euroguidance network and hosts the Euroguidance Centre Ireland.

Euroguidance Ireland:

- Collects, processes and disseminates information on studying and training opportunities across participating countries.

- Liaises with guidance professionals through career fairs, publications, etc.
- Meets with the students of guidance counselling nationally and presents to them the Network and the resources available to inform students about studying in Europe.

In the whole mechanism overseen by Léargas, the major part is on information rather than guidance to learners. Within post-secondary non-tertiary colleges of further education/training (where some of VET takes place), there are guidance counsellors present who can provide information and guidance on mobility where appropriate. Currently, Ireland's FET (further education and training) sector is undergoing reform. Within this reform, there are plans for guidance services for all of FET sector, which will include a focus on mobility.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

The mechanism of information and guidance for international learning mobility is coordinated countrywide. NCGE and Euroguidance Ireland are National Centres, and therefore have a remit to deliver goals at a national level.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

There is no legislation where the promotion of international learning mobility in IVET is mentioned as an objective.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

The most significant initiative at the time being is the involvement of Ireland in the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) – led tests of Guidance Frameworks for Quality Assurance and evidence-based practice and development. These tests are carried out at country level. In Ireland, the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) and its partners are reviewing sections of the Framework outlined in the European Resource Kit, and testing them in different sectors. VET is part of these activities, although a minor part of them.

An initiative currently under consideration and preparation for the future is a research action to establish an evidence base on the role of guidance in FET, which should include: research on potential variation in access to formal and informal guidance across different parts of the sector; the role of guidance in progression to employment and further study; guidance to second level students about further education options, and the role of guidance to assist employees to up-skill and re-skill. No concrete steps have been implemented yet however.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Currently, the policy to improve the provision of information and guidance on international learning mobility for IVET learners is not evaluated. The methods to be used in evaluating information and guidance actions have not yet been decided.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

Eurodesk, which is based in Léargas, and is a free information service on EU funding and opportunities to work, study, volunteer and travel in Europe, addresses young people and those who work with them.

The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) hosts the Euroguidance Centre Ireland which:

- Collects, processes and disseminates information on studying and training opportunities;
- Liaises with guidance professionals through career fairs, publications, etc.; and
- Meets with the students of guidance counselling nationally and presents to them the Network and the resources available to inform students about studying in Europe.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

Ireland has an information and guidance mechanism for international learning mobility of IVET learners, overseen by Léargas, a not-for-profit

organisation owned by the Department of Education and Skills. Eurodesk and The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) are the two bodies through which this provision is ensured. The share of personalised counselling, advice and guidance directly offered to learners in this provision seems limited however, as it is present in part of the IVET institutions mostly (post-secondary non-tertiary colleges of further education). However, reforms are underway to provide guidance services for all of FET sector, with focus on mobility (Further Education and Training Strategy 2014 – 2019 of the Department of Education and Skills). The existing mechanism is coordinated countrywide. Measures to improve the quality of guidance have been taken recently (tests of Guidance Frameworks for Quality Assurance), however they seem to be far from focusing on the specific issue of guidance for international mobility in IVET. The improvement measures are also not currently evaluated. In future, it should be made sure that the actions aimed at the improvement of information and guidance provision for IVET international mobility are in place and subject to regular evaluation.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

There is no explicit policy in relation to taking into account in curricula the learning abroad experience of Irish IVET learners. In practice however, any learners who participate in ERASMUS+ may have their learning (including international) recognised formally under the European Credit Transfer system. In addition, for all learners whether within or outside Erasmus+, NQF/EQF-related awards/modules gained abroad may be recognised for access, transfer and progress purposes in Ireland. Also, in principle, recognition of prior learning (RPL) may also allow for the mobility experiences to be taken into account in the curricula. However, such instances are very much the exception rather than the norm. Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is currently preparing a more cohesive national approach to the RPL process in Ireland, which will be applicable to all sectors of the Irish education system, including VET.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

At the moment, there are no targets set for IVET international learning mobility. The delivery of further education and training in Ireland had, until recently, been rather fragmented. With the establishment of SOLAS, however, for the first time policy development in further education and training (including VET) came under a single authority. Therefore, it is likely that targets will be developed for IVET international learning within the Further Education and Training Strategy, at a national level.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

No specific measures have been taken in Ireland to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries. Developing VET in Ireland is still relatively recent and so far it has not extended to facilitating international exchange with third countries in the same way as in higher education.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

No specific measures have been taken to reduce the administrative burdens that may hinder the international mobility of IVET learners.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

No specific measures have been taken to remove the possible obstacles that may hinder the mobility of minors.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Incoming IVET students from the EU benefit (through the European Health Insurance Card) from the same social security as their counterparts in the country (i.e. local IVET learners). There is no additional social security coverage for these learners.

In terms of labour protection, both EU and non-EU learners who are employed are subject to Irish labour laws. However, in terms of unemployment-related welfare payments, while EU citizens enjoy the same benefits as Irish citizens, non-EU citizens must be legally resident in the country for 2 years before being able to make any claims. Asylum seekers, until such time as they gain official refugee status, are not entitled to work.

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES" THEMATIC AREA

Ireland has no explicit policy intention to integrate international learning mobility periods in the curricula of IVET programmes. Ireland has also not set targets for mobility in IVET, and has not taken any measure to facilitate the mobility of IVET learners. For future progress, it could be considered developing a clear policy expression of support to integration of mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET learners, and integrating the UE 6% benchmark into the IVET institutional and policy-making landscape, and/or setting national targets for IVET mobility. It could also be investigated (e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys) whether there is a need for measures to smooth the delivery of visas and residence permits to IVET learners from third countries, alleviate the administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility, and remove the possible obstacles to the mobility of minor IVET learners. Measures could then be considered and taken accordingly.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

Recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility is handled case by case at the discretion of IVET providers.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

Learning acquired abroad by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility may be recognised, but anecdotal evidence suggests that the process in general for the recognition of prior learning (at home or abroad) may at times be considered by some as somewhat difficult. The recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET learners is included under the recognition of prior learning. Initial attempts have been made to gather views on this issue by QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland), and it is possible that QQI will take the initiative to develop an improved, more streamlined, qualifications recognition service.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in the country applies to:

- Courses
- Credit points
- Units
- Modules
- Programmes
- Qualifications/diplomas/degrees

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

Currently, the approach to recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET learners is not coordinated. But the issue is currently being addressed by QQI and SOLAS.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

The recognition process is not bound to a regulatory time limit.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

There are currently no actions aimed to establish, or make more visible, contact points for recognition of learning acquired during mobility periods.

However, in February 2015, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) organized a first meeting of the Recognition of Prior Learning National Practitioners inviting interested parties (e.g. Recognition of Prior Learning Officers at schools and colleges, representatives from SOLAS and other education and training bodies) to explore how the recognition of prior learning in the non-formal and informal areas could be developed. Recognition of Prior Learning in Ireland is still in its infancy in many areas (although apprenticeship is an exception). QQI's actions, as one of the main awarding bodies in the area of FET and VET in Ireland, are a first step in making RPL a more comprehensive and easily accessible service for learners (both Irish and international). This should go some way in establishing contact points, and from there, making them more visible. The involvement of QQI means that these developments are likely to occur and be co-ordinated at a national level.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

There is no visibility policy, so no evaluation of it.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The National Europass Centre is under the responsibility of QQI. The National Europass Centre is promoting the use of the Europass Mobility Documents and the Europass Certificate Supplements nationally.

EQF/NQF is promoted nationally by QQI to all education and further education and training institutions.

QQI also hosts the Enic-Naric (European National Information Centre / National Academic Recognition Information Centre Networks) which provides services and advice on the recognition of qualifications.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

In the thematic area of Recognition of Learning Outcomes, Ireland meets one of the six reference criteria of the indicator. The main positive aspect is that the recognition applies to all types of learning components considered in this review, i.e. courses, credit points, units, modules, programmes and qualifications / diplomas / degrees. The process of recognition is not bound to a regulatory time limit. It is not coordinated countrywide. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the process in general for the recognition of prior learning abroad may at times be considered by some to be somewhat difficult. The country also lacks actions aimed to establish visible contact points for recognition of learning acquired during mobility periods. On the other hand, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) has started already to look into ways to develop an improved, more streamlined service for recognition. The pending issues (e.g. ease of access, coordination of the recognition process, visibility of contact points) could be tackled as part of future developments. To further encourage and support IVET mobility, the country could also be suggested to better exploit the range of EU tools for the visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes, namely ECVET and the Learning Outcomes approach, and make use of these tools (including the Europass Mobility Document and Certificate Supplement and the NQF/EQF) in IVET mobility processes.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

Ireland has not taken specific measures to support IVET providers and companies in the creation of partnerships and networks for IVET mobility.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

There is no policy to support the creation of partnerships and networks, so no evaluation of it.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

Funding the international mobility of learners is made primarily to institutions. In first place, ERASMUS+ funds applicant institutions. These institutions, in turn, provide the funding to learners.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

There is no evaluation of the funding to learners.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

Stakeholders and staff involved in organising IVET mobility projects receive support within the framework of Erasmus+ and Leargas. No systematic action is organised outside this framework.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

There is no evaluation of the support to stakeholders.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

Ireland has mechanisms to fund the international mobility of IVET learners and provides support to stakeholders in charge of organising mobility projects. However, there are no actions to support the creation of mobility partnerships and networks. The existing actions are of limited

scope and are not evaluated. To improve the conditions for IVET mobility, the country could develop a policy to support the creation of mobility partnerships and networks; make sure that funding for learners and support for stakeholders are available countrywide (i.e. also outside Erasmus+ and Léargas); and arrange for these support measures to undergo systematic fully-fledged evaluation.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In the thematic area of Information and Guidance, Ireland has mechanism to provide IVET learners with information and guidance for their international learning mobility. However, the share of personalised counselling, advice and guidance directly offered to learners in this provision is limited, as it is present only in part of the IVET institutions (post-secondary non-tertiary colleges of further education). Reforms are underway to provide guidance services for all of FET sector, with focus on mobility. The existing mechanism is coordinated countrywide. Measures to improve the quality of guidance have been taken recently (tests of Guidance Frameworks for Quality Assurance), however they seem to be far from focusing on the specific issue of guidance for international mobility in IVET. The improvement measures are also not currently evaluated. In future, it should be made sure that the actions aimed at the improvement of information and guidance provision for IVET international mobility are in place and subject to regular evaluation.

In the area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, Ireland has no explicit policy intention to integrate international learning mobility periods in the curricula of IVET programmes. Ireland has also not set targets for mobility in IVET, and has not taken any measure to facilitate the mobility of IVET learners. For future progress, it could be considered developing a clear policy expression of support to integration of mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET learners, and integrating the UE 6% benchmark into the IVET institutional and policy-making landscape, and/or setting national targets for IVET mobility. It could also be investigated (e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys) whether there is a need for measures to smooth the delivery of visas and residence permits to IVET learners from third countries, alleviate the administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility, and remove the possible obstacles to the mobility of minor IVET learners. Measures could then be considered and taken accordingly.

In the thematic area of Recognition of Learning Outcomes, the main positive aspect is that recognition applies to all types of learning components considered in this review, i.e. courses, credit points, units, modules, programmes and qualifications / diplomas / degrees. However,

the recognition process is not bound to a regulatory time limit. It is not coordinated countrywide, and is felt by users as somewhat difficult. The country also lacks actions aimed to establish visible contact points for recognition of learning acquired during mobility periods. On the other hand, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) has started already to look into ways to develop an improved, more streamlined service for recognition. The pending issues (e.g. ease of access, coordination of the recognition process, visibility of contact points) could be tackled as part of future developments. To further encourage and support IVET mobility, the country could also be suggested to better exploit the range of EU tools for the visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes, namely ECVET and the Learning Outcomes approach, and make use of these tools (including the Europass Mobility Document and Certificate Supplement and the NQF/EQF) in IVET mobility processes.

Finally, in the area of Partnerships and Funding, Ireland has mechanisms to fund the international mobility of IVET learners and provides support to stakeholders in charge of organising mobility projects. However, there are no actions to support the creation of mobility partnerships and networks. The existing actions are of limited scope and are not evaluated. To improve the conditions for IVET mobility, the country could develop a policy to support the creation of mobility partnerships and networks; make sure that funding for learners and support for stakeholders are available countrywide (i.e. also outside Erasmus+ and Léargas); and arrange for these support measures to undergo systematic fully-fledged evaluation.

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IVET level(s) covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary
- Post-secondary (non-academic higher VET)

Main schemes for international IVET mobility in Italy

Mobility scheme	Source of funds	Target group
- Erasmus+ VET (Isfol) - Erasmus + Higher education (only non-academic higher VET related issues) (Indire)	European	- IVET learners (Technical and Vocational School's Students, Vocational Institutions students) - School/vocational Institutions learners recent graduates and VET qualified (within 12 months by the graduation / qualification)
Italian Regions	European Social Fund (ESF) Regional Operational Programs	- IVET learners - Technical and Vocational School's Students - School and University graduates and VET qualified
Youth Guarantee: traineeships in transnational mobility	Youth Employment Initiative + ESF – Ministry of Labour National Operational Youth Guarantee programme	- School new graduates and VET qualified (within 12 months by the graduation / qualification) - University new graduates (within 12 months by the graduation / qualification)
School-work alternance (also abroad)	National (Ministry of Education)	IVET learners (Technical and Vocational schools) and upper secondary general education students
Transnational mobility and internships schemes	ESF Ministry of Education National Operational Programme 2014-2020	IVET learners (Technical and Vocational schools), upper secondary general education

		students, post-secondary non-academic higher VET students
Your First Eures Job - Apprenticeships - Traineeships	EaSI 2014-2020 Fund – Eures	Young people aged 18-35
The Job of My Life – MobiPro 3.0 and 4.0 (Memorandum of Understanding Italy-Germany) - Traineeships - Apprenticeships in Germany	- For Germany: BMAS and MobiPro – EU - For Italy: ESF 2014-2020 Ministry of Labour National Operational Programme	Young people aged 18-27 (with or without an upper secondary level qualification/graduation) who are willing to learn German, to be trained and work in Germany

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

In Italy, IVET is divided into two main strands at upper secondary level:

- Technical schools and Vocational schools, under the competence of the Ministry of Education;
- Vocational Education and Training centres, under the competence of Regions.

Moreover, there can be IVET at post-secondary level:

- Post-secondary higher technical training (non-academic VET), under the competence of both Ministry of Education and Regions;
- Tertiary level IVET (in universities), under the competence of the Ministry of Education.

For this reason there are two different approaches in providing information and guidance on IVET mobility topics.

With regards to upper secondary education, the Ministry of Education has defined guidelines for education institutions to support them in the

promotion and organisation of mobility experiences (short or long periods) for students at national level. In case of short periods, students receive credits useful for the final examinations. The long mobility is normally used by students who want to attend one school year in a foreign country. In this case, the learning experience is valid for the achievement of the education pathway. In addition, according to the Law 107/2015 (La Buona scuola) and the relevant operational guidelines for schools, school-work alternance can also be implemented abroad starting from the school year 2015-2016.

With regards to Vocational Education and Training under the competence of Regions, the mobility topic is managed in different ways, using specific financial lines in Regional Operational Programmes (POR) 2014-2020 under the field of Transnational cooperation.

To get information on international learning mobility IVET learners can utilize information provided by information and guidance services organized in schools and VET institutions.

In line with the "Guidelines on individual international learning mobility for students" ²⁰⁵, arrangements for information on and promotion of international learning experiences for students are included and described in the "Plan of studies" (POF). Upper secondary schools nominate representatives and contact persons for international learning mobility and organize specific information activities for students and families as well as information/training activities for teachers involved in these learning experiences abroad. Information on international mobility is provided also during the annual "Open day" organized to promote courses and activities of schools and VET institutions.

VET providers (schools and VET institutions), as well as IVET learners can also receive information and guidance during the Info Days organized by the Erasmus+ Agency and National Focal Point Eurodesk, and through participating in the annual guidance Fairs promoted by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour (Job Orienta – Verona; Salone dell'orientamento – Messina e Reggio Calabria; ABC Orientamento – Genova). They can also contact public employment centres, municipal guidance and information centres ("Informagiovani"), etc.

Employment services play an important role in providing information and guidance also on the following schemes:

- Transnational mobility traineeship scheme destined to young people, as one of the measures provided within the Youth Guarantee Programme;
- Your First Eures Job transnational mobility scheme (for apprenticeships and/or traineeships);

²⁰⁵ Ministry of Education, Prot 843 - 2013

- The Job of My Life-MobiPro 3.0 and 4.0 project (for traineeships and apprenticeships).

Information on the last two schemes is provided through Eures advisers and assistants located in Employment services. Both schemes are accompanied with language courses.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

IVET in upper secondary education and VET under the competence of regions are not integrated in terms of information and guidance provision, even if they cooperate. In addition, VET policies vary across Regions.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

Promoting international mobility in IVET is part of the Guidelines for international students' mobility of 10/04/2013 ESF Regional Operational Programmes for the period 2014-2020.

Within the National Youth Employment Initiative (YEI – Ministry of Labour and European Social Fund Operational Programme on Youth Guarantee), traineeship in transnational mobility is one of the measures inserted in the Agreements signed with Regions that are in charge of providing for these traineeships at local level.

Within the Ministry of Education ESF 2014-2020 National Operational Programme, special projects for transnational mobility and internships in foreign countries are provided both within the school-work alternance in general and within Technical and Vocational schools (both at upper secondary and higher non-academic VET levels). Implementation is granted through special administrative guidelines issued by Ministry of Education to schools and Regional School Offices.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

Improvement actions are in the form of financing and enhancing the National Euroguidance Centre and the Italian database on learning opportunities connected to Ploteus and the Italian ERASMUS + Agencies.

The authorities involved are the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and the Ministry of Education, University and Research. The objective is to increase awareness of learning opportunities available in the European countries for IVET learners, students, trainees, apprentices, young people and adults. With regard to Euroguidance, a national network of 66 partners (Rete Nazionale di Diffusione - RND) has been established since 1994. The role of the network is to spread in a very capillary way information and documentation for learning mobility.

In 2015 specific information seminars for employment services operators in charge of delivering Youth Guarantee Programme to end-users (young people) have been organised. Transnational mobility schemes that can be provided through Erasmus+ and Your First Eures Job (Eures) were one of the focus of these seminars.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

There isn't a systematic evaluation of the improvement actions. However the National Euroguidance Centre monitors the website counter and number of prints delivered during events²⁰⁶.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

Information and assistance is provided to IVET institutions and companies through information days, events, newsletters, and information desk, for example:

- Annual guidance Fairs promoted by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour (Job Orienta – Verona; Salone dell'orientamento – Messina e Reggio Calabria; ABC Orientamento – Genova; etc.);
- The Info Days organised by the Erasmus+ Agency (ISFOL and INDIRE). With regard to the promotion of Call for Proposal Erasmus+ 2016, the Erasmus+/Isfol Agency organized 3 Info Days (North; Center; South

²⁰⁶ Day-to-day provision of information and guidance is also monitored. The Operational National Plan of Erasmus+, validated by the Ministry of Education, University and Research and the Ministry of Labour and Social policies, foresees evaluation activities which also apply to the provision of information and guidance for IVET learners' international mobility. In addition, the Italian Erasmus+ Agency is subject to the ISO certification, so also phone calls and other activities of information and guidance are recorded and evaluated. Finally, there is a continuing monitoring activity and, as in the past for Erasmus and the Leonardo da Vinci Programme, an external evaluation activity is expected for the new Erasmus+ projects.

Italy) and takes part in various specific information/training events organised by the public employment Centres; the Erasmus+/Indire Agency organised a specific national event in Milan targeted to all ECHE holders providing information on all mobility opportunities offered by the Programme for the higher education sector, and also takes part to local events organized by Higher education institutions or local associations.

- Events organized by Eurodesk Network, Regions, etc.

Information is also available on the Erasmus+ web site and Newsletter.

Specific seminars will be organised in 2016 for IVET institutions, employment services operators, chamber of commerce representatives, universities, etc. on transparency and mobility tools/projects/programmes in general. Transnational mobility opportunities provided by Erasmus+ and Your First Eures Job will be one of the focus of these seminars.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

Italy provides IVET learners with information on international learning mobility. However, this provision does not comprise a systematic coverage of personalised advice, counselling and guidance for their international learning mobility. The provision is also not coordinated countrywide as IVET in secondary education and VET under the responsibility of Regions operate separately and regional policies differ. There have been actions to improve this provision, however these actions are not subject to systematic evaluation. For further progress in this area, it could be considered enhancing a mechanism for the provision of personalised advice, counselling and guidance to IVET learners for their international mobility. Putting in place countrywide coordination of the provision as well as improvement actions regularly evaluated would constitute a significant step forward.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

There is no particular expression of the country's policy intention to integrate mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes. With regards to school-work alternance, IVET curricula programmes have been adapted (operational guidelines for schools to implement school-work alternance), but there is no specific adaptation to pathways implemented in foreign countries even though these kind of pathways are foreseen as a possible option. In practice, the situation is very diverse across regions and institutions. Integration is much more frequent in universities than in VET institutions.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

Italy has adopted the EU 6% benchmark. The national implementation of the benchmark assigns the objectives of 1% to VET Institution managed by Regions and 5% to Technical and Vocational Schools in the educational system²⁰⁷.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

In the past, examples of such facilitating measures were the representations that the National Agency made to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the Leonardo Da Vinci programme beneficiaries. The Leonardo National Agency approached the Ministry to better explain that the Leonardo Programme was a "learning mobility" one, similar in nature to Erasmus, and that consequently the beneficiaries of Leonardo projects were not concerned with work visas but instead should be easily delivered student visas. At present, this situation does not exist anymore thanks to the new integrated programme Erasmus+, where there are no more

²⁰⁷ Italy has also adopted the EU benchmark that in 2020 at least 20% of those graduating in the European Higher Education Area should have had a study or a training period abroad.

differences between VET learning mobility (ex Leonardo da Vinci mobility) and studying mobility (ex Erasmus mobility).

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

With regard to Erasmus+, the entire Programme has been simplified at EU and National levels in terms of administrative and financial procedures and burdens. The most helpful simplification is the introduction of “scales of Units” for the design of financial contribution to be granted to IVET institutions. This tool simplifies the statement of expenditures procedures by VET Institutions.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

The Italian law allows international learning mobility of students aged below 18 provided that there is a parental consent and an accompanying adult. In the context of Erasmus+, an accompanying adult is foreseen and financed for every 10 students aged below 18.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social security

Incoming apprentices and IVET students from the EU benefit (through the European Health Insurance card) from the same medical care as their counterparts in the country (i.e. local IVET learners).

Labour protection

Incoming learners are subject to the same labour laws as their Italian counterparts. Law 196/97, art. 18 (guidance and learning traineeship), and Regulations 142/98 establish the drafting of an insurance contract for students, both Italians and EU, involved in learning traineeship. Guidelines of 24 January 2013 approved in State-Regions Conference contain provisions for non-curricular traineeship of Italian and EU trainees. Guidelines for non-EU trainees (approved in State-Regions conference of 5 August 2014) contain provisions on insurance and protection. As traineeship issue is managed at regional level, Regions have issued regional laws on the basis of the above guidelines.

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE “ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES” THEMATIC AREA

There is no particular expression of the country policy intention to integrate mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes. However Italy has adopted the EU 6% benchmark as a target for mobility in IVET. The country has in place measures to facilitate the delivery of visas to IVET learners from third countries. The conditions for the mobility of minor IVET learners have been kept sufficiently low to avoid hampering their mobility. However, no specific measures have been taken to reduce the administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility. In future, it could be considered checking on the ground – e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys – the existence of needs for such measures and putting them in place as appropriate. Another step ahead could be to consider developing a clear policy intention to promote the integration of mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

Recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility is at the discretion of IVET providers, and may be granted on a case by case basis according to the specific learning agreements between sending and receiving institutions.

The Your First Eures Job and The Job of My Life- MobiPro projects are governed by specific provisions when it comes to the recognition of the qualifications acquired abroad.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

Learning acquired abroad by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility may be recognised, but the process is felt by users as somewhat difficult.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in the country applies to:

- Credit points (partial recognition)
- Units of Learning outcome (partial recognition);
- Qualifications/diplomas/degrees (full recognition)

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

Recognition of learning outcomes is at the discretion of IVET providers. The recognition process takes place within the national legal framework of the "Competences certification national system" (Legislative Decree 13/2013).

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

There is no time limit set for processing recognition requests.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

Contact points for recognition are the Regional Education Offices of the Ministry of Education and the ENIC-NARIC agency. Visibility of these contact points is ensured through information campaigns based on events, conferences and forums on a monthly basis, and information days held in universities all over Italy²⁰⁸.

²⁰⁸ Regarding IVET (upper secondary education and VET), actions for information on validation and certification of competences are foreseen within the national legal framework (Legislative Decree 13/2013 on "Competences certification national system"),

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

Although each player involved in the visibility policy monitors its own activities, and actions financed on EU funds undergo financial monitoring, a general strategy of evaluation of the visibility policy at national level is lacking.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Europass Mobility Document is used by IVET providers to describe skills and competences acquired during the mobility experience. The Document is used by the sending and receiving institutions.

The Europass Certificate Supplement is used by the institutions that issue qualifications at the end of the IVET pathway: education institutions, Regions and Provinces, other public authorities providing IVET. The purpose is to describe the learning outcomes acquired in terms of skills and competences and indicate the EQF level.

ECVET is mostly used when designing mobility projects for learners financed by ERASMUS +. The ECVET approach is largely adopted by Erasmus+ VET beneficiaries even if a whole application of the tool involving the recognition of learning outcomes as ECVET credit points is still in a testing phase. One of the more active regions in this testing phase is Piedmont Region which in 2012 regulated the recognition of international learning mobility experiences (and the related learning outcomes) achieved in IVET and CVET.

Italy does not yet have a complete and effective national qualification framework but has completed in 2012 the referencing to EQF of Italian qualifications awarded by public authorities (Ministries and Regions) and recognised at national level. Within 2016 a first release of the National Qualification Framework will be issued. The information on EQF levels of the referenced qualification is in IVET qualifications and in Europass Certificate Supplement. Institutions that issue qualifications use EQF level to indicate the learning outcomes acquired by learners.

even though these information actions are not specific for IVET international mobility.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

Recognition of learning acquired abroad by IVET learners is possible in Italy. The existing approach to recognition applies to credit points, units and qualifications / degrees / diplomas. It makes use of the Europass Mobility Document and ECVET. However the process is felt as difficult by its users. It is not subject to a time limit for processing recognition requests. Actions have been undertaken to make visible the contact points where users can get information on recognition, but their monitoring is fragmented and a full-fledged comprehensive evaluation is lacking. The Europass Certificate Supplement, the NQF/EQF and the learning outcomes approach are in use in the country in general, but does not seem to serve in the context of IVET international mobility. Addressing these issues in future could allow for valuable progress to promote international mobility in IVET.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

In the context of Erasmus+ Programme, the key action 2 "Strategic partnerships" allows to finance projects aimed to create networks and partnerships able to build and share tools and methodologies to support learning mobility. Even in this case, Italy capitalizes the opportunities offered by the European level adapting them to the national needs. For example the Erasmus+ Agency organizes "contact seminars", also open to foreign VET Institutions.

Regarding school-work alternance and its possible option to be implemented in a foreign country (transnational mobility school-work alternance), a National Register by the Chamber of Commerce is about to be set with companies willing to receive students. Even though the transnational mobility school-work alternance is part of a legal framework (Law 107/2015 La Buona Scuola), there are not yet specific provisions for this specific path.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The Erasmus+ Agency monitors the transnational project partnerships financed at national level.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

There is an increasing effort in using the European Social Fund both at Regional and national level. For example the ESF 2014-2020 Ministry of Education National Operational Programme finances scholarships for transnational mobility and internships projects within both school-work alternance in general and Technical and Vocational schools (both at upper secondary and higher non-academic VET levels).

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Controls are carried out on the basis of financial and procedural criteria in reference to the correct application of EU financial reporting and audit procedures. The conclusions of auditing and monitoring activities are duly taken into account by the managing authorities. Irregularities are reported and prosecuted.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

There are initiatives at local level. For example many mobility projects promoted by Regions include specific actions aimed at supporting tutors and other staff involved.

Within the Your First Eures Job project, small and medium enterprises involved in hiring/hosting a trainee or an apprentice receive a special benefit for his/her integration in the company.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

Annual reports and financial auditing are carried out. Customer surveys are carried out by VET institutions. However these monitoring activities do not translate into recommendations that would shape future generations of policies.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

Although the relating information presented in this fiche is very limited, Italy has in place actions to support companies and IVET institutions in the creation of partnerships and networks and in organising international mobility projects. Actions to fund IVET learners for their international learning mobility are also in place. However, although some of these support actions are subject to monitoring, systematic and complete evaluation of policies in this area is lacking. In future, it could be considered putting in place, for all support policies in this area, a full-fledged regular evaluation, including translating monitoring activities into recommendations that are actually implemented and improve the next generation of actions over time.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In the thematic area of Information and Guidance, Italy provides IVET learners with information on international learning mobility. However, this provision does not comprise a systematic coverage of personalised advice, counselling and guidance for their international learning mobility. The provision is also not coordinated countrywide. There have been actions to improve this provision, however these actions are not subject to systematic evaluation. For further progress in this area, it could be considered enhancing a mechanism for the provision of personalised advice, counselling and guidance to IVET learners for their international mobility. Putting in place countrywide coordination of the provision as well as improvement actions regularly evaluated would constitute a significant step forward.

In the area of Administrative and Institutional issues, there is no particular expression of the country's policy intention to integrate mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes. However Italy has

adopted the EU 6% benchmark as a target for mobility in IVET. The country has in place measures to facilitate the delivery of visas to IVET learners from third countries. The conditions for the mobility of minor IVET learners have been kept sufficiently low to avoid hampering their mobility. However, no specific measures have been taken to reduce the administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility. In future, it could be considered checking on the ground – e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys – the existence of needs for such measures and putting them in place as appropriate. Another step ahead could be to consider developing a clear policy intention to promote the integration of mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes.

Regarding Recognition of Learning Outcomes, recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET learners is possible in Italy. The existing approach to recognition applies to credit points, units and qualifications / degrees / diplomas. It makes use of the Europass Mobility Document and ECVET. However the process is felt as difficult by its users. It is not subject to a time limit for processing recognition requests. Actions have been undertaken to make visible the contact points where users can get information on recognition, but their monitoring is fragmented and a full-fledged comprehensive evaluation is lacking. The Europass Certificate Supplement, the NQF/EQF and the learning outcomes approach are in use in the country in general, but does not seem to serve in the context of IVET international mobility. Addressing these issues in future could allow for valuable progress to promote international mobility in IVET.

Finally, in the area of Partnerships and Funding, although the relating information presented in this fiche is very limited, Italy has in place actions to support companies and IVET institutions in the creation of partnerships and networks and in organising international mobility projects. Actions to fund IVET learners for their international learning mobility are also in place. However, although some of these support actions are subject to monitoring, systematic and complete evaluation of policies in this area is lacking. In future, it could be considered putting in place, for all support policies in this area, a full-fledged regular evaluation, including translating monitoring activities into recommendations that are actually implemented and improve the next generation of actions over time.

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IVET level(s) covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary
- Tertiary

Main schemes for international IVET mobility in Latvia

Mobility scheme	Source of funds	Target groups
Erasmus+	- European - National budget	- Vocational education students and recent graduates; - Apprentices; - Vocational education teaching staff, specialists of international motilities, supervisors of work placements; - Higher education students, teaching staff.

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

The information and guidance provision regarding initial vocational education mobility is ensured within a broader information and guidance mechanism in the country. The responsible state institution on international mobility is the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), which has delegated the implementation of EU programme Erasmus+ to:

- The State Education Development Agency (SEDA), in charge of Erasmus+ programme (and until 2013, Lifelong Learning Programme) in the Latvian general basic and secondary education, vocational education, higher education and adult education areas; and

- The Agency of International Programmes for Youth, in charge of the part of Erasmus+ programme related to promoting youth activities and mobility, working with voluntary services for youth, non-formal learning and youth information programmes.

Information and publicity measures are an integral part of the Erasmus+ programme implementation. In SEDA, EU Education Programmes Department (including units of higher education mobility projects, school and adult mobility, strategic partnerships, as well as programmes management) and Information and Career Guidance Department (implementing also Euroguidance activities) are involved in the information and guidance provision regarding mobility.

The main target groups of information and guidance on mobility are coordinators of mobility projects in vocational education institutions, career education specialists in vocational education institutions, as well as students and their parents. Information and guidance to learners is provided directly at vocational education institutions by a teacher or mobility project specialist.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

The information and guidance mechanism on mobility is countrywide coordinated by a single agency, i.e. the State Education Development Agency, which administers implementation of mobility projects and provides information and disseminates results, as well as implements Euroguidance activities.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

The Law on Higher Education Institutions (1995) stipulates that international cooperation at tertiary level of education including promotion of student international mobility is one of the tasks of higher education institutions (HEIs), which also implement professional higher education study programmes. Therefore, HEIs should cooperate with their counterparts in other countries, promote this cooperation, as well as promote the exchange of students and academic personnel between HEIs in Latvia and abroad (Article 5, point 3). The law regulates joint study programmes, including higher professional education programmes, which should ensure mobility of students and personnel (Article 55¹).

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

Such improvement actions are lacking. The promotion of international learning mobility for vocational education students at secondary and higher education level is a part of education development policy defined in the document "Education development guidelines for 2014-2020" (2014)²⁰⁹. However, these measures are not focused on supporting the development of information provision and guidance to individual learners.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

There is no improvement policy for the provision of information and guidance on mobility for IVET learners, so no evaluation of it. Vocational education institutions submit reports to the National Agency which in turn prepares and submits to the Ministry of Education and Science its annual report on the implementation of Erasmus+ mobility programme. The National Agency also conducts studies on impact, dissemination, sustainability of mobility projects, as well as on participants' satisfaction. However guidance for learners is not specifically addressed in this monitoring activity.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

The main arrangements for providing initial vocational education institutions and/or enterprises with information and assistance on international mobility in initial vocational education include:

- Internet: several sections in the State Education Development Agency's official website²¹⁰ focus on the mobility (Erasmus+) projects and career information networks. A special website is devoted to Erasmus+ programme²¹¹, and there is a Euroguidance wiki website on mobility (in Latvian)²¹²;
- Social media: Twitter²¹³, Facebook²¹⁴, Flickr²¹⁵;

²⁰⁹ <http://m.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266406>

²¹⁰ www.viaa.gov.lv

²¹¹ www.erasmusplus.lv

²¹² <http://mobilitate-euroguidance.wikispaces.com/Par+mums>

²¹³ https://twitter.com/VIAA_LV

- Informative materials: free, online flyers, newsletters, brochures etc.;
- Events: conferences, seminars, workshops, including regional events, education exhibitions;
- Interviews and articles in media;
- Billboards in 10 regional libraries.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

Latvia has a mechanism for providing IVET learners with information and guidance for international mobility. This provision is coordinated countrywide. However, the country does not have in place actions to improve its provision overtime. Better enhancing international mobility in IVET in future would require putting in place a regular evaluated procedure to ensure that the provision of information and guidance to IVET learners improves over time.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

Although international mobility is not yet included in vocational education as compulsory element there is a clear and marked policy intention to increase the provision of international learning mobility for vocational education students at secondary and higher education level. Promoting international mobility of initial vocational education and HE students is part of major education development policy, defined in the policy document "Education development guidelines for 2014-2020" (2014)²¹⁶.

<https://twitter.com/EUErasmusPlus>

²¹⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/EUErasmusPlusProgramme>

²¹⁵ https://www.flickr.com/photos/erasmus_plus

²¹⁶ <http://m.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266406>

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

The policy document "Education development guidelines for 2014-2020" (2014)²¹⁷ includes different targets for international learning mobility with timeline, such as:

- Number of initial vocational education students participating in mobility activities (from 473 in 2012 to 538 in 2020);
- Proportion of young people (18-34 years old) obtaining professional qualification in initial vocational education programmes with international mobility experience (from 5.3% in 2012 to 6% in 2020);
- Number of HE students, including from professional higher education programmes, participating in mobility activities (from 1960 in 2012 to 2548 in 2020);
- Proportion of HE graduates, including from professional higher education programmes, with international mobility experience (from 13.7% in 2012 to 20% in 2020);
- Proportion of foreign HE students (in mobility), including from professional higher education programmes, in the total number of HE students (from 0.8% in 2012 to 2% in 2020).

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

In Latvia, there are in force agreements on the facilitation of the issuance of visas between the European Community and the following third countries: Russian Federation, Ukraine, Armenia, Moldova, Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Azerbaijan and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. A written request or a confirmation of enrolment from the host education institution, student cards or certificates of the courses to be attended are sufficient documents for justifying the purpose of the journey to the Latvia for students and accompanying teachers who undertake trips for the educational purposes, including in the framework of exchange programmes, as well as other school related activities. All categories of visas are issued for them according to the simplified procedure without requiring any other justification, invitation or validation concerning the purpose of the journey.

In addition, fees for processing the visa application are waived for the mentioned target groups²¹⁸. The Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations

²¹⁷ <http://m.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266406>

²¹⁸ <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/consular-information/european-community-visa-facilitation-agreements-with-third-countries>

regarding the state fee for examination of the documents necessary for requesting a visa, residence permit or the status of a long-term resident of the European Union in the Republic of Latvia and the services related thereto" (2013)²¹⁹ stipulate the costs for individuals wishing to obtain visas and residency permits. The regulations determine that:

- Students who arrive to study in an accredited Latvian education institution within the framework of an exchange programme and their inviter are exempted from payment of number of state fees;
- The inviter of a foreigner who will request a visa or a residence permit with the purpose of studies or practice placement is exempted from payment of state fees for requests of a work permit for the invitee.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

The State Education Development Agency regularly carries out small surveys (during informative and/or monitoring seminars) to find out satisfaction of beneficiaries with different administrative aspects of the programme implementation. These studies have not highlighted unmet needs of users regarding the administrative burdens. No specific measure has therefore been taken. Any legal entity can submit a project proposal for international mobility of initial vocational education learners. The mobility programmes are administrated by a single agency (i.e. SEDA), the paper work is reduced to apply for projects, and applications can be submitted electronically.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

No specific measure regarding the movement of IVET learners has been taken. According to the Cabinet of Ministers regulations "Procedures by which children cross the state border" (2010)²²⁰, when a child, who is a national of Latvia, departs from the state independently or accompanied by an authorised person, they have to present a notarial certified consent of at least one parent. The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs has to, upon request of an education institution, submit and approve the list of travellers for school trips in the European Union, if a child living in the Republic of Latvia, who does not have citizenship of any of the EU

²¹⁹ <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=260857>

²²⁰ <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=214902>

Member State, is going on an excursion with a children's group to a European Union Member State. A list of travellers is recognised as valid travel document if the photographs complying with the requirements of passport photography of those students, who are not citizens of EU Member State, are attached to the list of travellers. The requirement regarding the photographs for school trips within the EU is not applied when the students can present a personal identification document with a photograph.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social security

The state guaranteed medical services in Latvia can be received by the citizens of EU and EEA countries and the citizens of Switzerland who stay in Latvia due to employment or as self-employed persons, as well as the members of their families, and the foreigners with permanent residence permit in Latvia. Citizens of the European Union Member States, Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland or Switzerland can use the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). The EHIC card can be used if the person is temporarily going to one of the Member States for study practice. This document certifies that the holder is a resident of one of the aforementioned countries and is covered by the social insurance rules of this country. During the period that the holder of the EHIC card resides in another of the participating countries, the card ensures the right to receive necessary or emergency health care to the same extent that it is available under the national social insurance rules to the permanent residents of the country in question. The medical help is provided by the hospitals and the doctors who provide state-guaranteed health care services²²¹. The Cabinet of Ministers Regulations on "Health care organization and financing arrangements" (2013)²²² define the procedures for a person – insured by the EU and EEA Member States and the Swiss social security system – to receive health care services in Latvia. These Regulations contain legal norms in accordance with the European Parliament and the Council Directive 2011/24/EU on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare (9 March 2011). According to the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations on foreigners' health insurance" (2008)²²³, foreigners may enter and stay in the territory of Latvia without the health insurance policy if they are citizens of the EU, the EEA or Switzerland and want to stay in Latvia not more than 90 days.

²²¹ <http://www.vmnvd.gov.lv/en/nhs-services/european-health-insurance-card-ehic>

²²² <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=263457>

²²³ <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=179063>

Third countries nationals should have an insurance that guarantees expenses for at least emergency medical treatment; transportation to the nearest medical facility; transportation to the home country in case of serious illness or death. The sum of the insurer's liability limit during the insurance period should not be less than EUR 30,000 when requiring short-term visas, and EUR 42,600 when requiring long-term visas.

Labour protection

The Labour Protection Law (2001)²²⁴ states that employers have an obligation to ensure the functioning of the labour protection system in their enterprise. Expenditures related to labour protection have to be covered by the employer as well as from a special budget intended for occupational accidents. Employers should ensure (including financing) mandatory health examination for those employees, whose health conditions are affected or may be affected by the working environment factors harmful to health, and for those employees who need special conditions at work. The Cabinet of Ministers Regulations "Labour protection requirements in workplaces" (2009)²²⁵ prescribe the health and safety requirements for individuals in workplaces. Employers have to ensure the safety and health of their employees in the workplaces. The Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations regarding work in which employment of adolescents is prohibited and exceptions when employment in such work is permitted in connection with vocational training of the adolescent" (2002)²²⁶ stipulate jobs which may not be practiced by adolescents, and exceptions when employment in such jobs is permitted for the purpose of education. Employment of adolescents is permissible only in exceptional cases when it is related to vocational education. The work has to be performed in direct presence of work supervisor or a trusted representative, and compliance with regulations related to labour protection has to be ensured. These Regulations take into account legal norms of Council Directive 94/33/EC on the protection of young people at work (22 June 1994).

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES" THEMATIC AREA

Latvia has a policy orientation to promote the integration of international mobility experiences into the curricula of IVET programmes. The country

²²⁴ <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=26020>

²²⁵ <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=191430>

²²⁶ <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=62644>

has also set targets for international mobility in IVET, and has taken measures to facilitate the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from 11 third countries. Regarding the reduction of administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility, surveys suggest that users are satisfied with the existing situation and no specific measure is needed. However there is a lack of specific measures to remove the possible obstacles to international movement of minor apprentices and IVET students. Steps for future progress in this area could consist in assessing these obstacles and arranging accordingly appropriate facilitating measures if proved necessary.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

Recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility is at the discretion of IVET providers, and may be granted on a case by case basis according to the specific learning agreements between sending and receiving institutions. Vocational education providers take into consideration learning outcomes of students achieved during the international learning mobility according to the specific learning agreements between sending and hosting institutions without any specific pre-described recognition procedure. Schools decide which parts of study course (both theoretical and/or practical) may be replaced with the learning outcomes achieved by the students during the mobility.

In Higher Education however, the recognition of study periods obtained abroad is regulated by the Law on Higher Education Institutions, Article 84 (1995). The sending HEIs are responsible for the decision on recognition of learning outcomes of students (including those of professional higher education programmes) involved in international study mobility, and the transfer of gained credit points.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

IVET learners involved in international learning mobility have easy access to recognition of learning acquired abroad. Although in Latvia there are no legal regulations on recognition of learning outcomes achieved abroad for initial vocational education students, they essentially have no problems getting their learning outcomes recognised. The only mobility for them is provided in the framework of Erasmus+ programme, which selects the best mobility projects, and vocational education institutions choose the best students for mobility. Vocational education institutions assess the extent to which the experience gained during the mobility is transferred as practice. The recognition of learning acquired abroad is provided after every mobility period at institutional level on basis of learning agreements.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in the country applies to:

- Courses
- Credit points
- Modules
- Programmes
- Qualifications/diplomas/degrees

Credit points (CP) are used only for HE sector. The Law on Higher Education Institutions (1995)²²⁷ defines the credit point as an accounting unit of studies which corresponds to a student's workload of 40 academic hours (one week of studies). Learning outcomes of student achieved in other HEIs or colleges, as well as the acquisition of study programmes or their part should be counted in their study programme in form of credit points.

The Law "On the Regulated Professions and the Recognition of Professional Qualifications" (2001)²²⁸ determines the regulated professions, as well as the basic requirements to be observed for the recognition of the qualifications obtained in these professions in Latvia and in other countries.

²²⁷ <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=37967>

²²⁸ <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=26021>

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

The mobility projects for initial vocational education students are ensured only through the Erasmus+ programme, which is administered by a single national agency – State Education Development Agency. Hence, although, there is no national legal framework for the recognition of learning outcomes achieved in the mobility periods, requirements of the EU programme to take into account the learning outcomes achieved abroad must be followed by participating institutions for the projects to be successful.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

There is no regulatory time frame for the recognition of learning outcomes achieved in the mobility periods.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

There is no visibility policy. In practice, learners can contact their institutions, which are responsible for the recognition of learning outcomes achieved during the mobility. For the recognition of qualifications acquired in other countries, the responsible body is the Academic Information Centre (AIC) – Latvian ENIC/NARIC. AIC evaluates the level of the qualification compared to Latvian educational system and issues its statement. This statement is submitted to the education institution or employer for them to take final decision on recognition²²⁹. AIC can be contacted by learners directly or via Education institutions. However visibility actions for making AIC known by learners potentially concerned with recognition are lacking.

²²⁹ The Law “On the Regulated Professions and the Recognition of Professional Qualifications” (2001) determines the regulated professions, as well as the basic requirements to be observed for the recognition of the qualifications obtained in these professions in Latvia and in other countries: <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=26021>. AIC as ENIC/NARIC is information institution and contact point on issues relating to recognition of diplomas, qualifications and degrees acquired abroad. The information is provided through AIC website, social media, and regular events for admission officers who work with international students. AIC provides individual consultations for learners via email, social media (Facebook, Twitter, draugiem.lv), telephone and face-to-face meetings.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

There is no visibility policy, so no evaluation of it.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Latvia has been represented in the European network of National Europass Centres since 2005 by the Academic Information Centre. Europass Mobility documents have been issued since 2005. Approximately one half of issued Europass Mobility documents are requested for the initial vocational education students' international mobility periods.

At present, the Europass Certificate Supplement is not used in Latvia.

At present, ECVET system is not introduced in the Latvian vocational education, yet there is a political willingness and initiatives that could support the introduction of ECVET in Latvia. According to the policy document "Education development guidelines for 2014-2020" (2014), the use of ECVET system should be facilitated in the Latvian vocational education. Therefore, since April 2014, the State Education Development Agency implements the "ECVET activity" project (2014-2015). The aim of project is to popularize and promote implementation of ECVET principles in Latvia. Vocational education institutions which participate in mobility projects already use ECVET principles (except ECVET points), because this is requirement for the EU programme Erasmus+ mobility projects in vocational education.

The Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF) was adopted in 2010. Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers (2013)²³⁰ state that higher education diploma supplement should include LQF/EQF or EHEA-QF level. The LQF/EQF levels should also be reflected in the diagram of the Latvian Higher Education System that is part of the diploma supplement. The policy document "Education development guidelines for 2014-2020" (2014) set the task to continue the development of National Qualifications Framework according to European Qualifications Framework model including vocational education sector. Amendments (2015) to the Vocational Education Law²³¹ stipulate conformity of Latvian professional qualifications levels to the Latvian Qualifications Framework levels and inclusion of reference to the Latvian Qualifications Framework level in all documents certifying vocational education or qualification (by 2017).

Vocational education institutions are required to use learning outcomes

²³⁰ <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=256157>

²³¹ <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=20244>

approach during the international mobility projects following the principles of Erasmus+ programme.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

Latvia has in place an approach for the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET learners. The process seems to be felt as easy to use by IVET learners. It is coordinated countrywide and covers almost all types of learning outcomes (i.e. courses, credit points, modules, programmes and qualifications, with the exception of units, however). The Europass Mobility Document, ECVET, the LQF/EQF and the Learning Outcomes approach are used for the purpose of visibility, transfer and recognition in IVET.

However, the recognition system is not subject to a regulatory time frame for processing recognition requests, and the country does not have an evaluated policy for the visibility of contact points where users can get information on recognition. In future, it could be at least checked (e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys) whether a visibility policy is necessary. Addressing these issues could be considered for further progress, as well as extending the range of learning components (units) and EU tools (Europass Certificate Supplement) taken into account in the recognition process.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The policy document "Education development guidelines for 2014-2020" (2014)²³², which outlines national policy in education, includes activities facilitating support measures for international cooperation. It is planned to promote higher education internationalization and international mobility both in higher education and vocational education for students, teachers and adult education teachers by means of the EU Programme

²³² likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266406

Erasmus+. Countrywide support in the creation of mobility partnerships and networks is provided by State Education Development Agency for initial vocational education providers and enterprises, which wish to participate in initial vocational education mobility projects. The planned Erasmus+ programme's measures are established and implemented by this agency. Vocational education institutions and enterprises engaging in mobility projects receive not only financial support, but also wide informative and advisory support from the agency. The agency provides supportive services for stakeholders to find mobility partners and work placements, as well as organizes contact seminars and preparatory visits for project proposers. The Ministry of Education and Science prepared informative report "On necessary funding to ensure the implementation of European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport Erasmus+" (2014) and Cabinet of Ministers allowed the ministry to assume long-term liabilities of the pertaining state budget in 2014-2020²³³.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The partnership supporting policy is monitored. The State Education Development Agency annually prepares, publishes and submits to the Ministry of Education and Science the report on its activity, including the review of the coordinated partnership projects.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

Financial support for mobility participants is provided countrywide in terms of the Erasmus+ programme, which is the only financial scheme available for the initial vocational education sectors. Initial vocational education students sign the contract with sending institution on receiving financial support for the implementation of Erasmus+ mobility. This funding includes financial support for individual aid (EUR 18-112 per day

²³³ This includes:

- Financing the State Education Development Agency for provision of Erasmus+ implementation (EUR 3 million), in particular the implementation of informative and publicity activities addressed at proposers of mobility projects;
- Provision of mobility in higher education (EUR 9.9 million).

<http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/view.do?id=4949>

depending on the country in which mobility will take place). The funding of travel expenses and language learning may be paid to the vocational education students or covered by the sending institution. The sending institution in the contract provides acknowledgment that necessary health, liability and accident insurance will be provided.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The funding policy is monitored. Vocational education institutions implementing international mobility projects prepare project final reports which are submitted to the State Education Development Agency following the lines of Erasmus+ programme.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

Vocational education institutions and enterprises involved in mobility projects receive not only financial support, but also wide informative and advisory support from the State Education Development Agency (see Section 1.1.6).

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

The support policy is monitored. The State Education Development Agency annually prepares, publishes and submits to the Ministry of Education and Science the report on its activity, including the review of the support actions to organising mobility.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

Latvia has in place actions to support companies and IVET institutions in the creation of partnerships and networks for mobility projects, as well as in organising mobility projects. The country also funds IVET learners for their mobility activities. These actions are monitored. For future progress, it might be considered making sure a full-fledged evaluation of these

policies is in place, ensuring that regular monitoring also translates into readjustments / reforms that improves policies over time.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In the thematic area of Information and Guidance, Latvia has a mechanism for providing IVET learners with information and guidance for international mobility. This provision is coordinated countrywide. However, the country does not have in place actions to improve its provision overtime. Better enhancing international mobility in IVET in future would require putting in place improvement actions regularly evaluated to ensure that the provision of information and guidance to IVET learners improves over time.

In the area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, Latvia has a policy orientation to promote the integration of international mobility experiences into the curricula of IVET programmes. The country has also set targets for international mobility in IVET, and has taken measures to facilitate the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from 11 third countries. Regarding the reduction of administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility, surveys suggest that users are satisfied with the existing situation and no specific measure is needed. However there is a lack of specific measures to remove the possible obstacles to international movement of minor apprentices and IVET students. Steps for future progress in this area could consist in assessing these obstacles and arranging accordingly appropriate facilitating measures if proved necessary.

Regarding Recognition of Learning Outcomes, Latvia has in place a mechanism that seems to be felt as easy to use by IVET learners. The process is coordinated countrywide and covers almost all types of learning outcomes (i.e. courses, credit points, modules, programmes and qualifications, with exception of units, however). The Europass Mobility Document, ECVET, the LQF/EQF and the Learning Outcomes approach are used for the purpose of visibility, transfer and recognition in IVET.

However, the recognition system is not subject to a regulatory time frame for processing recognition requests, and the country does not have an evaluated policy for the visibility of contact points where users can get information on recognition. In future, it could be at least checked (e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys) whether a visibility policy is necessary. Addressing these issues could be considered for further progress, as well as extending the range of learning components (units) and EU tools (Europass Certificate Supplement) taken into account in the

recognition process.

Finally, in the area of Partnerships and Funding, Latvia has in place actions to support companies and IVET institutions in the creation of partnerships and networks for mobility projects, as well as in organising mobility projects. The country also funds IVET learners for their mobility activities. These actions are monitored. For future progress, it might be considered making sure that a full-fledged evaluation of these policies is in place, ensuring that regular monitoring also translates into readjustments / reforms that improve the next generation of policies.

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IVET level covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary

Main schemes for international IVET mobility in Luxembourg

Mobility scheme	Source of funds	Target group
Erasmus+	European	IVET learners, teachers and schools staff
Mandatory mobility (including cross-border apprenticeship)		Students in specific branches or willing to learn specific trades

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Luxembourg has an information and guidance mechanism for the international learning mobility of IVET learners.

Mobility via traineeship abroad

Organisation

Students in secondary schools or institutions that have applied for an Erasmus+ project can plan traineeships abroad during their training. The total duration of the traineeships may last between 2 weeks and 1 year. In the IVET training (except cross-border apprenticeship, see following item) only traineeships could be done abroad.

Actors

The main contact point for students is their secondary schools/institutions which provide all information. Secondary schools get all the information regarding the administrative management from Anefore, which is the national agency responsible since 2007 for the implementation of European programmes for education and training throughout life.

Target groups

Only students in secondary schools/institutions having a mobility project

with Anefore are concerned.

Delivery process

The secondary schools having a mobility project may promote the mobility to their student via their teachers and guidance services (SPOS). The guidance service gives general information to the learners and their parents and also gives personal consultations and interviews. The new Erasmus+ programme is managed by two national agencies in Luxembourg: Anefore for the education and training part, and the Youth national service (Service National de la Jeunesse SNJ) for the youth part. Information on mobility opportunities is also provided by local Action for Youth (Action locale pour la Jeunesse ALJ) agencies. In each of the services, the learners could receive personal advice.

Content

Secondary schools provide students with all the documents necessary for the organisation of a traineeship and they follow them during the training. Anefore makes available to schools/institutions a series of administrative documents and forms that contain the information necessary for the organization of the traineeships. Secondary schools may add additional requirements if necessary (new insurance etc.). Anefore is at the disposal of the institutions in the event of questions or if they need additional information.

Mandatory Mobility

Organisation

Certain training/courses require a placement abroad. This is in particular the case for certain training in the agricultural field and in health. There are also trades that could only be learned via cross-border apprenticeships. Cross-border apprenticeship is an apprenticeship where the work-based learning part is carried out in a training institution located in Luxembourg and where the school-based part is provided by an institution/secondary school in a neighbouring country.

Actors

Guidance services at school/national level give information regarding the branches concerned. The authorisation of the Ministry of National Education, Children and youth (MENJE), of the national employment service (Adem – Public employment service) and of the professional chamber concerned should be sought prior to any cross-border apprenticeship. The foreign secondary schools/institutions provide the general education and the school-based part of the VET training.

Target groups

Students in specific branches or willing to learn specific trades.

Delivery process

Any guidance services and educational institutions can provide information on these types of training.

Content

Information on the Qualities / Knowledge Required, a training description and information on possible specializations following the training are provided²³⁴.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

The information and guidance mechanism is countrywide coordinated by Anefore.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

Legal provisions²³⁵ in Luxembourg include the objective of promoting the international learning mobility in IVET. Such is the case for instance of the framework agreement on the cross-border mobility in the Greater Region.

A Law project on guidance under preparation outlines that each school must develop an orientation approach adapted to the specific needs of its learners population and aimed among others, to inform about the education and training pathway opportunities in Luxembourg as well as abroad. Secondary schools in particular will have an important role in this.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

Luxembourg has taken measures to further improve the provision of information and guidance on international mobility for IVET learners.

²³⁴ An example is provided here:

https://beruffer.anelo.lu/jobs/maroquinier_iere

<http://www.handsup.lu/fr/metiers-formations/listing/fiche-metier-pdf/metiers-de-la-mode-sante-hygiene/maroquinier>

²³⁵ Cross-border apprenticeships:

<http://www.legilux.public.lu/leg/a/archives/2010/0189/a189.pdf#page=34>

<http://www.legilux.public.lu/leg/a/archives/2014/0153/a153.pdf#page=2>

Mobility via traineeship abroad

The Law project on guidance currently under preparation provides that schools put in place a guidance process corresponding to certain quality criteria developed by the Guidance House Coordination Service in consultation with the SCRIPT (Department for Coordination of Educational and Technological Research and Innovation) and secondary schools. A pilot project has been launched in February 2015, 6 secondary schools are part of a pilot group, and 10 others take part in a think tank. The six institutions of the pilot group will develop their own guidance process by the end of the school year 2015-2016, and then they will implement it during the school year 2016-2017. Meanwhile, the pilot group, under the direction of SCRIPT will develop the framework and the quality criteria for orientation. This work will be finalized in early 2017. The implementation of a guidance process will become mandatory for all secondary schools starting with 2017-2018.

Mandatory mobility

The actors of the Greater Region²³⁶, in partnership with other relevant bodies, decided to deepen their cooperation in support of cross-border vocational training. They have thus developed a framework agreement²³⁷ that was signed on 13 November 2014 in Luxembourg²³⁸. The agreement entered into force on 4 December 2014. It defines for the first time common objectives for cross-border training for the Greater Region and proposes appropriate approaches to achieve these common goals. It also describes the measures to be taken in the field of "information and communication to sensitise citizens and businesses of the Greater Region to the opportunities for cross-border vocational training" and increase the visibility thereof. One of the objectives is the improvement of information on the possibilities of cross-border vocational training in the Greater Region. This also involves improving the information on the various initiatives in the fields of vocational training and skills at EU level.

²³⁶ Saarland, Lorraine, Luxembourg, Rhineland-Palatinate, Wallonia and the rest of the French Community of Belgium, and the German-speaking Community of Belgium.

²³⁷ <http://www.men.public.lu/fr/actualites/communiqués-conference-presse/2014/11/13-accord-cadre/rahmenvereinbarung-accord-cadre.pdf>

²³⁸ By the Minister of Education, Children and Youth, the Minister of Labour, Employment and Social and Solidarity Economy, the director of the public employment agency (ADEM), and the director of EURES-T PED (European Employment Services - Border). The signing by most other actors was made in November 5, 2014 in Trier.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

There is no evaluation of the guidance improvement process as the SCRIPT-led process is still underway. On the information side, the improvement measures are subject to evaluation. Each year, the partners report on the progress of the implementation of the Framework Agreement to the Summit of the Greater Region. The conclusions are published and transmitted for opinion to the Interregional Parliamentary Council as well as to the Economic and Social Committee of the Greater Region. The monitoring of the framework agreement implementation and the coordination of reporting are under the responsibility of the WG Labour Market of the Greater Region Summit, supported by the Secretariat of the Greater Region Summit. From partners' reports and opinions of the Interregional Parliamentary Council and the Economic and Social Committee of the Greater Region, the WG Labour Market of the Greater Region Summit makes recommendations which will then be adopted by the Greater Region Summit and brought to the attention of the partners.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

Mobility via traineeship abroad

Anefore provides information by several channels:

- Websites²³⁹
- Leaflets
- Press releases
- Information meetings for/in secondary schools
- Interventions in conferences and seminars
- Social networks
- Mailings

Mandatory Mobility

- Guidance leaflet
- Website on Guidance and trades²⁴⁰

²³⁹ <http://www.anefore.lu/programmes/erasmus/formation-professionnelle/>
<http://www.erasmusplus.lu/>

²⁴⁰ <https://beruffer.anelo.lu/>, <http://www.handsup.lu/fr/metiers-formations>

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

IVET students interested to undertake a traineeship abroad are provided with information and guidance through their schools / VET institutions. These in turn receive information from Anefore, the national agency responsible for European mobility programmes and lifelong learning, including the VET part of the Erasmus+ programme. Students undertaking mandatory placements abroad (cross-border apprenticeship) also are provided with information and guidance at school and national level. The whole provision of information and guidance to IVET learners for international learning mobility is countrywide coordinated by Anefore. The country has taken measures to improve the provision of information and guidance for IVET learning mobility. Goals in this respect are included in Anefore's mission, and there's also a Law project under preparation aiming to streamline the guidance process across schools and increase its quality. Measures have also been taken to improve information for cross-border vocational training as part of a Framework Agreement between partners in the Greater Region, which entered into force in 2014. The measures taken to improve the provision of information and guidance are also subject to evaluation (at least to some extent as the reform of guidance is still underway).

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

In Luxembourg, the international learning mobility of IVET students is integrated in the curricula of a certain number of IVET programmes with mandatory mobility, and IVET programmes of secondary schools participating in Erasmus+.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

Luxembourg's target for international mobility in IVET is to increase the share of VET learners who have received a certificate, diploma or other type of recognition/validation of their learning outcomes acquired abroad. No target figure has been set. The reference is whether there is an increase over time or not.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

A dedicated page²⁴¹ of a national website²⁴² contains all relevant information regarding administrative procedure, thus assisting the visas and residency permits application process of IVET learners from third countries.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

The website www.guichet.lu is a general administrative website where all interested persons can find all kind of administrative information regarding daily life in Luxembourg in two different languages (FR and DE). This website can also be used by incoming and outgoing learners.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

IVET students aged below 18 only need a parental authorisation. During the mobility training period, they keep in touch with the responsible person from the sending institution and can benefit from assistance.

²⁴¹ <http://www.guichet.public.lu/entreprises/en/ressources-humaines/recrutement/ressortissant-pays-tiers/etudiant/index.html>

²⁴² www.guichet.lu

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Resident students going abroad

The institution/secondary school sending students abroad give them all necessary information and take care of the administrative procedures regarding social and labour protection as well as insurances.

Foreign students coming to Luxembourg

All the administrative procedures are described on the website www.guichet.lu²⁴³. On this page, references are made to the following legal acts:

- Law of 29 August 2008 (Loi du 29 août 2008) - Free movement of persons and immigration,
- Grand-Ducal regulation of 5 September 2008 - Libre circulation des personnes et immigration.

When the right to medical care exists in another Member State of the European Union (EU), or in a Member State of the European Economic Area (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein) or Switzerland, students may benefit from medical care in Luxembourg thanks to the European Health Insurance card. The student may then register with the National Health Fund (CNS). This registration is only required because of medical treatment and when the reimbursement is requested from the CNS.

Where entitlement to benefit from social security is in a country which has concluded a social security agreement with Luxembourg, the student must provide proof of his social security entitlement in his/her country of origin to the Joint Centre of Social Security (CCSS) in order to benefit from social security in Luxembourg.

To be affiliated to the Luxembourg social agencies, the student must register with the CNS by presenting the registration or tuition certificate and the form established by the institution of his/her country of origin (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cape Verde, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Quebec, Serbia, Tunisia, Turkey).

In case the student cannot benefit from insurance, or if his/her country of origin has not concluded a social security agreement with Luxembourg, s/he must subscribe a personal affiliation with the joint Centre of Social Security (CCSS).

²⁴³ <http://www.guichet.public.lu/entreprises/en/ressources-humaines/recrutement/ressortissant-pays-tiers/etudiant/index.html>

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES" THEMATIC AREA

International mobility experiences of IVET students are integrated in the curricula of some IVET programmes that take part in Erasmus+ or where mobility abroad is mandatory. Luxembourg has also set targets for international mobility in IVET and has taken actions aimed to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries. The legal requirements for the mobility of minors have been kept sufficiently low for avoiding that facilitating measures are needed, still support to learners abroad is ensured in that they can keep in touch with the responsible person from the sending institution and can benefit from assistance when needed. However no specific measure has been taken to reduce learners' administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility. In future it could be considered investigating the situation on the ground, e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys, in order to check whether support measures to users are needed, and design and implement them accordingly.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

Recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility is regulated by law²⁴⁴.

²⁴⁴ Règlement grand-ducal du 27 octobre 2006 pris en exécution de l'article 4 de la loi modifiée du 18 juin 1969 sur l'enseignement supérieur et l'homologation des titres et grades étrangers d'enseignement supérieur

Règlement grand-ducal du 9 mai 2008 fixant les modalités de reconnaissance d'équivalence du Baccalauréat International au diplôme de fin d'études secondaires luxembourgeois

Règlement grand-ducal du 7 décembre 2010 fixant les modalités de reconnaissance d'équivalence du Baccalauréat International au diplôme de fin d'études secondaires luxembourgeois

For each IVET learner, an individual Learning Agreement is established between the participant trainee, the sending institution and the host institution, in order to make the intended learning outcomes transparent for all parties involved. This contract includes a learning programme and a clear definition of the envisaged learning outcomes of the mobility period in terms of knowledge, skills and competences to be developed. During the internship, the progress of the trainee is evaluated on an on-going basis through monitoring and mentoring arrangements between the sending and the receiving institution. At the end of the internship, an evaluation by the sending institution is done upon a written report and a questionnaire that has to be filled in by the learner. Recognition of the achieved learning outcomes is done through a certification of the internship abroad, as well as through the Europass Mobility certificate.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

IVET learners involved in international learning mobility have easy access to recognition of learning acquired abroad.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in the country applies to:

- Modules
- Programmes

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

The same approach to recognition is applied countrywide.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

The recognition of learning acquired abroad is done immediately at the end of the internship, but there is no regulatory time limit.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

There are no policy initiatives or actions aimed to make more visible contact points for the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET learners.

In Luxembourg the main contact point for learners is their secondary school / VET institution, which provides all the information regarding the administrative management and the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad during an internship.

Newcomers with an IVET degree may visit the Diploma Recognition Services of the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth to ask for recognition of their diploma. All information is also available on the portal www.guichet.lu²⁴⁵.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

There is no visibility policy, so no evaluation thereof.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Europass Mobility document is part of the recognition mechanism in secondary schools where undertaking an apprenticeship abroad is mandatory. Furthermore, the learner is able to prove his/her international learning experience using this document. It describes in detail the content and the results of the period of training in Europe and thus reflects the added value of this experience.

²⁴⁵ The administrative guide from the Luxembourg State can be found here: <http://www.guichet.public.lu/citoyens/fr/enseignement-formation/enseignement-postprimaire/jeune-recemment-arrive-pays/reconnaissance-etudes/index.html>

The use of the Europass Certificate Supplement is highly recommended by Anefore, and is mandatory for the VET mobility projects of the Erasmus+ Programme.

Learning agreements are used within Erasmus+ VET mobility projects. There are currently no other ECVET-relevant activities under way or forthcoming. A review of the current system will be launched as soon as the first cycle of the reformed system has been achieved. The use and recognition of learning outcomes within ECVET are highly recommended and Anefore will encourage the gradual implementation of these tools in the coming years, in collaboration with the group of national ECVET experts. Those experts will for example guide secondary schools in how to use ECVET within their VET mobility projects.

The implementation of EQF/NQF is under development²⁴⁶.

The learning outcomes approach is used in the Learning Agreement drawn between the student and the sending and the host institution, in order to make the intended learning outcomes transparent for all parties involved. This contract includes a learning programme and a clear definition of the envisaged learning outcomes of the mobility period in terms of knowledge, skills and competences to be developed. Recognition of the learning outcomes achieved is done through a certification of the internship abroad, as well as through the Europass Mobility certificate.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

IVET students undertaking mobility periods abroad have easy access to the recognition of learning outcomes and the recognition approach is coordinated countrywide. The recognition process is not bound to a regulatory time limit, which is a point that could be re-visited in future. To better meet the requirements in this thematic area, other suggestions could be made in relation to the scope of recognition, which currently only covers two types of learning components (modules and programmes), and could be extended to other types of learning components acquired abroad, i.e. courses, credit points, units and qualifications / diplomas / degrees. Another drawback is related to the lack of policy actions to establish dedicated contact points for information on recognition of learning acquired during mobility periods. Currently, this function is performed by VET providers, who are supposed to provide all the necessary information to their students. However, it should be made sure,

²⁴⁶ <http://www.men.public.lu/fr/grands-dossiers/formation-adultes/clq/index.html>

e.g. through a user survey, that this principle actually applies and all user groups are aware of how they can obtain information on recognition. The country makes use of the Europass mobility document, the Europass Certificate Supplement, ECVET and the Learning Outcomes approach, but not of EQF/NQF which is currently under development. Once in place, this tool as well could be considered in future to enhance the visibility, recognition and transfer of learning outcomes acquired during mobility periods.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The country has policy actions to support the creation of partnerships for international learning mobility projects in IVET.

The Erasmus+ programme in Luxembourg is coordinated by Anefore. International cooperation projects and the sharing of experiences between institutions are strengthened. All sectors are concerned: education, vocational training, higher education, adult education and the youth sector. Four types of partnerships can be funded:

- *Strategic partnerships* meet the growing needs of innovation and aim to bring together actors from a given sector: education, education and training, higher education, adult education. For a more significant impact, activities of mobility and cooperation measures can be combined within a project;
- *Knowledge alliances* are partnerships of large scale targeting the modernization of higher education institutions. Links with the world of business can generate even more innovation, creativity and adaptation of qualifications to the changes on the labour market.
- *Sectorial alliances* allow co-operation between vocational training institutions and enterprises: creation of new sectors, modernization of training practices, social innovation, etc.;
- *International cooperation with third countries* is strengthened and aims at the modernisation of higher educational institutions, reforming modes of governance, quality of the lessons, non-formal education, etc. These partnerships involve neighbouring countries of the European Union, countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa.

To be funded, strategic partnerships in the VET sector must address either at least one horizontal priority of Erasmus+ or at least a specific priority set by the European Commission for the VET sector:

- Establish partnerships between the world of education and the world of employment;
- Improve the relevance of VET provision to labour market and reduce mismatches between supply and demand of skills and skill shortages in the economic sectors by adapting curricula and qualification profiles;
- Improve transparency and mutual trust between VET systems through implementation of the recommendations of ECVET and EQAVET;
- Encourage the promotion of an easily accessible continuing VET, and focused on professional careers;
- Promote the development of skills and competences of teachers and trainers;
- Align VET policies on national, regional or local economic development strategies.

The partnerships must involve at least 3 organizations from 3 different countries (countries participating in the Erasmus+ programme). Organizations from partner countries may also participate if their expertise and involvement means a real added value to the project. The duration of a strategic partnership is between 24 months and 36 months. The financial management of the project is provided by the project coordinator. The maximum grant for strategic partnerships is 150.000 per year.

The Sectoral alliances seek to meet the skill needs at European level through a sectoral approach in order to improve competitiveness and employability and aim in particular at:

- Modernizing vocational education and use its potential to facilitate economic development and innovation at local and regional levels;
- Strengthening the exchange of knowledge and best practices between VET schools and the labour market, in particular by integrating training and learning in enterprises (work-based learning);
- Promoting labour mobility and recognition of qualifications at European level, in a given sector.

Sectoral alliances are international projects, with a duration of 24 or 36 months, which must involve at least 9 organisations from 3 different European countries participating in the program, including at least two member states. They must also involve at least one organization from each of the following three categories in each of the countries involved in

the alliance:

- Public or private entities providing vocational education;
- Public or private entities with a representative function in a given sector and expertise in this sector;
- Public or private entities having a function of regulating the education and training systems.

The activities of sectoral alliances can be financed up to:

- 700.000 euros maximum for a project of 24 months;
- maximum 1 million euros for a 36 month project.

The secondary schools which have subscribed for a mobility project are encouraged to develop international partnerships or alliances.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

Information not available at this time

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

In Luxembourg, there are policy actions aimed to provide IVET learners with financial support for their international mobility.

Mobility via traineeship abroad

Organisation

Students in secondary schools or institutions which have applied for an Erasmus+ project can undertake traineeships abroad during their training. The total duration of the traineeships may last between 2 weeks and 1 year.

Actors

Anefore is the national agency responsible since 2007 for the implementation of European programmes for education and training throughout life. The main contact point for students is their secondary schools / institutions which provide all the information. The secondary

schools get all information regarding the administrative management from Anefore.

Target groups

Only students in secondary schools / institutions having a mobility project with Anefore are concerned.

Means allocated

The secondary schools having a mobility project and sending the learners prepare a grant agreement which specifies: the amount of the financial support that will be received during the mobility period; and how this amount will be transferred to the learner. The amount of daily allowance for learners varies from EUR 22 to EUR 67 depending on the receiving country. The travel allowance varies between EUR 180 and EUR 1100, depending on distance from sending country.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The actions taken to provide IVET learners with support for their international mobility are subject to evaluation.

Anefore is subject to audits evaluating its operation and its proper management.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

The country has policy actions aimed to provide stakeholders involved in organising international IVET mobility projects with financial and non-financial support.

Anefore monitors the lifecycle of funded projects and manages the assessment at the national level. The Agency plays both the role of facilitator and operator of means. It:

- co-manages and monitor projects, aiming for quality;
- disseminates the results of projects.

In 2014, the amount invested in Erasmus+ projects of the VET sector reached 1.066.709 EUR.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

The actions taken to provide stakeholders and staff with financial and non-financial support for their international mobility are subject to evaluation.

Anefore is subject to audits evaluating its operation and its proper management.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE “PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING” THEMATIC AREA

Luxembourg has in place policies for supporting VET institutions and companies in the creation of partnerships and networks and in organising mobility projects. Strategic partnerships in VET in the priority areas of Erasmus+, and sectorial alliances are encouraged and can receive funding. The Agency also plays the role of facilitator for the stakeholders and staff involved in mobility projects and offers support and assistance in the administrative management of the projects. The country is also committed to support students. IVET learners from institutions involved in Erasmus+ projects can undertake traineeships abroad and receive financial support for their mobility. These support actions are subject to some monitoring (except the support to partnerships and networks, which is not). In future, it could be made sure that – and made clear how – all policies in this area are evaluated and resulting recommendations translated into improvements to the next generation of policies.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In the thematic area of Information and Guidance, Luxembourg provides IVET learners with information and guidance on international mobility. This provision is coordinated countrywide. The country has taken improvement measures, and these measures are subject to evaluation (at least to some extent as the reform of guidance is still underway).

In the area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, international mobility experiences of IVET students are integrated in the curricula of some IVET programmes. Luxembourg has also set targets for international mobility in IVET and has taken actions aimed to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries. The legal requirements for the mobility of minors have been

kept sufficiently low for avoiding that facilitating measures are needed, still support to learners abroad is ensured in that they can keep in touch with the responsible person from the sending institution and can benefit from assistance when needed. However no specific measure has been taken to reduce learners' administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility. In future it could be considered investigating the situation on the ground, e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys, in order to check whether support measures to users are needed, and design and implement them accordingly.

Regarding Recognition of Learning Outcomes, IVET students undertaking mobility periods abroad have easy access to the recognition of their learning outcomes. The recognition approach is coordinated countrywide but is not bound to a regulatory time limit, which is a point that could be re-considered in future. To better meet the requirements in this thematic area, other suggestions could be made in relation to the scope of recognition, which currently only covers two types of learning components (modules and programmes), and could be extended to other types of learning components acquired abroad, i.e. courses, credit points, units and qualifications / diplomas / degrees. Another drawback is related to the lack of policy actions to establish dedicated contact points for information on recognition of learning acquired during mobility periods. In future, it could be checked, e.g. through a user survey, whether all user groups are aware of how they can obtain information on recognition, and appropriate visibility policy could be set up if necessary. The country makes use of the Europass Mobility Document, the Europass Certificate Supplement, ECVET and the Learning Outcomes approach, but not of EQF/NQF which is currently under development. Once in place, this tool as well could be considered in future to enhance the visibility, recognition and transfer of learning outcomes acquired during mobility periods.

Finally in the area of Partnerships and Funding, Luxembourg has in place policies for supporting VET institutions and companies in the creation of partnerships and networks and in organising mobility projects. The country is also committed to fund students' mobility. These support actions are subject to some monitoring (except the support to partnerships and networks, which is not). In future, it could be made sure that – and made clear how – all policies in this area are evaluated and resulting recommendations translated into improvements to the next generation of policies.

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IVET level(s) covered in this fiche:

- Post-secondary non-tertiary

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Malta has an information and guidance mechanism for international learning mobility of IVET learners.

The European Union Programmes Agency (EUPA) is the National Agency in Malta that acts as a link between the European Commission and project promoters, among which are VET institutions and VET entities at national level. It manages the Erasmus+ Programme and one of its main aims is to support VET institutions and VET entities to benefit from funding under KA 1 of Erasmus+. It is through such funding that the EUPA manages to reach out to the IVET learners themselves and help them undertake mobility experiences abroad.

The primary target audience of the National Agency are public and private VET institutions and VET entities. The National Agency aims to reach the various stakeholders and to inform them about the various possibilities they can benefit from under the Erasmus+ Programme. Indeed, the National Agency takes care in having a powerful communication and information policy. It often organises information seminars and workshops specifically targeting VET institutions and entities. Besides, it also participates in various local events, such as education fairs so as to further its outreach in the VET sector.

The National Agency also strives to assist IVET learners and to provide them with the necessary information and guidance. Indeed, the National Agency organises and participates in a number of activities and events through which it can deliver the necessary information to students themselves, directing them to the right contact points to be able to successfully participate in international learning mobility. Examples of such events include: career and education fairs, freshers' week organised by one of Malta's leading VET providers (MCAST), seminars and workshops.

Apart from managing the Erasmus+ Programme and participating in other networks, the National Agency hosts in particular the Eurodesk Centre and Euroguidance Centre. Through the work and initiatives taken by these networks, the National Agency further contributes to the national information and guidance mechanism for the international mobility of IVET learners.

Furthermore, the National Agency boasts a highly informative website where users can access the necessary information and guidance. It also makes use of the various social media tools available, such as Facebook. Through such tools, the Communications Team continues to inform the general public about KA 1 and mobility opportunities and upcoming deadlines.

The information provided to stakeholders is quite broad, ranging from information on Erasmus+, on the application processes, how to fill and submit high quality and successful applications, the funding process and implementation of projects, etc. The information provided to IVET learners includes information on the opportunities they can benefit from, contact points within their VET institutions and VET entities where they can easily apply for an international mobility experience and the documents they can make use of in order to record the skills and competences acquired throughout this mobility experience (such as the Europass Mobility Document and the Europass Certificate Supplement, managed by the National Europass Centre, which is also hosted by the National Agency.)

In addition to the above the National Agency provides one-to-one meetings whereby information is further elaborated and examples are also provided. One-to-one meetings are highly in demand and the Communications Unit within the National Agency dedicates a lot of time on such meetings to ensure that the information is fully understood.

The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) as the leading VET provider in Malta, has an international office which functions primarily through Erasmus+ funds. Therefore international mobility is the prime focus. The International Office works in conjunction with all the institutes within MCAST to promote and manage mobility among IVET learners. Students at level 4 of education are targeted each year. The International Office serves as the main contact point when it comes to international mobility, partners and projects. The work of the International Office goes down to one-to-one meetings to ensure each student is comfortable with the programme and any doubts are cleared.

MCAST is making use of various mechanisms to provide IVET learners with information and guidance on International Learning Mobility. These include the effective use of Social Media mainly its Official website, and

Facebook, Mailshots, and Video conferencing with interested parties. Printed material is regularly produced such as flyers, the MCAST Link which is the biannual College publication, as well as the College prospectuses both full-time and part-time. MCAST officials regularly participate in radio and TV programmes promoting VET programmes. Group career guidance presentations are provided upon requests from potential IVET students who would be studying the English language. Other career guidance sessions are provided in conjunction with the MCAST International Office to students prior to their international internship. In addition, MCAST's official website provides information on training opportunities as well as contact details of officials such as Career Guidance personnel. This makes the service more accessible and through emails, phone calls and other means of communication, interested parties would access the required support which would help them make an informed decision.

The Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) is a VET and Higher Education Institution where many international mobility projects are managed through EU funds. The Erasmus mobility office works hand-in-hand with the International Internship Office where all student placements are organised. Students following diploma courses are targeted each year and various meetings both in groups, as well as individual meetings, are organised both by the Internship Office and the VET Coordinator to ensure that all students proceed with placements related to their studies. In addition, ITS also provides career guidance and counselling service to its students. All those who benefit from Erasmus funds for their placements are in contact with both the Internship Office as well as the Erasmus Mobility Office at ITS.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

In Malta, the information and guidance mechanism for international learning mobility of IVET learners is coordinated countrywide.

The European Union Programmes Agency (EUPA) is the sole National Agency that is responsible for the management of the Erasmus+ Programme in Malta. Thus, the information and guidance mechanism is subject of countrywide coordination. Besides, the Erasmus+ Programme is emphasised as a tool by which the country can address its national policies. The latter are in line with the policies set at European level and with the targets the EU set for 2020. Furthermore, since ECVET was transferred to the National Agency in the past years, the National Agency continues to take care to keep close contact and coordinate with the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (the entity previously responsible for ECVET). This close coordination continues to

ensure consistency in the promotion of ECVET to various local and national stakeholders. Besides, this effort continues to push towards reaching convergent national policies and practices which are in line with European policies, objectives and practices.

Furthermore, the National Agency strives to coordinate with national VET institutions and entities, offering them project implementation guidance with regards to learning mobility in the VET sector. Such guidance and assistance guarantees IVET learners to fully benefit from the international mobility experience. These experiences help IVET learners to develop professionally, and personally. For this reason, the National Agency is fully aware that efforts and coordination will help in addressing national policies and practices, and in aligning them to European policies and practices.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

The objective of promoting international learning mobility in IVET is not specifically included in legal provisions. In Malta there is not any law regarding IVET.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

The country has a policy for improving the provision of information and guidance for IVET international learning mobility.

The National Agency takes care in drafting substantial and strong strategies with which it can successfully reach its objectives. Indeed, a Communications Multi-annual Plan has been designed to address the Communications Business Scenario for 2015-2020 with particular focus on covering the necessary information and promotional material to help more citizens to benefit from funding under the educational, training and youth programmes provided by the European Commission. Its central aim is to strengthen the effectiveness of the Communications Unit function. In order to ensure that this aim is well addressed, this multi-annual plan has been drafted based on the conclusions derived from the analysis of the 2014 Communication work plan. This ensured that good practices are once again included in the plan and improvements are made in those areas that require more substantial input.

The policy includes a number of activities to ensure a wider and more concrete outreach aiming at securing the take-up of available funds. It lists activities for the dissemination of information and the transfer of good practices, a focus on online information tools, including the National Agency's website and social media platforms, plans for the development of a number of information booklets and other information material. A step-by-step tutorial is also being developed in order to further guide visitors to improve the quality of applications submitted for all sectors. Furthermore, so as to ensure that the proper messages are received effectively, the Communications Plan identifies a number of objectives, particularly:

1. To target the right audience.
2. To deliver the appropriate message at the right time.
3. To engage effectively with all stakeholders.

To date, the Communications Unit and the National Agency in general, are committed towards the successful implementation and achievement of the multi-annual plan. An exercise of internal reviews and reporting is carried out from time to time in order to make sure that the NA's commitments and objectives are being addressed and eventually reached successfully. Furthermore, such reviews will help the NA ensure that the policy remains relevant throughout the upcoming years and that it remains in line with changing business requirements.

As mentioned above, one-to-one meetings are being given a lot of importance since they are highly in demand. An evidence based research undertaken during 2015 shows that although information sessions and workshops are a good channel for the dissemination of information, one-to-ones are more popular amongst potential applicants. This might be due to the fact that they feel more comfortable discussing their issues with the Communication Team rather than with a number of people whom they would not even know.

Within MCAST, the International Office is the sole provider of information on international mobility for IVET learners among its student population. It ensures that students are informed of the opportunities available at the right time, thanks to various methods of communication, including SMS and visits in classes which are found to be the most effective. The Directors of the Institutes may serve as contact points sometimes, however students are always directed to the International Office for proper guidance. The Erasmus mobility office in conjunction with the International Internship Office is the main contact point for mobility, either EU funded or not. Therefore, potential students are contacted prior to their International Internship that is a compulsory module within their course. They are informed that some mobility projects are funded through EU funds and in this regard they have the opportunity to apply and benefit from this opportunity. Students following Higher National

Diplomas also have the opportunity to go abroad on study mobility to another higher education institution in another EU country. Actions for improving the provision of information and guidance on international learning mobility for IVET learners include:

- The production of DVDs - Interactive MCAST prospectus
- The promotion of one-to-one professional career guidance interviews

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

In Malta, the policy for improving the provision of information and guidance for IVET international learning mobility is subject to internal and external evaluation.

With reference to the Communications multi-annual plan of the National Agency, besides conducting an internal exercise of reviews and reporting, this plan is also subject to evaluation through questionnaires and case studies such as the Evidence Based Research Analysis held in 2015. A yearly annual report has to be prepared and submitted for the scrutiny of the European Commission. In addition, the plan is also subject to checks and evaluation by the National Authority. The National Agency is committed to work on the feedback provided by both entities in order to improve upon the work that has already been undertaken.

Similar to EUPA, MCAST is also subject to external evaluation mainly through EUPA's audits, mentoring from the European Commission through online tools and reporting and mentoring from the EUPA itself through various bilateral meetings, and on the spot checks before, during and after project implementation. ITS also has external evaluation mainly through EUPA's audits, mentoring from the European Commission through online tools and reporting and mentoring from the EUPA itself through various bilateral meetings and on-the-spot checks before, during and after project implementation.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

The National Agency aims, as much as possible, to reach out to the general public and to those entities and organisations that can benefit from its services. For this reason, a number of information sessions are organised in order to inform about the programmes available and upcoming deadlines. A number of workshops are also organised, in order

to provide those interested in submitting a project proposal with information on how to successfully complete and submit high quality application forms, thus increasing their chances of selection. The NA also provides the possibility of setting up one-to-one meetings with IVET institutions and VET entities. Follow-ups and project-implementation support is also provided. Furthermore, the NA seeks to inform and guide IVET institutions and entities through its online tools, particularly its user-friendly website and social media platforms. Information on calls and upcoming deadlines are all promoted on these highly followed platforms.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

Malta has a comprehensive mechanism ensuring information and guidance on mobility topics to both IVET institutions and IVET learners. The main body performing this function is The European Union Programmes Agency (EUPA) which is the National Agency for Erasmus+. Its primary target audience consists of VET institutions and other stakeholders, but it also aims to reach IVET students through dedicated activities and events, its website, and social media tools. IVET students can also receive information and guidance through contact points within their VET institutions; the International Office of the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) - the leading VET provider in the country; and the International Internship Office within the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS), where students can receive information and guidance on Erasmus+ mobility and opportunities for placements abroad.

Countrywide coordination of the provision is ensured through EUPA, which also hosts the national Europass, Eurodesk and Euroguidance Centres, and is now also in charge of ECVET.

Malta also has a policy for improving the provision of information for IVET international learning mobility, namely the Communications Multi-annual Plan 2015 - 2020 of the National Agency. This aims to achieve a wider and more targeted provision of information on mobility, through a variety of activities, information materials and media, both online and offline. Here however, the intervention seems to be more on information than on guidance, a point which could certainly be improved in future. The policy is subject to reviews and monitoring, ensuring that feedback provided by the European Commission and the National Authority is used to further improve current actions.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

Malta is committed to the integration of international mobility in IVET curricula.

As Malta's largest vocational education institution, the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) has been entrusted with monitoring and partly implementing the National Vocational Education and Training Policy for Malta. MCAST has restructured its curricula within all the IVET programmes in order to enable semester-based delivery. All units are assigned ECVET credits for MQF/EQF levels 1-4 and ECTS credits for MQF/EQF Levels 5 and 6 thus enabling student mobility to partner institutions on either of the following models:

For Level 5 and Level 6 Programmes:

- SMP – Student Mobility Placement, where students are offered work placement related to their studies abroad;
- SSP – Student Study Placement, where students follow one semester of the course within an approved partner institution abroad.

For Level 4 programmes, students have the opportunity to participate in the VET-Comp programme for a period of 3 weeks work placement abroad in a company offering experience related to their studies.

In all of the above cases MCAST coordinates both inbound and outbound mobility.

The Institute of Tourism Studies integrates a one-year international mobility as an integral part of its curriculum. All the Level 4 and Level 5 educational programmes offered by the Institute include this mandatory one-year mobility overseas.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

Malta has national policy targets related to student mobility under Erasmus+: the number of students benefitting from mobility should increase over time; and the funding committed for mobility should be fully utilised. The National Agency follows-up the targets and develops additional efforts through advertising campaign, information sessions and other activities to ensure that targets are met. VET institutions, such as MCAST and ITS, work closely with the National Agency (EUPA) to ensure full achievement of the national targets.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

There are no specific measures in place aimed to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries. No significant issues/concerns suggesting a need for such measures have been reported, however no investigation / study / research on this have been conducted. Introducing such measures would be considered should the need arise in the future.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

The country has taken measures to reduce administrative burdens that may hinder the international mobility of IVET learners.

The National Agency is the national entity responsible for managing the Erasmus+ Programme. In addition, the National Agency hosts the Maltese offices of four other European Networks: the National Europass Centre, Euroguidance, Eurodesk and ECVET. Thus, by encompassing all networks, the National Agency provides a one-stop shop to anyone having any queries in relation to European mobility and the recognition of skills and competences acquired through VET courses.

Other measures were taken by MCAST and ITS. MCAST has created the Partnership Office under which the International Office operates. While the latter offers a communication point and a one-stop shop for international mobility projects, the Partnership Office enhances this element as it is the one-stop shop for partners and networking on a European and international level.

On the other hand, in ITS, both the ITS Erasmus Office and the

International Internship Office provide networking opportunities at a European and international level and serve as a one-stop shop for both students and host organisations.

All three entities cater for different target groups of students. The National Agency offers its services to students who wish to further their studies abroad. On the other hand, MCAST and ITS offer services to their particular target students who take up courses in their respective areas of specialisation.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

There are no specific measures in place aimed to remove the legal obstacles to the mobility of minors. Malta has not developed any measures particularly focusing on IVET learners. No significant issues/concerns suggesting a need for such measures have been reported, however no investigation / study / research on this have been conducted.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social security

In Malta, there are no specific measures ensuring the protection of IVET students and apprentices involved in international learning mobility in terms of social security. Students may benefit from the European Health Insurance Card which allows them to receive free or reduced-cost emergency medical treatment during temporary visits in EU Member States, EEA countries and Switzerland. This applies to both outgoing and incoming students. MCAST additionally recommends that students are covered adequately by travel insurance.

Labour protection

Malta has no legal measures for the labour standards and safety protection of IVET students and apprentices whether residents or incoming. Safety has to be arranged between the sending and host organisations.

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE “ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES” THEMATIC AREA

Malta is committed to encouraging learning mobility in IVET through the integration of international mobility in IVET curricula, and through setting targets for international mobility in IVET. Another positive aspect refers to the measures taken to alleviate administrative burdens, by setting up one-stop shops - both at national and IVET provider level - where IVET students and stakeholders can access all the information related to participation in mobility projects. To further improve the conditions for IVET mobility in this thematic area, it should be made sure that incoming IVET learners from third countries have easy access to visas and residency permits and that mobility of minor IVET learners is not actually hampered, two aspects in relation to which no measures have been taken to date. Although it may be deemed that no such measure is necessary because no difficulty was officially reported, there has not been any fully-fledged investigation targeted at checking the situation on the ground and surveying users' needs and stakeholders' views. In future, it could be investigated, e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys, whether the existing conditions for delivering visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries and for the exit of minor learners are easy enough, or instead require putting in place support measures for assisting learners (or their institutions) in their mobility process.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

There is no possibility of recognition of learning acquired abroad by IVET learners. Since not all students are able to undertake a period of learning abroad, the mobility experience is not recognized as part of the formal qualification. Obligations of assessment of the formal qualification still need to be adhered to.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

There is no possibility of recognition of learning acquired abroad by IVET learners.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

There is no possibility of recognition of learning acquired abroad by IVET learners.

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

There is no possibility of recognition of learning acquired abroad by IVET learners.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

There is no possibility of recognition of learning acquired abroad by IVET learners.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

There is no possibility of recognition of learning acquired abroad by IVET learners, so no contact points and no visibility policy thereof.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

There is no visibility policy, so no evaluation thereof.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The National Europass Centre, hosted by the National Agency (EUPA), is working towards increasing awareness of the Europass Mobility Document, since it was detected that the general public is not yet fully aware of the document's usage and benefits. The Europass Mobility Document is currently used by those undertaking experiences abroad (exchanges, work placements, etc.) in order to get their experience valued and the skills and competences developed recognised.

The Europass Certificate Supplement is being used particularly by MCAST. However, the National Europass Centre is also working towards increasing the use of this document. This is particularly being done through a number of awareness-raising events. Indeed, the National Europass Centre has received queries regarding the Europass Certificate Supplement from other local VET entities.

Between 2011 and 2013, a national project with the aim to test ECVET implementation in Malta was underway. This project resulted in the development of the Manual for the Conversion of Existing Qualifications into the ECVET System. This Manual for Conversion explains how VET entities can easily change their accreditation mechanism to ECVET. Currently, Malta also has four ECVET Experts which help VET institutions and other stakeholders to better understand and take up this system. The National Agency works in close collaboration with these four ECVET Experts and the National Commission for Further and Higher Education in order to promote the Conversion Manual and the usage and benefits of ECVET. Currently, VET institutions such as the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, and the Institute of Tourism Studies are working towards accrediting their IVET learners in accordance with ECVET. Work is being done in order to encourage employers to take up this mechanism when providing on-the-job training and other VET courses to their employees.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

Malta has introduced the Europass Mobility document and the Europass Certificate Supplement, and the National Europass Centre is working towards raising awareness of these documents and the benefits they could bring to students. The country has also worked towards the implementation of ECVET and a Manual for the Conversion of Existing Qualifications has been developed, to assist VET institutions to apply the

principles of ECVET in their accreditation procedures. However Malta does not have in place a mechanism for recognition of learning that IVET learners have acquired abroad. Mobility experiences abroad are not recognised as part of the formal qualifications, and students must undergo the formal assessments in the same conditions as those who have not undertaken a mobility period abroad. In order to encourage international learning mobility in IVET, it could be suggested to consider in future designing and implementing a user-friendly and visible recognition system, countrywide coordinated and time-framed, taking into account a wide range of learning components (courses, units, credits, modules, programmes and qualifications /diploma / degree) and making at least use of relevant EU tools for visibility already existing in the country (Europass Mobility Document, Europass Certificate Supplement, and ECVET). Developing a recognition system would certainly make participation in mobility projects more attractive for IVET students, and support the country's effort to reach its mobility targets.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

Malta supports IVET providers and companies in the creation of mobility partnerships and networks.

Within MCAST, the Partnerships Office caters for the creation and establishment of partnerships, both with European and international institutions. This is achieved in various manners such as participation in inter-institutional activities through ERASMUS+, travelling and visiting international institutions, networking.

Furthermore, the role of the International Office within the Partnerships Office enhances European partnerships through the Erasmus+ network and projects. This occurs since the Partnerships Office's role is to create links with local and foreign institutions. These links are formalised through agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). Since this network that was created and is sustained by the Partnerships Office is utilised by MCAST's internal organisation, the International Office benefits accordingly.

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Furthermore, MCAST recently established a Research & Innovation department which clearly enhances its role as the leading VET provider, developing research projects and establishing partnerships. This is achieved since MCAST can provide such facilities and services to other institutions and industry who require them, hence consolidating MCAST's role in VET.

ITS has an EU Projects Coordinator whose task is to identify or source any possible international partnerships and networks in which ITS can participate. The aim is to create more possibilities where the entity can assist its student in participating in international mobility, as well as offering opportunities to foreign students to come to Malta.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The actions carried out by MCAST and ITS to support the creation of mobility partnerships and networks are not subject to evaluation.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

The National Agency financially supports VET mobility through the Erasmus+ programme.

Erasmus+ aims at boosting skills and employability, and modernizing Education, Training and Youth work. The programme, through its centralized and decentralized actions, aims to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy, and the strategic framework for cooperation in education and training amongst others.

The National Agency aims to help IVET companies and entities to access funding under all key actions under the Erasmus+ programme, and ultimately it is the IVET student who benefits. Students benefit directly through this funding since they are the ones participating on the respective mobility activities organised by their institutions.

MCAST widely promotes international mobility through Erasmus + and this is the only source of finance for the students. Sometimes, the funding may not be enough, especially when students are travelling to the

northern part of Europe where the standard of living is very high. One of the factors contributing to drop outs from Erasmus+ mobility projects is the lack of financial support. Erasmus+ funding is calculated according to the country of destination and the duration as established by the Commission, and the International Office can in no way adjust according to the needs of the students. It is evident that without the Erasmus+ funding, no mobility would be taking place, since no other opportunities are available.

ITS also promotes intensively international mobility amongst its students, as it is a compulsory module within their courses. Some students are supported financially from Erasmus+, whilst others will receive financial support (a salary) from the enterprise they work in. The Higher Education funding allowance for mobility is drastically less than the VET funding, and some students tend to drop out from the Erasmus+ Higher Education projects due to lack of financial support. As explained above, Erasmus+ funding is calculated according to the country of destination and the duration as established by the Commission, and the ITS can in no way adjust this according to the needs of the students. It is evident that without the Erasmus+ funding, not all ITS internships could take place. As an example, a Higher Education student gets €700 per month vs. €1624 per month for a VET student (average, over a 6 months period), while eventually these two categories of students have the same expenses. Hence, the Higher Education student would opt for a fully company paid internship and would only utilise Higher Education funds when no other options are available.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Neither MCAST nor ITS carry out any form of auditing or monitoring. The National Agency EUPA carries out national reviews which includes also the IVET learners undertaking mobility through MCAST and ITS.

The services, work plans and activities carried out by the National Agency are all monitored and reviewed by the National Authority and the European Commission. The National Agency has to carry out regular internal checks, reviews and reports so as to guarantee that the objectives set are being addressed and met. Besides, the National Authority carries out evaluation of the running of the Agency and the management of the programmes budgets and work plan. The National Authority carries out the necessary scrutinising exercises and reporting. External Auditors are also regularly appointed so as to guarantee that the budgets are being adhered to. Finally, the work carried out by the National Agency is scrutinised by the European Commission. A yearly

report describing the activities carried out, the budget utilised, and those plans that were not successfully realised, has to be drawn by the National Agency and sent to the European Commission for its approval. Based on the feedback provided after such evaluation exercises, the National Agency further adjusts its objectives and establishes future targets.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

Malta has taken measures to provide stakeholders involved in organising international IVET mobility projects with financial and non-financial support.

The European Networks of Eurodesk and Euroguidance are present and active in Malta. Their offices are also hosted by the European Union Programmes Agency (EUPA), the National Agency responsible for the management of Erasmus+. Both networks aim to provide their input and assistance to all those involved and participating in IVET mobility projects. Both networks are committed to organize a number of information sessions, informative events, workshops and one-to-one meetings with the aim to disseminate the necessary and right information to those participating in IVET mobility projects and to provide them with the necessary support. Since these networks are hosted by the National Agency, beneficiaries are provided with a one-stop-shop for all their needs and queries.

The MCAST International Office provides the administrative and financial support for participants in IVET mobility. The Office offers guidance and advice from the application stage, up until buying the tickets, and in case any problems arise during the IVET work placement abroad. Its role also includes assistance with paper work, financial support and assistance with logistical planning.

Likewise, the ITS Mobility Office provides the administrative and financial support for participants in IVET mobility. It offers guidance and advice from the application stage up until departure, and in case any problems arise during the IVET work placement abroad. Its role also includes assistance with paper work, financial support and assistance with logistical planning. The ITS VET Office and the International Internship office are constantly in contact with the students during their placement abroad via skype, facebook, emails, telephone calls etc. to ensure all parties (but especially the student) are comfortable and any obstacles, queries etc. are tackled as soon as possible.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

The actions aimed to provide stakeholders and staff with financial and non-financial support are not subject to evaluation. However, regular feedback is provided by service users and the weaknesses identified are addressed by further actions.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

Malta has measures in place to support IVET providers and companies in the creation of mobility partnerships and networks, through the work of MCAST and ITS. MCAST, the leading VET provider in the country, has a Partnership Office that also supports the creation of partnerships with European and international institutions. Additionally, the EU Projects Coordinator within the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS), a VET and HE institution, has the task to identify possible mobility partnerships for ITS. However, this support policy is not evaluated.

IVET students are supported financially for their international mobility from Erasmus+ funds, and this policy is evaluated. However no other funding sources are available and the financial support offered is sometimes not enough. To improve conditions for IVET mobility, it should be made sure that students are provided with sufficient financial resources, either in the frame of European Programmes or from internal sources.

Stakeholders and staff involved in organising international IVET mobility projects are offered support – mainly in the form of information, advice and guidance – through the European Union Programmes Agency (EUPA), and the Euroguidance and Eurodesk centres which are hosted within the Agency. In addition, administrative and financial support to stakeholders involved in mobility projects is also offered at VET provider level, through the MCAST International Office and the ITS Mobility Office. This policy is not evaluated. To fully meet this indicator criterion, evaluation measures should be put in place to monitor and assess the effectiveness of the support to arranging and running mobility projects.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In the thematic area of Information and Guidance, Malta has a mechanism ensuring information and guidance on mobility topics to IVET learners. Countrywide coordination of the provision is ensured. Malta also has a policy for improving the provision of information for IVET international learning mobility, but attention there seems to be paid more to information than to guidance, a point which could certainly be improved in future. The improvement policy is subject to evaluation.

Regarding the area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, Malta is committed to encouraging learning mobility in IVET through the integration of international mobility in IVET curricula, and through setting targets for international mobility in IVET. Another positive aspect refers to the measures taken to alleviate administrative burdens, by setting up one-stop shops – both at national and IVET provider level – where IVET students and stakeholders can access all the information related to participation in mobility projects. To further improve the conditions for IVET mobility in this thematic area, it should be made sure (e.g. through user surveys) that incoming IVET learners from third countries have easy access to visas and residency permits and that mobility of minor IVET learners is not actually hampered, two aspects in relation to which no measures have been taken to date.

In the area of Recognition of Learning Outcomes, Malta does not have in place a mechanism for recognition of learning that IVET learners have acquired abroad. In order to encourage international learning mobility in IVET, it could be suggested to consider in future designing and implementing a user-friendly and visible recognition system, countrywide coordinated and time-framed, taking into account a wide range of learning components (courses, units, credits, modules, programmes and qualifications /diploma / degree) and making at least use of relevant EU tools for visibility already utilised in the country (Europass Mobility Document, Europass Certificate Supplement, and ECVET). Developing a recognition system would certainly make participation in mobility projects more attractive for IVET students, and support the country's effort to reach its mobility targets.

Finally, regarding the area of Partnerships and Funding, Malta has measures in place to support IVET providers and companies in the creation of mobility partnerships and networks and in organising mobility projects. Actions to fund the mobility of IVET learners are also in place. However, while this latter policy is evaluated, the former ones are not. In addition, the financial support offered to students is sometimes not enough. To improve conditions for IVET mobility, it should be made sure that students are provided with sufficient financial resources, either in the frame of European Programmes or from internal sources. It could also be

considered putting in place full-fledged evaluations for all policies in this area.

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IVET levels covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary

IVET Mobility in the Netherlands comprises networked partnerships. Erasmus+ National Agency receives EU funding and is responsible for this IVET mobility programme. Schools receive lumpsum funding from the government and can apply for subsidy through Erasmus+. Target groups are schools, mobility-coordinators in schools, teachers and students. Since 2015, schools can make use of the 'Excellence-budget'. 4.5 million EUR of this budget (24.5 million in total) is earmarked for mobility.

Main schemes for international IVET mobility in the Netherlands

Mobility scheme	Source of funds	Target Group
Erasmus+	EU	- IVET schools - Coordinators - Students - Teachers
Regulation Quality Agreements IVET (December 2015)	4.5 million EUR earmarked for mobility via Excellence budget (24.5 million EUR)	Schools
Education budget	Lumpsum funding	- IVET schools - Coordinators - Students - Teachers

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

In the Netherlands, parallel mechanisms for information and guidance on IVET learning mobility operate at different levels (national, (inter)regional and local). The target groups reached by the information and guidance mechanisms are students and VET schools in general, at regional or individual level.

Guidance makes part of the education programme. Students can obtain information and guidance from International guidance officers in school. They can also carry out self-preparation using the information material available as well as websites (e.g. stagemarkt.nl).

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

The information and guidance mechanisms for IVET learning mobility are coordinated in the Netherlands.

Policy agendas of the Ministry of Education are translated into local initiatives, and stakeholders are consulted in the process. Dialogue and cooperation are the important features of the implementation process. Among others, the main actors are: the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Dutch Council for VET-Schools (MBO Raad), the Cooperation Organisation for VET and Labour Market (SBB), the Dutch Council for private education (NRTO), Skills-Netherlands, Nether, Europass, Trade Unions, Employers organisations and CINOP Erasmus+. These stakeholders meet on a regular basis (quarterly) in the Steering Group for International Vocational Education and Training (Stuurgroep Beroepsonderwijs Internationaal).

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

Legal provisions do not specifically include the objective of promoting international learning mobility in IVET.

International mobility is not an item in the General Adult Education and Vocational Education Act (WEB – Wet Educatie en Beroepsonderwijs; 1996 with later amendments). The 1996 WEB Act introduced regional training centres and agricultural training centres with a regional function, as many young people who consider attending a VET study programme focus primarily on the regional labour market.

However international mobility has received more attention in recent years. In her 2014 Letter “Into the world: Letter on the government's vision on the international dimension of higher education and VET”²⁴⁷, the

²⁴⁷Government's vision on the international dimension of higher education and VET. Into the world: Letter on the government's vision on the international dimension of higher

Dutch Minister of Education abandoned the idea that internationalisation in VET should be restricted to neighbouring countries or to 'internationalisation at home'. The importance of mobility in VET is underlined in this policy brief and has become an element of the national VET policy.

At the same time, VET schools in the Netherlands have a large extent of autonomy in selecting their priorities. How much attention is given to mobility and to the promotion of mobility depends largely on the priority given to this subject by the schools.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

EP-Nuffic (the centre for internationalisation of Dutch education) has been recently appointed by the Ministry of Education to organise the education-wide promotion of information and guidance on mobility, including in VET.

SBB, the new Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market began on 1st August 2015. The SBB work placement portal ²⁴⁸, operational since 1st August 2015, includes information on international mobility. The portal is expected to improve information on mobility, in particular through presenting results of surveys among workplace companies. A study on valid quality-indicators for apprenticeships (incl. international apprenticeships) is expected end of 2015.

Netherlands is committed to promoting the international learning mobility in VET, as demonstrated in the policy letter of the Minister of Education "Into the world: Letter on the government's vision on the international dimension of higher education and VET" (2014) mentioned in section 1.1.3. However, it is not clear to what extent the overall policy proposed in this document includes specific actions designed to improve the provision of information and guidance on international learning mobility for IVET learners.

education and VET (2014) <http://www.government.nl/documents-and-publications/letters/2014/07/21/government-s-vision-on-the-international-dimension-of-higher-education-and-vet.html>

²⁴⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-X20igz0iQ&list=PLpzzKmBAMvwQGSVYUnSu5Cl0onATYmS59&index=2>

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Evaluation usually has the form of dialogue and operating the PDCA-approach (Plan-Do-Check-Adjust) by the stakeholders, both separately and in the meetings and decision process of the Steering Group mentioned in section 1.1.2. However evaluation / self-evaluation / research / monitoring on provision of information and guidance is scarce.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

The National Agency CINOP Erasmus+ provides assistance, workshops, instruction and developed a self-scan (self-evaluation tool). The new SBB portal operational since August 2015 also provides information to companies and IVET institutions.

Recently appointed by the Ministry of Education to organise the education-wide promotion of information and guidance on mobility, EP-Nuffic (the centre for internationalisation of Dutch education) provides information to companies, institutions and schools, including in the VET sector. Senior secondary vocational education (MBO) is largely a new domain for EP-Nuffic: the basic support previously offered to primary and secondary schools and institutions of higher professional education (HBO) and research universities (WO) was so far not available for MBO institutions. This sector is unique in many ways, not least because of its close connection to the job market. EP-Nuffic is working to improve service provision to this sector by establishing partnerships with MBO specialists/organisations (CINOP/Erasmus+).

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

The Netherlands has mechanisms for information and guidance on IVET learning mobility operating in parallel at national, (inter)regional and local levels. The targets groups reached are both IVET students and schools. These mechanisms for information and guidance provision are coordinated countrywide through a process of dialogue and cooperation between stakeholders, who meet regularly in the Steering Group for International Vocational Education and Training. Initiatives have been taken to improve the provision (appointing EP-Nuffic to promote

information and guidance including in IVET; the new SBB portal), however systematic evaluation of these initiatives is lacking.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

Starting with the 2016-2017 school year, all VET schools will use the revised Qualification Structure. Qualifications have been drafted in broad terms, but are specific enough to guide education providers. In addition to the national qualifications, schools will be afforded the leeway to draft some of the options themselves, and thus to anticipate specific regional needs or preferences, for example cross-border mobility. The options will also allow them to provide coursework in the German language for example.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

The 2014 Letter "Into the world: Letter on the government's vision on the international dimension of higher education and VET"²⁴⁹ of the Education Minister states that Netherlands has endorsed the EU mobility target of 6%.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

The country has taken actions to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries. If a VET student

²⁴⁹Government's vision on the international dimension of higher education and VET. Into the world: Letter on the government's vision on the international dimension of higher education and VET (2014) <http://www.government.nl/documents-and-publications/letters/2014/07/21/government-s-vision-on-the-international-dimension-of-higher-education-and-vet.html>

from outside the EU wants to study in the Netherlands for longer than 90 days, the educational institute (VET school) needs to be licensed by the IND (Immigration and Naturalisation Service) as a 'Referent'. All accredited institutions are registered and the register is available on the internet. It is for the educational institute to arrange the necessary visa and permits for the student. The 'Referent' has the task to monitor and guide the student during their stay in the Netherlands.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

The country has taken actions to reduce administrative burdens that may hinder the international mobility of IVET learners. The 'Red Carpet Programme' involves regular meetings to tackle mobility issues ('mobstackles'). It aims at aligning stakeholders' actions to guide foreign students through the rules on registration and the issuing of residence permits in a clear and structured way. It also aims to identify and eliminate unintended obstacles. The programme is implemented by a group of organizations, namely: the IND (the Immigration and Naturalization Service), DUO (the Education Executive Agency), the SURF foundation, Studielink, Studiekeuze123 and EP-Nuffic.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

Only institutions that are registered as "Referent" can be allowed to have minor students come to the Netherlands. Outgoing minors must have a parental consent, and benefit from money made available by parents. No specific measures have been taken to remove legal obstacles to the mobility of minors.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social security

The Netherlands is committed to ensure the social protection of IVET students and apprentices involved in international learning mobility.

Social protection regulations are an element of sectoral collective (labour) agreements and might differ between sectors²⁵⁰. Within work based learning (BBL), students are employees and thus covered by collective bargaining agreements. Within school based pathway (BOL), the school is responsible.

Labour protection

The country is also committed to provide incoming IVET students and apprentices with protection in terms of labour standards and safety. The national Working Conditions Act (Arbeidsomstandighedenwet), the Working Conditions Decree (Arbobesluit) and the Working Conditions Regulations (Arboregeling) are documents stating the rights and obligations for employers and employees in the area of health and safety at work²⁵¹. The provisions of these acts also apply to incoming IVET students and apprentices, from both EU and non-EU countries. Non-EU learners need to have a permit however.

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES" THEMATIC AREA

The Netherlands has a policy intention to allow for integrating international learning mobility in the curricula of IVET programmes, starting with 2016-2017. Under the revised Qualification Structure, schools will have the possibility to opt for cross-border mobility experience as an integral part of the IVET curriculum. The country has also endorsed the EU 6% IVET mobility benchmark, and has taken measures to facilitate the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries and to reduce administrative burdens that may hinder IVET mobility. The 'Red Carpet Programme' implemented by several organisations is aimed to guide foreign students through administrative procedures in a clear and structured way. The aspect that could be suggested for future attention is the lack of specific measures to reduce legal obstacles to the mobility of minor IVET learners. Although it may be deemed that no such measure is necessary because no difficulty was officially reported, there has not been any fully-fledged investigation

²⁵⁰ For more information, please see:

http://cao.minszw.nl/index.cfm?menu_item_id=16538&rubriek_id=392840&link_id=101179&hoofdmenu_item_id=16507

²⁵¹ For more information, please see:

http://www.inspectieszw.nl/english/work_by_foreign_nationals/

targeted at checking the situation on the ground and surveying users' needs and stakeholders' views. In future, it could be investigated, e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys, whether the existing conditions for the exit of minor learners are easy enough, or instead require putting in place support measures for assisting learners (or their institutions) in their mobility process.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

Recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility is at the discretion of IVET providers, and may be granted on a case by case basis according to the specific learning agreements between sending and receiving institutions.

In the Netherlands, VET schools are responsible for the assessment of students and the recognition of learning acquired during mobility periods abroad.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

This information is not available at this time

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in the country applies to:

- Courses
- Programmes
- Qualifications / Diplomas / Degrees

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

The approach to recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad is coordinated in the Netherlands. A national framework is in place: The 2012 VET Supervision Framework (Inspectorate of Education)²⁵².

There is also a national reference point (NRP) appointed by the Ministry of Education²⁵³ for information on and recognition of vocational qualifications acquired abroad.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

In accordance with a 'working agreement' between stakeholders in the field of recognition (i.e. workplace coordinators and school examination commissions), recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET students is bound to a time limit of six weeks.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1 STRATEGY / ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

The country has contact points for recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad.

A national structure for Credential Evaluation is in operation to assess qualifications or training acquired abroad. The Department for Credential Evaluation within the Foundation for cooperation on VET and Labour Market (SBB) provides policy advice about the comparability between Dutch and foreign VET qualifications and systems. The department provides the following services for students, schools, employees, employers and authorities:

- Policy advice
- Comparability between foreign and Dutch VET qualifications and systems
- Regulated professions at senior secondary VET-level (revised Directive 2013/55/EU of the European Parliament)
- Functioning as Netherlands National Reference Point, the

²⁵² <http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/english>

²⁵³ <http://www.nlnrp.nl/startpage.html>

information point for vocational education in the Netherlands and abroad

For these tasks, SBB has been appointed by the Dutch Ministry of Education. Information on SBB's activity is ensured via the joint SBB – EP-Nuffic website²⁵⁴. However, there is no visibility policy targeted at ensuring that SBB and its website are known to their potential users.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

Although SBB's activity is monitored²⁵⁵, since there is no visibility policy, there is no evaluation thereof.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Europass Mobility document is used to describe what an individual has learned in an international mobility programme. The document is used by schools who have joined the Erasmus+ programme.

In the Netherlands, the Europass Certificate Supplement is a non-personal document available for free. Certificate Supplements for each qualification are available via a special website (cs.s-bb.nl) in Dutch, English and German. They are used to explain what is learned during a certain training programme and useful in case of cross-border mobility. Learning outcomes are rated according to the NQF, EQF and ISCED frameworks.

The government supports ECVET, but there is no obligation for VET providers to use it in mobility programs. However, under the umbrella of the Erasmus+ program, the number of projects with ECVET elements is growing. The main purpose has been quality enhancement of work placements abroad. In most cases, work placements are an integrated part of a student's qualification process. The extent to which learning outcomes are identified and recognized differs widely. Pioneers among the VET providers have started to use the learning outcomes approach - along

²⁵⁴ <http://www.idw.nl/>

²⁵⁵ An evaluation report is drafted by SBB and sent to the Ministry of Education each year. It contains figures and trends on:

- the amount of requests
- sectors
- purpose of requests: work, study, both or other
- country of origin
- gender and age of applicants.

with ECVET principles - to develop international study programs. Learning outcomes are used as a common language to compare qualifications. Memoranda of Understanding help to structure and sustain the cooperation with European partner schools.

Learning outcomes, viewed as a common international language for VET providers and companies, are used to help students to choose a learning environment abroad in an informed manner. Learning outcomes might also help (future) employers to understand what (additional) knowledge, skills and competences a student has gained abroad.

Learning outcomes are rated according to the NQF and EQF frameworks on the Europass Certificate Supplements.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

The Netherlands has processes for the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET students. The process applicable to short-term mobility is bound to a time limit of six weeks. Recognition in the country makes use of the range of EU tools for the recognition, transfer and visibility of learning outcomes, i.e. the Europass Mobility Document and Certificate Supplement, ECVET, EQF/NQF and the Learning Outcomes approach. The recognition processes are coordinated countrywide. They cover three types of learning components (courses, programmes and qualifications). The country has a contact point for recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad, i.e. the Department for Credential Evaluation within the Foundation for cooperation on VET and Labour Market (SBB). However, no specific policy is in place to ensure that this contact point is visible to its potential users. Steps that could be considered for further progress in future include surveying users to check whether the recognition processes are easy to use, and whether the contact points for information on recognition are sufficiently known to them. Appropriate measures could then be taken as necessary. Expanding the scope of recognition to other types of learning components, i.e. credit points, units and modules could be considered as well.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

In the Netherlands, there are policy actions aimed to support the creation of partnerships for organising international learning mobility projects in IVET.

While there is no coordinating body at operational level, the process is supported by (national/local/regional) policy initiatives, contact seminars, dialogue, cooperation, the building of consortia and the definition of projects. Some projects and networks are organized thematically (green education) or regionally (border-regions). IVET providers and companies are supported in the creation of partnerships through the Steering Group for International Vocational Education and Training, the Red Carpet Programme, and consortia/networks such as Dutch Alliance (VET schools) and EfVET (the European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training).

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The effectiveness of policies, projects and implementation processes is discussed in dialogue and monitored via project-based methodologies (Plan-Do-Check-Adjust). The actors/stakeholders concerned organise this process themselves in and through their meetings. In practice however, the checking and adjusting phases may be missing.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

The country has taken measures to provide IVET learners with financial support for their international mobility.

In the 2014 Letter on Internationalization (in VET), the Minister of

Education announced financial support to be offered for this purpose. The Minister subscribes to the view of the MBO Raad that internationalisation can be an effective tool to promote excellence in VET. In 2014, a €25 million budget was earmarked for promoting excellence in IVET, of which €4.5 million were assigned to financing mobility. These resources can also be used to finance mobility outside Europe, for example with institutions in China.

The launch of Erasmus+ in 2014 has also expanded the financial resources available, including a substantial increase in the budget for IVET. Dutch institutions will use all these resources to maximum advantage. On the basis of their own detailed internationalisation policy, nine Dutch VET institutions already were awarded a 'certificate for mobility' under the European Life Long Learning programme, which facilitates their access to the Leonardo da Vinci subsidy programme. The intention is for all Dutch VET institutions that pursue a structural international policy to hold the new Mobility Charter by 2020²⁵⁶. The Charter should greatly facilitate access to EU resources. The Erasmus+ resources may also encourage institutions to invest their own funds in outbound mobility.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The actions aimed to provide IVET learners with financial support for their international mobility are subject to evaluation.

The €4.5 million subsidy for VET institutions through the excellence budget will be monitored through quality indicators assessed by the Education Inspectorate. Schools send in their (annual) quality plans for assessment. In line with requirements laid down in the Regulation Quality Agreements, excellence-budget is granted or not. Furthermore, regular reporting (VET institutions) and monitoring (Ministry of Education) is legally laid down in the December 2014 Regulation Quality Agreements MBO (senior secondary VET)²⁵⁷.

Figures on international mobility will be monitored in the annual 'apprenticeship-monitor'. Pilots are in place and a national thematic advisory committee will evaluate the pilots in 2016.

²⁵⁶ The Erasmus+ VET Mobility Charter aims to reward and promote quality in mobility. Charter holders benefit from streamlined procedures, including the application process, the organisation of mobility projects, and reporting activities. A Call for Proposals for the award of the VET Mobility Charter is organised annually.

²⁵⁷ http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0035923/geldigheidsdatum_22-05-2015

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. STRATEGY / ACTIONS TO PROVIDE INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH FINANCIAL AND NON-FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The country has actions aimed to provide stakeholders involved in organising international IVET mobility projects with financial and non-financial support.

The Ministry of Education underlines the fact that also lecturers should be actively encouraged to benefit from the opportunities offered under Erasmus+. Like the MBO Raad, the Minister of Education regards lecturers as important drivers of internationalisation in the VET sector. She will therefore ask the National Agency for Erasmus+ to gear its publicity and support efforts to both lecturer and student mobility in VET and to include extensive attention for quality aspects. VET lecturers are supported in maintaining networks on internationalisation and mobility issues in general²⁵⁸.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

Information not available at this time.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

In the Netherlands, companies and VET institutions are supported in the creation of partnerships and networks for IVET mobility through policy initiatives at national, regional and local level. IVET institutions also receive support targeted at their staff (with particular reference to lecturers) for organising mobility projects. Financial support is also available through Erasmus+ for IVET learners' international mobility. Part of these support actions are subject to some monitoring, however systematic evaluation of the support policies in this area is lacking. For further improvement in future, it could be considered putting in place fully-fledged evaluation for all policies in the area, including translating monitoring activities into recommendations that are actually implemented and improve the next generation of actions. It could also be made sure (e.g. through users surveys) that the support provided to learners, companies, institutions and their staff actually meets these target groups

²⁵⁸ See for example Dutch Alliance <http://dutchalliance.nl/wordpress/>

mobility needs.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In the thematic area of Information and Guidance, the Netherlands has mechanisms for information and guidance on IVET learning mobility operating in parallel at national, (inter)regional and local levels. The targets groups reached are both IVET students and schools. These mechanisms for information and guidance provision are coordinated countrywide through a process of dialogue and cooperation between stakeholders, who meet regularly in the Steering Group for International Vocational Education and Training. Initiatives have been taken to improve the provision (appointing EP-Nuffic to promote information and guidance including in IVET; the new SBB portal), however systematic evaluation of these initiatives is lacking.

Regarding the area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, the Netherlands has a policy intention to allow for integrating international learning mobility in the curricula of IVET programmes, starting with 2016-2017. Under the revised Qualification Structure, schools will have the possibility to opt for cross-border mobility experience as an integral part of the IVET curriculum. The country has also endorsed the EU 6% IVET mobility benchmark, and has taken measures to facilitate the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries and to reduce administrative burdens that may hinder IVET mobility. The aspect that could be suggested for future attention is the lack of specific measures to reduce legal obstacles to the mobility of minor IVET learners. Although it may be deemed that no such measure is necessary because no difficulty was officially reported, there has not been any fully-fledged investigation targeted at checking the situation on the ground and surveying users' needs and stakeholders' views. In future, it could be investigated, e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys, whether the existing conditions for the exit of minor learners are easy enough, or instead require putting in place support measures for assisting learners (or their institutions) in their mobility process.

In the area of Recognition of Learning Outcomes, the Netherlands has processes for the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET students. The process applicable to short-term mobility is bound to a time limit of six weeks. Recognition in the country makes use of the range of EU tools for the recognition, transfer and visibility of learning outcomes, i.e. the Europass Mobility Document and Certificate Supplement, ECVET, EQF/NQF and the Learning Outcomes approach. The recognition processes are coordinated countrywide. They cover three types of learning components (courses, programmes and qualifications).

The country has a contact point for recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad, i.e. the Department for Credential Evaluation within the Foundation for cooperation on VET and Labour Market (SBB). However, no specific policy is in place to ensure that this contact point is well known to its potential users. Steps that could be considered for further progress in future include surveying users to check whether the recognition processes are easy to use, and whether the contact points for information on recognition are sufficiently known to them. Appropriate measures could then be taken as necessary. Expanding the scope of recognition to other types of learning components, i.e. credit points, units and modules could be considered as well.

Finally, regarding the area of Partnerships and Funding, companies and VET institutions are supported in the creation of partnerships and networks for IVET mobility through policy initiatives at national, regional and local level. IVET institutions also receive support targeted at their staff (with particular reference to lecturers) for organising mobility projects. Financial support is also available through Erasmus+ for IVET learners' international mobility. Part of these support actions are subject to some monitoring, however systematic evaluation of the support policies in this area is lacking. For further improvement in future, it could be considered putting in place fully-fledged evaluation for all policies in the area, including translating monitoring activities into recommendations that are actually implemented and improve the next generation of actions. It could also be made sure (e.g. through users surveys) that the support provided to learners, companies, institutions and their staff actually meets these target groups mobility needs.

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IVET levels covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Norway has a decentralised information and guidance system for learners. Guidance practitioners are employed by the schools to guide learners in educational and vocational matters. During the past few years, an educational programme for guidance practitioners has been developed, and many counsellors have taken supplementary training.

The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU) is a Norwegian public sector agency that promotes international cooperation in education and research. The centre is Norway's official agency for international programmes and measures related to education. It is commissioned by several national and international public organisations to administer programmes within all levels of education. In addition to programme administration, SIU is responsible for promoting Norway as an education and research destination, as well as providing information and advisory services within the field of internationalisation in education.

The Centre has established a dialogue with the education sector enacted through conferences, seminars and web services disseminating information about the opportunities for mobility.

An integrated part of this work is to develop the international dimension of educational and vocational guidance and counselling systems. An important focus area is to enhance the knowledge of guidance practitioners so they are better able to facilitate mobility of high quality and increase the visibility and relevance of the mobility experience.

SIU is also running a web page aimed at learners at all levels, including IVET learners²⁵⁹. This web page provides general information about the benefits of international mobility for IVET learners. It also provides some advice about how to go about to get abroad.

²⁵⁹ studerutlandet.no

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

Guidance provision for VET learners is regulated by law (the Education act), and the responsibility to enact it lies with VET schools. This act and belonging regulations determine the extent of guidance a school has to provide (one work year for every 500 learners) and regulates what fields the guidance should cover. There are local varieties in how the schools choose to fulfil this task.

The act also states that guidance strategies for VET learners should be embedded in the VET schools' working life network. This is to secure that the training and guidance provided is in accordance with working life.

The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU) is responsible for coordinating national measures within the field of internationalisation, including provision of information and guidance.

In 2015, the Ministry of Education and Research appointed a national committee to investigate how lifelong career guidance can be strengthened.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

The Norwegian Government's White Paper on Internationalisation of Education (2008-2009) states that internationalisation of education and training has high political priority in Norway. It specifically mentions mobility in vocational education and training as a mean to improve quality, and to prepare the future workers for the European labour market that follows the European Economic Area Agreement (EEAA).

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU) was in 2011 given the mandate to act as a competence centre on the internationalisation of primary and secondary education and training. The Centre has since then strengthened dissemination of information about the opportunities available through various initiatives and programmes for

all levels of primary and secondary education and training. In 2014, following Norway's decision to participate in Erasmus+, SIUs allocation grant was significantly increased to strengthen the Centre's role in promoting international cooperation and mobility in education, including IVET mobility. Extensive information activities across the country, directed towards IVET providers, has been carried out in order to increase the number of mobility projects initiated and thus the possibility for IVET learners to participate. The IVET providers are responsible for informing the potential participants about the possibilities, in accordance with programme instructions.

In 2015, the Norwegian National Euroguidance centre was transferred from the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training to SIU. This gives SIU an important opportunity to reinforce and improve the guidance side of SIU's activity. More specifically this means that SIU is working specifically towards providing information about IVET mobility to the group of guidance practitioners who meet the learners in their daily work.

To achieve this, SIU has initiated a project called "Guidance practitioners – door-openers for mobility?". The objective of the project is to increase practitioner's knowledge of/on opportunities for mobility; increase the awareness of the benefits international experience can yield.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

The performance of SIU's information and advisory services within the field of internationalisation in education, including learning mobility for IVET learners, is subject to external evaluations/audits on a yearly basis. The external evaluations are performed by independent consultants (auditors) commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and the European Commission. The evaluations look, among other things, at the correspondence between information strategy and actual activities, as well as the feedback received from the target groups for information activities. The outcomes of the evaluations are systematically used to improve and correct SIUs activities.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

SIU's web page²⁶⁰ is the primary source of information for the target public, and was revamped in 2014 in order to allow for easy information

²⁶⁰ www.siu.no

access. In combination with the information seminars hosted by SIU and associated stakeholders across the country every year, general information as well as practical guidance on applications for funding and project development is provided to a broad public, such as VET institutions, school owners and apprenticeship training agencies.

SIU collaborate closely with regional and local stakeholders concerning information activities. In particular, the county councils, which are also school owner on the upper secondary level in Norway, are important partners for SIUs information activities.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

Norway provides IVET learners with information and guidance for international study mobility. The existing mechanism is coordinated countrywide by the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU). Financial and institutional measures have been taken in 2011, 2014 and 2015 to improve the provision of information and guidance, and these measures are regularly evaluated.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

Internationalisation has received high attention in Norwegian educational policy for some time. The Ministry of Education and Research clearly defines increased quality as the main *raison d'être* for international cooperation, and it is accentuated that internationalisation should be an integral part of curricula and activities at all levels of education. An important contribution to education policy was presented in the White Paper *On the right track*. Quality and Diversity in School Education²⁶¹. This White Paper builds on earlier white papers from the outgoing

²⁶¹ [St. meld. 20 (2012-2013) På rett vei. Kvalitet og mangfold i fellesskolen]

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government, and the earlier educational reform (the 2006 Knowledge Promotion Reform in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education/training). *On the right track...* focuses on how to create an inclusive school in a multicultural society, how to make education relevant for future society, and how to deal with the challenge that too few people complete their vocational training and education. Internationalisation and mobility provide part of the answer to these challenges. For example, a new elective course, International Cooperation, has been introduced at secondary level, aiming at making language education more practical and facilitating increased knowledge about other peoples and cultures using tools such as eTwinning and international resources in the community.

Regarding upper secondary in general and vocational training in particular, mobility is facilitated. This has been done through strengthening pupils' rights when taking parts of their education/training abroad. The rules for recognition of such education have been reworked to secure coherent practice. Moreover, student exchange organisations have been given the task of assisting pupils in producing the documentation needed for approval.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

Norway has not set targets for international mobility in IVET. The EU 6 % benchmark is not in use, but the Ministry of Education and Research strongly emphasises the importance of taking advantage of the opportunities available, and encourages the use of international mobility in IVET

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

IVET learners must follow the same procedures to apply for visa and residency permits as everyone else.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

In upper secondary education, including vocational training, arrangements have been made to facilitate mobility. This has been done through strengthening pupils' rights when taking parts of their education/training abroad. The rules for recognition of such education

have been reworked to secure coherent practice across institutions, thus reducing the administrative burden on each school.

In 2015 a national ECVET expert team has been established in Norway. This group is intended to guide and assist sending organizations in consistent use of Memorandum of Understanding and Learning Agreements – documents that are used to ensure good quality mobility projects and learning outcomes. This expert group will become a resource that reduces the administrative burden on each sending organization.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

There are no legal obstacles to the mobility of minors.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social security

IVET learners and apprentices have the same basic social rights as every citizen. In addition to this, all sending organisations must make sure that all participants are covered by relevant insurances. Most school owners (counties) have insurances that covers all learners and apprentices.

European citizens who possess a European Health Insurance Card have access to medical treatment under the same conditions as national residents. Non-EU nationals will be covered by relevant travel insurances.

Labour protection

IVET learners and apprentices are covered by the Norwegian Working Environment Act (LOV-2005-06-17-62).

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES" THEMATIC AREA

Norway has a clear policy intention to integrate international learning mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes. Administrative

support has been put in place to alleviate the burdens induced by arranging mobility. However, the country has not set targets for the development of international mobility in IVET. It also has not taken any measures to smooth the delivery of visa or residency permits to incoming IVET learners from third countries, or to remove any obstacles that may hinder the mobility of minors. Although it may be deemed that no such measure is necessary because no difficulty was officially reported, there has not been any fully-fledged investigation targeted at checking the situation on the ground and surveying users' needs and stakeholders' views. In future, it could be investigated, e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys, whether the existing conditions for delivering visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries and for the exit of minor learners are easy enough or instead require putting in place support for assisting learners (or their institutions) in their mobility process. It could also be considered setting national level targets for mobility in IVET.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

The recognition system is framed by law. The IVET system in Norway is based on one final assessment. Learning acquired abroad through international mobility projects is integrated in the ordinary educational pathway, and as such it is recognised. In August 2015, a new regulation was added to the Education Act about the connection between the formative assessment and final assessment in upper secondary education and training. This regulation states that formative assessment shall promote learning and give the student an opportunity to improve his/her competencies throughout the training programme. The competencies the learner has acquired during the educational pathway are taken into account in the final assessment.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

Recognition is automatic and can therefore be considered easy.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

Learning outcomes are recognised without any particular reference to any specific format of learning component.

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

The coordination approach is framed by law.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

Recognition is automatic and does not require any process, hence process time frame.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

Recognition is integrated to the educational process and automatic. The learner does not have to request recognition, so there is no need for contact points and visibility policy thereof.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

There is no visibility policy, so no evaluation thereof.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Europass Mobility Document is used to enhance the visibility of the learning outcomes acquired by VET learners. It is mainly used for IVET mobility in Erasmus+. Europass Mobility document is increasingly used in relation to other European mobility tools, in particular ECVET. In 2014, the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation (SIU) organized a training seminar for the most experienced VET mobility organizers from a selected group of VET schools and school owners. This is planned to turn

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into an annual event facilitating a community of practice in Europass Mobility, Memorandum of Understanding and Learning Agreements.

The Europass Certificate Supplement is a non-personal document available for free download by anyone. VET institutions involved in Erasmus+ mobility projects mostly use it to compare VET systems and find suitable partner institutions abroad.

A national committee is currently considering ways of implementing ECVET in Norway. Their suggestions are currently subject to a public consultation. Establishing a national expert team is underway.

In 2014 the Norwegian national qualification framework (NQF) was linked to EQF. Reference to EQF is included in Europass Certificate Supplements.

In Norway, VET curricula are based on learning outcomes descriptions. VET institutions engaged in mobility projects use learning outcomes to get a common understanding between sending and receiving organisations. The learning outcomes are settled and formally agreed upon in Memorandum of Understandings and Learning Agreements between sender, receiver and learner.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

Norway ensures recognition of learning acquired abroad through integrating it into the ordinary education. Learners therefore do not have to request recognition, which is ensured automatically. The approach is framed by law and as such is countrywide coordinated. It ensures easiness of access to learners and avoids needing a time-frame for processing requests after the mobility stay or carrying out actions for the visibility of contact points.

Norway makes use of EU tools such as the Europass Mobility Document, The Europass Certificate Supplement, the EQF/NQF and the learning outcomes approach, mostly for purposes of visibility and facilitating mobility. Introducing ECVET is underway.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

SIU, Norway's official agency for international programmes and measures related to education, is responsible for promoting and facilitating international cooperation, standardization and mobility in education. SIU's main target groups involve all Norwegian education sector stakeholders, including IVET providers and businesses. IVET is a prioritized sector in several of international mobility programmes administrated by SIU. In 2015, SIU have co-organised two thematic seminars on "Supporting the development of high quality VET through international cooperation" (with a particular focus on areas such as work-based learning and ECVET). SIU also arranges annual information seminars aimed at raising the level of knowledge and attract newcomers to the international IVET mobility programmes. These information seminars are arranged in various places in Norway and welcome local and regional school authorities as well as NGOs related to the field of education, public sector institutions and the labour market organizations. In the Norwegian-German programme Gjør det!, it is possible to apply for preparatory visits for 1-2 participants per institution. The preparatory visits are used to discuss agreement details and look at facilities.

In addition to information seminars, several contact seminars are available for Norwegian IVET institutions and companies every year – some organised by SIU, and some by other National Agencies for Erasmus+. Such contact seminars are arenas for establishing partnerships and expanding networks.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The performance of SIUs information and advisory services, including the organisation of contact seminars, is subject to an external evaluation on a yearly basis. The external evaluation is performed by independent auditors commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of Education. The outcomes of the evaluation are systematically used to improve and correct SIUs activities.

All participants in SIUs information seminars and contact seminars are

encouraged to answer relevant online evaluation forms after the event.

All feedback is used by SIU to evaluate and adjust the strategies and plans for following years.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

IVET learners have access to three main types of individual financial support for international mobility, i.e. basic support, tuition support, and travel expenses. The Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund is the dedicated authority responsible for allocating these funds. Funding by this action, named Samarbeidsordningen, is based on pre-approved agreements between IVET providers and relevant companies abroad. SIU is responsible for approving such agreements.

In addition IVET learners can participate in Erasmus+ Mobility projects and the Norwegian-German mobility programme Gjør det!.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Ministry of Education and Research is currently preparing a public consultation on the Samarbeidsordningen in order to reduce administrative obstacles and increase use of the measure.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

SIU provides stakeholders with support to organize mobility projects through multiple channels and arenas. County councils (owners of IVET institutions) also provide relevant parties with financial and non-financial support to organize international IVET mobility projects. County councils have international officers providing administrative support and guidance to parties interested in organizing international IVET mobility projects. Some county councils also provide financial funding for schools interested in organizing international IVET mobility projects.

Also regional Europe offices (organisations representing the interests of regional constellations of municipalities, counties and central organisations in relation to European politics) and apprenticeship training offices (the intermediary organisations responsible for connecting IVET learners and relevant companies in the transition from school training and apprenticeship period) provide information and advice to stakeholders involved in organizing international IVET mobility projects. SIU have close cooperation with several of these organisations.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

In 2011, SIU mapped out the involvement of the school owners (communities and county councils) in international activities through a survey targeted at the county councils and municipalities. An analytical report was prepared on the basis of this survey, where the statistical data from the programme activities in correlation with the internationalisation strategies at municipalities and county councils was analysed. A survey of international cooperation in upper secondary schools was also made.

This aspect is also covered by the annual audits that SIU is subject to, as described earlier. The audits may lead to recommendations, and all feedback from such audits are carefully considered by SIU when planning next year's strategy.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

Norway has policies for supporting companies and IVET institutions in creating partnerships and networks as well as organising international mobility projects. These policies are subject to evaluation. Norway also has actions for funding IVET learners for their international mobility. This latter policy is not subject to evaluation however. In future, it could be considered subjecting this policy to a fully-fledged evaluation that leads to recommendations which translate into reforms for the next generation of funding actions.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In the thematic area of Information and Guidance, Norway provides IVET learners with information and guidance for international study mobility. The existing mechanism is coordinated countrywide by the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU). Financial and institutional measures have been taken in 2011, 2014 and 2015 to improve the provision of information and guidance, and these measures are regularly evaluated.

Regarding the area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, Norway has a clear policy intention to integrate international learning mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes. Administrative support has been put in place to alleviate the burdens induced by arranging mobility. However, the country has not set targets for the development of international mobility in IVET. It also has not taken any measures to smooth the delivery of visa or residency permits to incoming IVET learners from third countries, or to remove any obstacles that may hinder the mobility of minors. Although it may be deemed that no such measures are necessary because no difficulty was officially reported, there has not been any fully-fledged investigation targeted at checking the situation on the ground and surveying users' needs and stakeholders' views. In future, it could be investigated, e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys, whether the existing conditions for delivering visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries and for the exit of minor IVET learners are easy enough, or instead require putting in place support for assisting learners (or their institutions) in their mobility process. It could also be considered setting national level targets for mobility in IVET.

In the area of Recognition of Learning Outcomes, Norway ensures recognition of learning acquired abroad through integrating it into the ordinary education. Learners therefore do not have to request recognition, which is ensured automatically. The approach is framed by law and as such is countrywide coordinated. It ensures easiness of access to learners and avoids needing a time-frame for processing requests after the mobility stay, or carrying out actions for the visibility of contact points. Norway makes use of EU tools such as Europass, ECVET, the EQF/NQF and the learning outcomes approach, but only for purposes of visibility and facilitating mobility, not for transfer and recognition.

Finally, regarding the area of Partnerships and Funding, Norway has policies for supporting companies and IVET institutions in creating partnerships and networks as well as organising international mobility projects. These policies are subject to evaluation. Norway also has actions for funding IVET learners for their international mobility. This latter policy is not subject to evaluation however. In future, it could be considered subjecting this policy to a fully-fledged evaluation that leads to

recommendations which translate into reforms for the next generation of funding actions.

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IVET levels covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary

IVET mobility in Portugal is mainly developed within the framework of ERASMUS+ Programme. It is financed by European funds. The target groups are the ones defined in the Programme.

Besides ERASMUS+, only small pilot projects have been carried out by several VET institutions (e.g. sectorial training centres), namely within the framework of ECVET partnerships, also financed by European funds and having as the main target group the IVET learners.

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Portugal does not have actions for providing IVET learners with information and guidance for international study mobility.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

There is no provision, so no coordination thereof.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

The existent legal provisions do not include that objective.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

More attention has been paid in recent period to improve the dissemination of VET-related information through VET events, fairs, and skills competitions. However, no structured actions have been taken to improve the existing situation through putting in place a mechanism for provision of information and guidance to IVET learners for their international learning mobility.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

There is no evaluation of the initiatives taken.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

Companies and VET institutions can find information about international mobility on the ERASMUS+ Agency website.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

Portugal does not provide IVET learners with information and guidance for international learning mobility. There have been attempts to put in place at least a provision of information through VET events, fairs and skills competitions, however no evaluations of these initiatives have been performed, and no structured actions to implement a full-fledged mechanism for provision of information and guidance to IVET learners on international learning mobility have been taken. Considering a plan for a comprehensive evaluated and countrywide coordinated policy in this area in future would certainly help improving international mobility in IVET

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

Portugal does not have any promotion action to integrate international learning experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

Portugal hasn't set any quantitative or qualitative target for the development of international mobility in IVET.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

No measures in this regard have been taken.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

No measures in this regard have been taken.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

No measures in this regard have been taken.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Incoming apprentices and IVET students from the EU benefit (through the European Health Insurance Card) from the same medical care as their

counterparts in the country (i.e. local IVET learners).

Incoming apprentices and IVET students (whether from the EU or from third countries) are subject to the country's labour law and benefit from labour and safety protection in the same conditions as their counterparts in the country (i.e. local IVET learners at work).

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES" THEMATIC AREA

Portugal does not have a policy orientation to integrate international learning mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes, and have not set targets for the development of international mobility in IVET. The country has also not taken measures to facilitate the mobility of IVET learners through smoothing the delivery of visas and residency permits to third country nationals, reducing the administrative burdens induced by mobility arrangements, or removing the possible obstacles to the movement of minor apprentices and IVET students. Addressing these issues in future would certainly help improving international learning mobility in IVET.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

Recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility is regulated by law at national / regional level. Recognition of qualifications acquired abroad is carried out with reference to existing recognised qualification in Portugal. The recognition is referenced to the National Qualifications Catalogue (itself referenced to the National Qualifications Framework). The responsible authority is ANQEP (National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education)²⁶².

²⁶² Decree-law 396/2007, 31 December - National Qualification System Dispatch 13584/2014, 10 November - Recognition of qualifications acquired abroad

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

Learning acquired abroad by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility may be recognised, but the process is felt by users as somewhat difficult. The recognition has to be solicited in a CQEP – Centre for Qualification and VET (under the supervision of the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education – ANQEP). The request is then analysed by a CQEP that offers education and training courses in the same area as the qualifications to be recognised. The criteria include identical professional output and similar curricular structure. If the recognition is due, a certification document is issued.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in the country applies to:

- Courses
- Programmes
- Qualifications / diplomas / degrees

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

Coordination is ensured by the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education – ANQEP through a national network of Centres for Qualification and Vocational Education (CQEPs).

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

There is a 30 working days limit counting from the request or from the reception of additional documentation required by the centre for qualification and vocational education in order to complete the analysis.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

The centres for qualification and vocational education (CQEP) are responsible for the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad. They form a national network. National coordination is ensured by the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education - ANQEP. ANQEP is responsible for the creation of a technological platform to support the recognition procedure management. It is also responsible for ensuring the availability of the platform to CQEPs network.

Visibility of these contact points is ensured through two ways. The CQEPs work as autonomous structures inside different types of organizations, such as Secondary Schools, VET Centres, Local Employment Services, etc. In that sense, these contact points are much framed in the current activity of those organizations and share the same target groups, like students or learners. Thus they can be visible to these target groups. On the other hand, the contact points also advertise their activity, namely on recognition, on the internet.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

The system for recognition through ANQEP and CQEPs has only been put in place in 2014. The evaluation process will be developed later.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The EUROPASS Mobility Document and the Europass Certificate Supplement are in use in Portugal. ECVET and Learning Outcomes approach are in an initial phase of implementation, i.e. an implementation based on sectorial projects.

Recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad is carried out against the background of the National Qualification Catalogue, which itself is referenced to the National Qualification Framework, which in turn is referenced to the EQF.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

Portugal has in place a mechanism for the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET learners. The mechanism takes into account courses, programmes and qualifications. It is coordinated countrywide and subject to a regulatory 30-day time limit for processing applications. Recognition in Portugal makes use of the EQF/NQF. The Europass Mobility Document and Certificate Supplement, ECVET and the Learning Outcomes approach are also in use in the country, although it is unclear whether this use extends to IVET international mobility. Actions are in place to make visible to users those contact points (CQEPs) where information on recognition can be obtained. This policy is not evaluated however. Also, the recognition process is felt as difficult by users. These drawbacks could be addressed in future. It could be made sure in future that the EU tools for transparency, mobility and recognition are used also for the purpose of IVET international mobility. Extending (to units, modules, credit points) the range of learning components that can be taken into account in the recognition process could also be considered.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

Portugal does not have actions to support companies and IVET institutions in the creation of partnerships and networks for international mobility projects.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

There is no policy to support the creation of partnerships and networks, so no evaluation thereof.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

IVET learners receive financial support for their international mobility within the framework of Erasmus+. The support is in the form of a subsistence allowance while abroad.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The National Agency for Erasmus+ is subject to auditing in compliance with the rules and procedures established under the Programme regulation.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

Within the framework of Erasmus+, stakeholders may receive funding for organising mobility projects. Projects participants are entitled to subsistence allowances while on the move. There is no non-financial support.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

The financial support provided within Erasmus+ is subject to evaluation in compliance with the rules and procedures established under the Programme regulation.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

Portugal has mechanisms to fund IVET learners for their international mobility, and to fund companies and IVET institutions for organising

mobility projects. These actions are subject to auditing. There is no non-financial support, in particular for helping businesses and institutions in organising projects or creating networks and partnerships for international mobility. Considering putting in place these types of non-financial support for stakeholders and their staff could certainly open way for further progress in this area in future. Also, setting regular full-fledged evaluations for all the policies carried out in the area would be a significant step forward.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In the thematic area of Information and Guidance, Portugal does not provide IVET learners with information and guidance for international learning mobility. There have been attempts to put in place at least a provision of information through VET events, fairs and skills competitions, however no evaluations of these initiatives have been carried out, and no structured actions to implement a full-fledged mechanism for provision of information and guidance to IVET learners on international learning mobility have been taken. Considering a plan for a comprehensive evaluated and countrywide coordinated policy in this area in future would certainly help improving international mobility in IVET.

In the area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, Portugal does not have a policy orientation to integrate international learning experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes, and have not set targets for the development of international mobility in IVET. The country has also not taken measures to facilitate the mobility of IVET learners through smoothing the delivery of visas and residency permits to third country nationals, or reducing the administrative burdens induced by mobility arrangements, or removing the possible obstacles to the mobility of minor apprentices and IVET students. Addressing these issues in future would certainly help improving international learning mobility in IVET.

Regarding the area of Recognition of Learning Outcomes, Portugal has in place a mechanism for the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET learners. The mechanism takes into account courses, programmes and qualifications. It is coordinated countrywide and subject to a regulatory 30-day time limit for processing applications. Recognition in Portugal makes use of the EQF/NQF. The Europass Mobility Document and Certificate Supplement, ECVET and the Learning Outcomes approach are also in use in the country, although it is unclear whether this use extends to IVET international mobility. Actions are in place to make visible to users those contact points (CQEPs) where information on recognition can be obtained. This policy is not evaluated however. Also, the recognition process is felt as difficult by users. These drawbacks could be

addressed in future. It could be made sure in future that the EU tools for transparency, mobility and recognition are used also for the purpose of IVET international mobility. Extending (to units, modules, credit points) the range of learning components that can be taken into account in the recognition process could also be considered.

Finally, concerning the area of Partnerships and Funding, Portugal has mechanisms to fund IVET learners for their international mobility, and to fund companies and IVET institutions for organising mobility projects. These actions are subject to auditing. There is no non-financial support, in particular for helping businesses and institutions in organising projects or creating networks and partnerships for international mobility. Considering putting in place these types of non-financial support for stakeholders and their staff could certainly open way for further progress in this area in future. Also, setting regular full-fledged evaluations for all the policies carried out in the area would be a significant step forward.

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IVET levels covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary
- Post-secondary non-tertiary

Main schemes for international IVET mobility in Romania

Mobility scheme	Source of funds	Target group
Erasmus+	European	IVET learners AND other groups ²⁶³

In Romania, the only type of international mobility for IVET learners is in the frame of Erasmus+ (for the VET sector).

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

In Romania, the international learning mobility of IVET learners is financed through the Erasmus+ Programme, which is administered by the National Agency for Community Programs for Education and Professional Development (ANPCDEFP). Information on international learning mobility opportunities is provided to IVET students systematically, by the VET schools that are the beneficiaries of Erasmus+ grants, who in turn receive information and assistance from ANPCDEFP. The objectives of this information provision are: promoting the projects; ensuring equal opportunities for all students in the target group; and selecting the students who will allow for the achievement of the project objectives.

According to the Erasmus+ guidelines, each beneficiary school must designate a project team and a selection team must be responsible for informing and selecting the students, and preparing the selected students for taking part in the mobility²⁶⁴.

²⁶³ In 2015, 98 projects were approved. 9 485 793 Euro were granted for 3 598 IVET learners, of which 87 were learners with special needs.

²⁶⁴ The grant recipients are informed about the obligation to ensure a transparent and valid selection process, and the issues to be considered in the training of students:

The schools that are awarded a mobility grant are required by ANPCDEFP to develop a detailed plan for the preparation of students taking part in mobility projects. If the students selected are minor, then their parents need to be informed as well on all aspects of the mobility.

At the end of the preparation stage, the students sign learning agreements, either in the format provided by EC for the Erasmus+ programme, or in the ECVET format (over 30% of the Erasmus+ grant beneficiary students have signed ECVET learning agreements).

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

In Romania, the information provision for IVET learning mobility is coordinated countrywide through the National Agency for Community Programs for Education and Professional Development (ANPCDEFP), which is the National Agency for Erasmus+.

The Agency supports schools in terms of information provision, information on selection of participants and training for the students participating in international learning mobility. The support provided for these activities begins with the meeting between ANPCDEFP and VET providers for the signature of grant contracts, continues with desk and on-the-spot monitoring carried out by ANPCDEFP experts, and ends with the evaluation of final reports (containing distinct categories on: informing the students, the selection and preparation process), and the feedback provided to beneficiary organisations. This close supervision by ANPCDEFP is intended to have a coordinating effect on the provision of information to IVET learners.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

In Romania, there are no legal provisions that include the objective of promoting international learning mobility in IVET.

information about the grant programme; related tasks; units of learning outcomes targeted in the mobility, the participants' learning tasks; the host organisation; the necessary pre-acquisitions; the learning activities they will take part in; information about the mobility tutors; how to assess the learning outcomes of the mobility, the validation, recognition and transfer procedures; teaching methods; language information; cultural information.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

The country has no specific policy actions aimed to improve the provision of information and guidance on international learning mobility for IVET learners.

However, several annual activities are carried out part of the implementation process of Erasmus+, aimed to achieve the programme objectives, to promote international mobility, and to disseminate information about the Programme. Among these activities is the ongoing monitoring of mobility projects by ANPCDEFP experts, identifying examples of good practice and providing support where problems have been identified. Examples of good practice are also promoted on the ANPCDEFP website and at the annual valorisation meetings.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

As there are no specific improvement actions for information and guidance provision to IVET learners, there is no evaluation.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

In Romania, IVET institutions are provided with information and assistance on IVET international mobility through ANPCDEFP, the National Agency for Erasmus+. This is done through a variety of activities:

- Phone or e-mail consultation offered by the ANPCDEFP and/or ECVET experts;
- Organisation of information meetings, webinars and seminars for VET schools;
- Publication of reference documents on the ANPCDEFP website;
- Translation, printing and publication on the ANPCDEFP website of ECVET materials/documents generated at EC level;
- Producing digital and paper information brochures in regard to ECVET for mobility;
- A network of ANPCDEFP trainers who provide courses, information and training on the importance of IVET mobility projects, on their design and implementation -these are offered on request for the VET field;

- Kick-off meetings with IVET mobility project beneficiaries, during which information is offered on how to carry out each stage of the project, and on ECVET. In these meetings the beneficiaries are recommended to use as many of the ECVET technical components as possible.
- Information and training meetings for actors in VET by the experts from the national team of ECVET experts;
- Biannual information and training meetings for the inspectors in the inspectors network in charge of European projects and programmes;

ANPCDEFP cooperates with the National Centre for TVET Development and with the team of ECVET experts in order to ensure coherence in their activities. ANPCDEFP experts responsible for IVET mobility projects receive training, in order for them to be able to provide information and guidance services concerning project management, as well as how to identify and formulate learning outcomes, and how assessment, validation, recognition and transfer of learning outcomes should be performed.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

In Romania, IVET students are provided with information on opportunities for international learning mobility by the VET schools that are beneficiaries of Erasmus+ mobility grants. VET schools are also required to provide a detailed plan for the preparation of students taking part in mobility projects. The National Agency for Community Programs for Education and Professional Development (ANPCDEFP) ensures the provision of information and assistance to IVET providers participating in Erasmus+. Through close supervision and monitoring of grant recipients, the Agency ensures the countrywide coordination of information provision to IVET learners. The main drawbacks in this thematic area are the lack of guidance for IVET mobility, and the lack of specific actions aimed to improve the information and guidance provision to IVET learners. A further step for Romania could be to consider providing IVET learners not only with information on Erasmus+ opportunities, but also with personalised advice and guidance by trained guidance counsellors, taking into account the students personal situation and aspirations, career plans and mobility options. Specific improvement measures should be clearly defined, identifying the issues that are intended for improvement, and should be evaluated to ensure their effectiveness.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

In Romania, international mobility periods can be integrated in the curricula of IVET learners and the national education law provides for the recognition and transfer of learning outcomes obtained during mobility periods.

In the national curriculum for vocational schools with the duration of 3 years there are 24 weeks allocated for placement in a company. In the national curriculum for technological high-schools 15 weeks are allocated for practical activities. A part of these weeks can be organised as international mobility. According to the Order of the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth no. 4931/2008²⁶⁵, the practical activities carried out during international mobility periods have to be recognised as part of the curriculum.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

In Romania, there are annual targets for international learning mobility in IVET, set by ANPCDEFP in the national work programme for Erasmus+.

Some of the indicators and targets are:

- To raise the quality and volume of learning mobility

Indicator: % share of VET learners from Programme Countries who have received a certificate, diploma or other type of recognition/validation of their learning outcomes acquired through their participation in the programme, using tools such as Europass and ECVET.

Targets: 90% in 2015 and 93% in 2016

- To encourage participation of people with special needs
 - Indicator: Number of learners with special needs participating in learning mobility
 - Targets: 15 learners in 2015 and 16 learners in 2016

²⁶⁵Order of the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth no. 4931/2008 referring to the Transfer and recognition of learning outcomes achieved by students in technical and vocational education and through practical training/work-based training

- To encourage participation of people located in rural areas
 - Indicator: % share of staff situated in rural areas participating in learning mobility
 - Targets: 10% in 2015 and 11% in 2016

On a local/regional level, the school inspectorates have introduced quality criteria for evaluating IVET schools in regard to their involvement in Erasmus+ projects, and the institutional development through these projects. These criteria are useful especially in relation to the target for newcomers, and have determined an increase in the number of IVET schools interested in Erasmus+ mobility. For example, in 2015, 34% of the applicants were newcomers.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

No specific measures have been taken to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries.

There is no information at national level regarding this type of mobility, and no specific issues have been identified in this regard. So far, in the frame of Erasmus+ there are no cases of incoming IVET mobility from third countries.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

No specific measures have been taken to reduce the administrative burdens that may hinder the international mobility of IVET learners, and it appears that there is no need for such measures. In Romania, IVET mobility takes place in the frame of Erasmus+ and the guidelines of this European programme are respected. The National Agency for Erasmus+ conducted a survey among Erasmus+ beneficiaries that included questions regarding administrative barriers, and no barriers were identified.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

No specific measures have been taken to remove legal obstacles that may hinder the mobility of minors, and it appears that there is no need for such measures. According to the legal framework concerning travelling²⁶⁶, the only document needed for young people under the age of 18 to travel to another country, either for tourism or for learning mobility, is parental approval. Therefore, the procedure for sending minors abroad is light.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social security

In Romania, there is no specific legislation to ensure that IVET students and apprentices involved in international learning mobility have appropriate access to protection in terms of social security. However, the ANPCDEFP recommends that beneficiary organisations use the European Health Insurance Card for students, through which incoming apprentices and IVET students from the EU benefit from the same social security as their counterparts in the country (i.e. local IVET learners).

So far, in the frame of Erasmus+ there are no cases of incoming IVET mobility from non-EU countries.

Labour protection

There is no specific legislation to ensure that IVET students and apprentices involved in international learning mobility have appropriate access to protection in terms of labour standards and safety.

However, the existing national legislation regarding labour standards and safety applies, so incoming learners from EU and non-EU countries benefit from the same labour protection as nationals of same status (learners) through the existing labour regulations.

Although there is no specific legislation concerning IVET international learning mobility, organisations taking part in VET mobility projects are required, through the grant agreements signed with participants, to provide the latter with health insurance (compulsory) and insurance against accidents and liability.

²⁶⁶Law no. 248/2005, art. 2 regarding the Free movement of Romanian citizens abroad

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES" THEMATIC AREA

In Romania, international learning mobility can be integrated in the curricula of IVET learners. The practical activities that are part of the curriculum of vocational schools and technological high-schools can be carried out abroad during learning mobility periods. The National Agency for Erasmus+ sets annual targets for IVET mobility, for example to increase the quality and volume of mobility, to encourage new applicants, and to achieve geographical balance of projects and participants. The main points that could benefit from future attention in the country are related to measures aimed to facilitate the international mobility of IVET learners in terms of delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries, reducing administrative burdens, or removing legal obstacles to the mobility of minors. So far, no need for measures has been identified in this respect. All IVET mobility in the country takes place in the frame of Erasmus+, and so far there were no cases of incoming IVET learners from third countries. In terms of administrative burdens, the National Agency for Erasmus+ conducted a survey among Erasmus+ beneficiaries that included questions in this regard, and no administrative barriers were identified. Regarding the mobility of IVET students under the age of 18, the only necessary formality for sending learners abroad is parental consent, the procedure is light, and it does not represent an obstacle to mobility. However no survey was carried out to check on the ground the need for measures facilitating minors' mobility. Such a survey could be considered in future.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

The recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners during mobility periods abroad is at the discretion of IVET providers, within a countrywide framework.

In the National Education Law no. 1/2011, there is a provision for the recognition of learning outcomes acquired during internships, irrespective of the place where the internship is carried out – either in the country or abroad. The Order of the Ministry of Education no. 4931 / 2008 approved the methodology regarding the transfer and recognition of learning outcomes achieved by students in vocational and technical education through practical training in the country and abroad. This methodology is in use and includes learning outcomes acquired during short and long terms periods of training abroad. These documents constitute the framework for the recognition, within which IVET providers recognise the learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners during learning mobility periods.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

IVET learners involved in international learning mobility have easy access to recognition of learning acquired abroad.

IVET training providers organise international learning mobility in such a way that the evaluation of learning outcomes is made by the host organisations. For each participant, the evaluation is followed by granting the credit for learning outcomes in the Europass Mobility document. On return to the sending organisation, the Mobility document is validated and the training provider recognises and transfers these results in units of learning outcomes to be acquired for awarding a qualification.

Before starting a mobility, the beneficiary schools must send the learning agreements to ANPCDEFP. In the learning agreements the following need to be clearly mentioned:

- The qualification for which the training will be done,
- The EQF and NQF level of the training carried out during the mobility,
- The unit/units of learning outcomes,
- The learning activities list,
- The tasks of those involved,
- The methods for the evaluation, validation, recognition and transfer of learning outcomes.

These learning agreements are analysed by ANPCDEFP and/or ECVET experts and improved if any inconsistency is found between learning activities, expected results of learning and how evaluation is done, or if the expected results of learning cannot be attained during the mobility.

After the approval of the learning agreements, the factors that could impede the process of recognition refer to the non-compliance with what is stated in the learning agreement.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in the country applies to:

- Courses
- Units
- Modules

The average duration of learning mobility for IVET students is 3 weeks. In these circumstances what can be recognised is a unit of learning outcomes contained in the standards of professional training or a unit of learning outcomes designed for mobility. As in Romania a unit of learning outcomes is correlated with a module of training / learning, by recognising this unit, the completion of the corresponding module is also recognised. Within Erasmus+, student mobility may take place both on the labour market and with training providers (with a shorter period of placement in the labour market), so attending courses is possible and participation in a course can also be recognised.

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

In Romania, the approach to the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad is coordinated countrywide.

The recognition is done in practice at the level of training providers, but within a national framework. The methodology is regulated at national level by ministerial order (Order no. 4931/2008 – Ministry of Education and Scientific Research).

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

The recognition process is not bound to a regulatory time limit.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

There are no actions aimed to establish, or make more visible, contact points for the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET learners.

For IVET mobility which only takes place under Erasmus+, all learning outcomes are validated, recognized and transferred at school level. Each student signs a learning agreement before the mobility. The experts of the National Agency for Erasmus+ verify for each project, before the mobility period, if all the students signed a learning agreement and if all students participated to preparation activities. During the preparation activities the learners are informed also about the contact person from the National Agency.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

As there are no actions for this purpose, there's no evaluation.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Europass Mobility Certificate is mandatory for each IVET student participating in learning mobility within Erasmus+. Before the mobility, the sending organisation needs to register each student in the Europass data base at the National Europass Centre (part of ANPCDEFP). When starting the mobility, each student has the online version of the certificate with the participant identification data, the sending and host organisation data, the mobility period, internship tutor and expected learning outcomes. At the end of the mobility period, once the evaluation has been completed, the certificate is filled in or updated with the learning activities carried out and the learning outcomes achieved during the mobility, and demonstrated during evaluation. The Certificate is printed and signed by the participant, by the legal representative of the host organisation and by the internship tutor. On return, the certificate is validated and signed by the legal representative of the sending organisation. The certificate is handed to the participant and a copy is kept in the project file. If the school is part of the control sample, a copy is sent to ANPCDEFP.

In some cases the Europass Certificate Supplement is also filled in during

the international mobility periods but it is not compulsory. The Europass Certificate Supplement is mostly used as an Annex to the Qualification Certificate obtained at the end of the entire IVET training programme.

Some of ECVET technical components are used by school beneficiaries of Erasmus+ grants for learning mobility for IVET students. The most used technical components are: ECVET Learning Agreement (more than 30% of the beneficiaries), Memorandum of Understanding /MoU (10% of beneficiaries), training standards to identify learning outcomes for mobility (more than 80% of beneficiaries). The ANPCDEFP in Romania decided that learners from theoretical high schools who learn intensive IT or intensive foreign languages can also benefit from IVET international learning mobility. The study programme of these students (around 18-20% of the total annual number of participants) is focused on content not on competencies (knowledge, not skills) and because of this, their training programme abroad has no ECVET technical elements.

IVET schools mention in the learning agreements the NQF level of the studies or training undertaken during a mobility period. These levels are also mentioned in the professional training standards. According to the NQF and the Law of National Education, learners participating in IVET international learning mobility prepare for qualification levels III-V NQF. Setting the qualification level for the students' training during a mobility period allows for the recognition and transfer of the learning outcomes. The professional training standards in force in Romania are structured in units of competencies. New standards that describe qualifications as sums of units of learning outcomes have been developed within a ESF funded project by the National Centre for TVET Development, experts for ITVET, IVET teachers and social partners. It is envisaged that these new standards will be enforced starting next year (2016). In terms of referencing to EQF, the proposal is for the eight NQF levels to be equivalent to the eight EQF levels, however the country is yet to finalise the Referencing Report to EQF.

The expected learning outcomes are described in the learning agreements, and the evaluated learning outcomes are described in the Europass Mobility documents. Both are used for validation, recognition and transfer on return from a mobility period.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

In Romania, all international learning mobility in IVET takes place within Erasmus+, and the recognition process is considered easy. The

recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad during mobility periods is at the discretion of IVET providers, within a countrywide coordinated framework. The methodology is regulated at national level by ministerial order. The country also makes use of the range of EU tools for the visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad. In this respect, the process of referencing the NQF levels to EQF has not been yet finalised, however the NQF levels are mentioned in the learning agreements. Among the drawbacks, the scope of recognition is currently limited to three learning components, and there is no regulatory time limit for the recognition process. These issues could be suggested for future consideration. Another aspect that could be considered in the future would be to ensure that the information on recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad is visible and easily accessible by IVET learners, and that the actions taken for the visibility of contact points for recognition are evaluated.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

In Romania support for the creation of partnerships for international learning mobility projects in IVET is provided by the National Agency for Erasmus+ (ANPCDEFP).

In order to ensure geographical balance for applications and learning mobility projects for IVET students, and in order to attract newcomers, the ANPCDEFP runs the following activities:

- Funding the participation of some VET schools at contact seminars organised by other national agencies;
- Organising contact seminars that allow interested schools in Romania to come into contact with similar organisations from other countries;
- Cooperating with other agencies to identify possible partners for schools;
- Communicating to the inspectors responsible with European programmes at regional level, through its experts, contact data for organisations from other countries, available for IVET mobility projects.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The actions aimed to support the creation of partnerships for IVET mobility projects are evaluated by ANPCDEFP, who provides this support.

ANPCDEFP follows up to see if contact seminar participants apply for mobility projects and if their applications have been approved. Follow-up is done also to see if there are applications where the partners' data has been provided through the ANPCDEFP. In the final report, follow-up is done to see if the beneficiary organisations were satisfied with the collaboration with the partner organisations recommended by ANPCDEFP, in order to decide if these foreign partners will be recommended in the future.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

In Romania, IVET learners are provided with financial support for their international mobility through the actions implemented by ANPCDEFP with support from the European Commission. Currently, the only type of financial support for the international mobility of IVET learners is in the frame of Erasmus+ (for the VET sector).

International mobility in IVET is still relatively a new issue in Romania and it is not currently supported with a consistent national policy and constant financial resources.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The actions to provide financial support to IVET learners for their international learning mobility are not subject to evaluation.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

The country has taken measures to provide IVET institutions and staff involved in organising international IVET mobility projects with financial and non-financial support.

The ANCPDEFPP and ECVET experts support the project coordinators involved in organising international mobility projects for VET students, with training on writing memoranda of understanding and learning agreements. In addition, meetings are organised with all or part of the beneficiaries: project management meetings, thematic monitoring and networking meetings; assistance in view of drafting the final report. All these types of meetings contain a special session dedicated to dissemination and exploitation of results, where beneficiaries are trained on how to ensure visibility of their projects and how to organise effective dissemination and exploitation of the outcomes. Monitoring and counselling is provided on site by the inspectors in charge with the EU cooperation projects.

The teachers who have run successful projects are invited to events organised by the National Agency to present good practice examples and/or are financed to take part in events organized by other national agencies or by the EC. In the annual evaluation of teachers, one of the criteria refers to the involvement in projects, and the score obtained allows some of the teachers to obtain a "Gradation of merit" and additional income along with that.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

The actions carried out to support the organisations and staff involved in organising IVET mobility projects are evaluated.

The ANCPDEFPP aims to see if support for drafting the Memoranda of Understanding and Learning Agreements has been effective and if the teachers in question require further support in the coming years. Also the effects of teacher participation in national / international events (with funding from the ANCPDEFPP) are followed-up. In schools there is follow-up to see if the involvement in European projects of teachers that received "Gradation of merit" remained the same / has increased or has decreased.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

In Romania, IVET providers and companies are supported to create partnerships and networks for IVET mobility through the work of ANPCDEFP (the National Agency for Erasmus+). This is done through information activities, through cooperation between ANPCDEFP and other agencies, but also through support offered to VET providers to participate in contact seminars. Mobility project coordinators involved in organising IVET mobility projects are also supported with information, assistance and training. Teachers involved in successful mobility projects may obtain a "Gradation of merit" and additional income along with that. These actions taken to support institutions, stakeholders and staff are evaluated and followed up by ANPCDEFP, and the results are used to further adjust the support provided. IVET learners currently receive financial support for their international learning mobility from Erasmus+. An important issue to tackle in the future in this thematic area is to put in place a regular evaluation of the funding policy, to make sure that IVET students are provided with adequate financial support to enable their participation in international learning mobility.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In Romania, information to IVET learners on learning mobility topics is provided by the VET schools that are beneficiaries of Erasmus+ mobility grants. The National Agency for Community Programs for Education and Professional Development (ANPCDEFP), who is the National Agency for Erasmus+ ensures the provision of information for IVET providers, and through close supervision and monitoring of project coordinators, it also ensures the countrywide coordination of information provision to learners. Further steps ahead in this thematic area would be to ensure that IVET learners are also provided with personalised guidance on IVET mobility, and that specific evaluated policy actions are taken to improve the information and guidance mechanism for IVET learning mobility.

In the thematic area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, Romania has a policy to integrate international mobility periods in the curricula of IVET learners, and targets are set annually by the National Agency for Erasmus+ to promote IVET mobility. As there were no cases of incoming IVET learners from third countries, no need for measures aimed to facilitate the mobility of this group of learners has been identified. In terms of administrative issues, the National Agency for Erasmus+ conducted a survey among Erasmus+ beneficiaries, and no administrative

barriers were identified. The procedure for sending minor IVET students abroad is not likely to represent an obstacle to mobility, because parental consent is the only formality required. However no survey was carried out to check on the ground the need for measures facilitating minors' mobility. Such a survey could be considered in future.

In what regards the indicator for Recognition of Learning Outcomes, the recognition process is considered easy, and it is applied at the level of IVET providers within a countrywide coordinated framework. The country also makes use of the range of EU tools for the visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad. The aspects that could benefit from attention in the future are the scope of recognition, which is limited to three learning components, and the lack of a regulatory time limit for the recognition process. The country should also make sure that information on recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad is visible and easily accessible by all IVET learners, and the actions taken to increase the visibility of contact points for recognition are subject to evaluation.

In the thematic area for Partnerships and Funding, there are actions to support IVET providers and companies in the creation of partnerships and networks for IVET mobility, through the work of the National agency for Erasmus+. The country also provides support and rewards mobility project coordinators and teachers involved in organising IVET mobility projects. These support actions are evaluated and followed up by the Agency, and the results are used to further readjust the support provided. IVET learners receive financial support for their international mobility only in the frame of Erasmus+. The main aspect that could be considered in the future in this thematic area is to implement a regular evaluation of the funding policy, to ensure that adequate financial support is available for the participation of IVET learners in international learning mobility.

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IVET level(s) covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary
- Post-secondary non-tertiary

In Slovakia, IVET international mobility mainly takes place within the Erasmus+ programme. The education and training sectors of the programme are coordinated by the Slovak Academic Association for International Cooperation (SAAIC) which functions as the Erasmus+ National Agency for education and training. The total budget for IVET mobility within this framework varies around EUR 4 million annually. This leads to about 2,000 IVET students participating in mobility abroad within Erasmus+.

There are also international mobility activities organised by individual schools / municipalities / regions, usually based on traditional partnerships. However, there are no national data about this kind of activities, and little is known about services in support of mobility outside Erasmus+. There is also only fragmented information about activities of diverse NGOs that support diverse forms of partnerships between students, schools and education players complementary to their core activities.

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

The most prominent mechanism for information and guidance on international learning mobility in IVET is provided by The Erasmus+ National Agency for education and training hosted by the SAAIC.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

There is no coordination between Erasmus+ and the other possible local-scope schemes.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

The new law on VET introduces participation in international mobility as a requirement for upper secondary schools in certain cases. However there is no comprehensive policy for the promotion of international learning mobility in IVET.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

Slovakia does not have in place any national plan to improve its current approach for providing IVET learners with information and guidance on international learning mobility.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

There is no improvement policy, so no evaluation of it. Yet SAAIC's activity is regularly monitored²⁶⁷.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

The Erasmus+ National Agency for education and training hosted by the SAAIC offers services in the form of leaflets, information seminars, online assistance, direct assistance by mobility specialists, good practice presentation seminars, etc.²⁶⁸. The SAAIC is also hosting the National Euroguidance Centre that contributes to the synergy with Erasmus+ activities.

²⁶⁷ Based on an internal regulation complying with ISO quality assurance procedures. SAAIC is a holder of a quality certificate EN ISO 9001:2000 awarded by the international auditing company TÜV Nord in Essen, Germany. Regular monitoring of the National Erasmus+ Agency activities is ensured by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport.

²⁶⁸ www.erasmusplus.sk

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

Slovakia has mechanisms to provide IVET learners with information and guidance on international learning mobility. The main actor in this area is the Erasmus+ National Agency for education and training. However there are also local mechanisms and all this provision is not countrywide coordinated. The country also lacks actions to improve its provision in this area. It could be considered in future setting a countrywide coordination mechanism that ensures all IVET learners can benefit from complete and similar information and guidance for international learning mobility. Further progress would require putting in place a fully-fledged evaluation process in order to regularly improve and update the provision over time.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

Integrating international mobility experiences in the curriculum of IVET programmes is possible but left up to the initiative of schools. It is the responsibility of schools to transfer the experience from international mobility into school curriculum. These initiatives are then presented by schools to SAAIC.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

Slovakia has not set any targets for international learning mobility in IVET. The EU benchmark (6%) is neither referred in policy documents nor addressed by policies.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

No measures on this topic have been taken. Third countries IVET mobility is not supported within Erasmus+ and there are no national means offered for this purpose. Thus, only marginal cases can appear within bilateral initiatives involving schools or self-governing regions / municipalities. There are difficulties observed with regard to delivery of visas, as it is administratively a very heavy procedure. But due to marginality of this kind of mobility, specific measures are not considered urgent.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

There is no one-stop shop approach or any similar measure to alleviate the administrative burden of outgoing learners.

Regarding incoming learners, Slovakia has one of the most restrictive legislation concerning migration. In the past, the National Erasmus+ (LLP) Agency initiated several consultations with immigration authorities, however no improvement came out due to the lack of political will to change Act No. 404/2011 Coll. on Residence of Aliens.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

No measure has been taken on this topic. Mobility of IVET minors is not considered a crucial issue by political players, despite criticism of the National Erasmus+ (LLP) Agency and educational institutions.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social Security

Incoming apprentices and IVET students from the EU benefit from medical care through the European Health Insurance card. In practice, however, commercial insurance is considered more appropriate.

Labour protection

Act No. 124/2006 Coll. on Safety and Health at Work in paragraphs 2, 3, and 7 covers protection of IVET students and also other persons who are in the workplace with the permission of employer in terms of labour standards and safety. This legislation also applies to mobility students and covers both EU and non EU nationals.

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES" THEMATIC AREA

Integrating international mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes is possible in Slovakia, but the country has not set any targets for international mobility in IVET. The country also lacks measures to facilitate international mobility of IVET learners, whether through easing the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries, or reducing the administrative burdens induced by arranging international mobility, or facilitating the mobility of minor apprentices and IVET students. Difficulties in these matters seem to have been reported by users and stakeholders however. Addressing these lacks could be considered for the country to further progress on the topic of administrative and institutional issues.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

Recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility is at the discretion of IVET providers.

Directors of IVET schools are fully responsible for this, as curriculum development is up to schools (School Educational Programme), as regulated by a state-set framework (State Educational Programme).

Act No. 61/2015 Coll. on VET has recently introduced a "dual" system

under which responsibilities are shared between a company providing practical training and a school providing theoretical training. Even in this case however, responsibility for recognition of learning acquired abroad still lies with schools as schools are finally responsible for school leaving examination and issuing certificates.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

Although the recognition process is not regulated at the national level, it functions smoothly as it is fully under the responsibility of schools. The process is governed by the provisions of the Learning Agreement between sending and receiving institutions.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

As a rule, learning outcomes are identified and agreed between sending and receiving institutions, regardless of any reference to courses, credit points, units, modules, programmes or qualifications.

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

The recognition process is decentralised at the school level and not coordinated countrywide.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

The recognition process is decentralised at the school level and not subject to any regulatory time frame.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

There are no genuine recognition procedures outside schools, and therefore, there are no contact points established.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

There is no visibility policy, so no evaluation of it.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Europass Certificate Supplement is not widely used as there is no long-term mobility in IVET in Slovakia (mobility stays are in general limited to three weeks). It is fully up to school to issue Europass Certificate Supplements, if required. No specific assistance is offered to school concerning description of learning outcomes acquired within respective fields of study. A component of state educational programme, the so-called *Graduate's profile* is recommended as a source for identification of learning outcomes for respective fields of study for issuing Europass Certificate Supplement, as well as for "national" Certificate Supplement regulated in detail in the Decree of the Ministry of Education of 23 July 2008 (No. 326/2008 Coll.).

ECVET is only used within Erasmus+ (and the previous Lifelong Learning Programme).

In Slovakia, NQF is already in preparation. A referencing report has been submitted for discussion to the Slovak government. Subsequently, it will be presented on the EU level in December 2015. Currently, NQF does not play a role with regard to recognition of the learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners during international mobility periods. Further progress is expected from the ESF project "Creation of the National Qualifications System", within which NQF descriptors should be developed. The originally set descriptors are under revision.

Identification of learning outcomes is an obligatory part of preparation of mobility in the framework of Erasmus+. Its dominant function lies with reaching an agreement between sending and receiving institutions about the content and outcomes of the learning period.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

Slovakia provides IVET learners having international mobility experience with possibilities for recognition which are easily accessible. The recognition process is decentralised at school level, so it is in principle well known from learners whom to contact for information on recognition, without any need for a policy of visibility of contact/information points. However no investigation was carried out to check the possible existence of this need. In future, it could be made sure, e.g. through a user survey, that the principle actually applies in an effective way.

Several existing EU tools are used for recognition, i.e. the Europass Certificate Supplement, ECVET, and the learning outcomes approach. A national Qualification Framework is also under construction and might serve the purpose of recognition in future.

For further progress in the area of Recognition of Learning Outcomes, Slovakia could consider introducing some harmonisation in the recognition process in order to further ensure convergence in practices countrywide. This could involve considering countrywide coordination of the recognition process and a regulatory time limit for dealing with recognition requests. The country could also consider introducing the use of the Europass Mobility Document. Introducing references to standardised learning components such as courses, credit points, units, modules, programmes and qualifications / degrees / diplomas could help bridging practices in the country and with the rest of the European Union, thus helping to increase flows of international IVET mobility where Slovakia is involved.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

Slovakia has introduced pilot projects in order to promote partnerships between companies and VET providers. Austrian project "Young Star" in Zlaté Moravce is promoting the elements of dual education in VET system in Slovakia. The network of Austrian and Slovak companies and VET school under the guidance of Ministry of Education, Science, Research and

Sport of Slovak Republic, Austrian Chamber of Commerce and State Institute of Vocational Education is believed to involve more companies and schools into this process and create the floor for promotion of learners and teacher mobility.

Another similar project has been established in cooperation with the Slovak-German Industry and Business Chamber, alongside with German companies. It provides dual education in VET schools in Nové Mesto nad Váhom and is expected to extend its capacities for other companies. The results of this project will be used not only for improvement of the governance structure of dual education, but it gives the opportunity for learners to experience the international mobility in partnership's country.

Also by the new Act on VET the entire system of dual education is based on partnership between companies and VET providers and thus promotes the possibilities for international learner mobility. Also, taking the created partnerships into account is part of optimising the capacities of VET schools.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

There is no evaluation of the policy to support the creation of partnerships and networks.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

Funding to learners is provided within the framework of Erasmus+²⁶⁹.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The funding policy is monitored within Erasmus+.

²⁶⁹ Types of funding within Erasmus+ are the same as in other EU countries and described in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/documents/erasmus-plus-programme-guide_en.pdf.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

The only substantial initiative is the assistance of the Erasmus+ National Agency with regard to Erasmus+ mobility projects. Activities of the National Agency Erasmus+ consist of information campaign on possibilities given under Erasmus+ also for IVET learners and apprentices, training sessions on preparation of the applications for grants under this grant scheme, consultancy and monitoring of the project implementation during its life cycle. Participants in these events are primarily the staff of schools sending their pupils to the placements abroad. Companies which have started with the dual system in VET since 1 September 2015 could also be involved in future.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

There is a standard evaluation procedure applied, internationally by DG EAC and nationally by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport. Based on statistics, desk research and some survey on specific issues, lessons are drawn to reshape the next generation of the programme, readjusting the rules in the current EU programme and suggesting changes to be reflected by national policies.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

Slovakia has actions for supporting the creation of mobility partnerships and networks, funding the international learning mobility of IVET learners, and providing support to companies and VET institutions involved in organising mobility projects. Only the latter undergoes fully-fledged evaluation, with monitoring actions translating into reforms to the next generation of policy. Ensuring that all policies in this thematic area are regularly evaluated could be considered in future.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In the thematic area of Information and Guidance, Slovakia has mechanisms to provide IVET learners with information and guidance on international learning mobility. The main actor in this area is the Erasmus+ National Agency for education and training. However there are also local mechanisms and all this provision is not countrywide coordinated. The country also lacks actions to improve its provision in this area. It could be considered in future setting a countrywide coordination mechanism that ensures all IVET learners can benefit from complete and similar information and guidance for international learning mobility. Further progress would require putting in place a fully-fledged evaluation process in order to regularly improve and update the provision over time.

In the area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, integrating international mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes is possible, but Slovakia has not set any targets for international mobility in IVET. The country also lacks measures to facilitate the international mobility of IVET learners, whether through easing the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries, or reducing the administrative burdens induced by arranging international mobility, or facilitating the mobility of minor apprentices and IVET students. Addressing these lacks could be considered for the country to further progress on the topic of administrative and institutional issues.

Regarding the area of recognition of Learning Outcomes, Slovakia provides IVET learners having international mobility experience with possibilities for recognition which are easily accessible. The recognition process is decentralised at school level, so it is in principle well known from learners whom to contact for information on recognition, without any need for a policy of visibility of contact/information points. However no investigation was carried out to check the possible existence of this need. In future, it could be made sure, e.g. through a user survey, that the principle actually applies in an effective way. Several existing EU tools are used for recognition, i.e. the Europass Certificate Supplement, ECVET, and the learning outcomes approach. A national Qualification Framework is also under construction and might serve the purpose of recognition in future. For further progress in this area, Slovakia could consider introducing some harmonisation in the recognition process in order to further ensure convergence in practices countrywide. This could involve considering countrywide coordination of the recognition process and a regulatory time limit for processing recognition requests. The country could also consider introducing the use of the Europass Mobility Document. Introducing references to standardised learning components such as courses, credit points, units, modules, programmes and qualifications / degrees / diplomas (instead of learning components defined in an adhoc way) could help bridging practices in the country and

with the rest of the European Union, thus helping to increase flows of international IVET mobility where Slovakia is involved.

Finally, concerning the area of Partnerships and Funding, Slovakia has actions for supporting the creation of mobility partnerships and networks, funding the international learning mobility of IVET learners, and providing support to companies and VET institutions involved in organising mobility projects. Only the latter undergoes fully-fledged evaluation, with monitoring actions translating into reforms to the next generation of policy. Ensuring that all policies in this thematic area are regularly evaluated could be considered in future.

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IVET level covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary

The country fiche covers international learning mobility within formal vocational education and training at upper secondary level.

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Information and guidance on learning mobility opportunities for IVET learners at upper secondary VET are mainly provided by schools (international offices in schools, mobility coordinators or teachers assigned to this area, school counsellors, work-based learning mentors), and the Slovene Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund (Public Fund).

The Public Fund has an information and guidance centre for those studying abroad, and it is also available for individual counselling. Its staff inform young people about mobility opportunities and scholarships available at schools. They help identifying an IVET learner's interest and wishes. They point out important aspects of mobility and the available financial means, aid with the administrative part of the application, and the arrangements needed to be made before going abroad.

The Erasmus+ National Agency – the Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Mobility and European Educational and Training Programmes (CMEPIUS) - provides counselling and information to schools (seminars, workshops, information days at schools), which in turn deliver this information among IVET learners. They participate also in events aimed at youth, where young people can receive information directly from CMEPIUS (e.g. information fairs).

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

In Slovenia, the provision of information and guidance on IVET mobility to IVET learners is not coordinated countrywide.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

Legal provisions in Slovenia do not specifically include the objective of promoting international learning mobility in IVET.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

In Slovenia, there are no policy actions aimed to improve the information and guidance provision on mobility for IVET learners.

However, information and guidance provision is included in the national programme for youth (namely in the Resolution on the National Programme for Youth 2013-2022) as a priority area, with a focus on strengthening the quality, promotion and support for studies and practical training abroad. There is also a policy to promote mobility at tertiary level (Internationalisation of Higher Education) and there is a programme document for the mobility of young people (Programme Document on Youth Mobility adopted by the National Youth Council of Slovenia).

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

There are no specific improvement actions, so no evaluation thereof.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

CMEPIUS systemically informs institutions (schools, universities, adult education institutions etc.) as well as all stakeholders via e-newsletters and its website. CMEPIUS also provides seminars and workshops, and is available for individual counselling. It also organises special seminars to

prepare project applications. Mobility opportunities are also presented at some events, such as career or information fairs, various events for young people, etc.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

In Slovenia, IVET learners receive information and guidance on IVET international learning mobility through schools, and the Slovene Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund (Public Fund). The Public Fund provides information, guidance and individual counselling to young people, on mobility related issues. The Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Mobility and European Educational and Training Programmes (CMEPIUS) provides information to IVET providers, and organises events on mobility aimed at youth. However, this information and guidance mechanism is not coordinated countrywide. The Resolution on the National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 aims to strengthen the quality, promotion and support for studies and practical training abroad, and includes information and guidance provision as a priority area. However, no specific policy actions have been taken to improve the provision of information and guidance on mobility for IVET learners.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

In Slovenia, international learning mobility can be integrated in the curricula of IVET programmes.

At upper secondary VET level, 20% of the educational programme in the curriculum is intended for the so-called 'open curriculum'. The content of this part of the curriculum is determined / prescribed by schools together with companies and / or social partners from the local environment. Learning mobility can be recognised as part of the open curriculum. International learning mobility is recognised as part of an educational

programme in Slovenia, usually as part of the work-based learning or as part of a professional module. Recognition falls within the domain of schools. Additionally, participation of schools in international projects is an integral part of the quality assessment of their work (quality indicators for schools' self-evaluation and the Rules on criteria for establishing work performance of directors in the field of education).

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

CMEPIUS set goals for co-financing the mobility of minimum 800 IVET students for the year 2014. For 2015 the target is 1200 students.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

Incoming students from non-EU countries who have been accepted to study in Slovenia at any level of education or specialisation, such as professional training, practical training or international student exchange in an appropriate educational institution, receive their residence permit, according to the current Slovenian Aliens Act. According to Article 44 of this Act, an application for a temporary residence permit for study purposes should receive priority treatment by the competent authorities.

In addition, Slovenia has signed bilateral cooperation agreements in the field of education with former Yugoslavia countries, so visas are no longer needed.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

There are one or more persons in charge for international and mobility projects at schools (sometimes employed or partially employed for such a task), arranging documentation and paperwork and providing students with all the required information. Due to the obligations related to the coordination of the project, the coordinator's regular workload is sometimes reduced.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

The procedure for sending minor IVET students abroad does not pose any specific difficulties.

First, the parents have to give their consent before the student submits the application for the project. When the applicants have been selected, the parents and students are invited for an obligatory meeting, where the parents have to give their consent again, as well as sign a form that they have been notified on the financial aspects. The students, with the school's aid, prepare a Europass CV, describing their wishes. The next step is the preparation: pedagogical, cultural, language wise, safety wise, insurance wise. Before the departure, there is another meeting where the students and parents have to sign a tripartite contract and are informed of the last minute details of the mobility.

Most of the arrangements are done by the school beforehand: accommodation, food, transport to and from airport, health insurance abroad, host mentor, etc. There are some arrangements the students are obliged to make themselves, like getting an EU insurance card.

Through the whole duration of mobility, the students are accompanied by 2 persons, one to aid with the professional side, and one to ease the organisation and language barriers. The host mentor, both companions and the student evaluate the progress of the student. Afterwards a Europass mobility certificate is issued, and the students have to fill in a questionnaire about the organisation of the mobility.

However, in practice, many companies are reluctant to hire international under-age students for practical training. In some countries host organisations sometimes require the sending organisation to sign a document according to which the sending organisation is responsible for the student during his/her leisure time. As a general rule, schools most often opt for providing accompanying persons (mainly teachers from the school).

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social security

In Slovenia there is no specific legislation for the social protection of IVET students and apprentices involved in international learning mobility. However, in practice, health insurance arrangements are made before the

international learning mobility, through the financing from the mobility project. Injury insurance is not regulated systematically. In practice the school insures the visiting students in the same conditions as for its own students during the practical training.

Labour protection

There is no specific legislation for the protection of IVET students and apprentices in terms of labour standards and safety.

Incoming students are provided with a lecture (2-4 hours) on safety at work by hosting schools, often followed by an exam. Safety guidelines are provided by partner companies as well as through mentors. Outgoing students usually have courses / lectures on safety at work before their mobility programme, as part of a broader preparation on learning mobility (some partner organisations require a certificate for the course in advance). Before starting their practical training in a foreign country, students attend a safety training provided by the host organisation.

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES" THEMATIC AREA

In Slovenia, the international learning mobility can be integrated in the curricula of IVET programmes as part of the "open curriculum", which represents 20% of the educational programme in the VET curriculum. The country has measures in place to facilitate the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries, and to alleviate the administrative burdens that may hinder mobility. Targets for IVET mobility are set at institutional level, for example by CMEPIUS, related to the minimum number of students that should benefit from a mobility period. The procedure for sending minor learners abroad is not considered as problematic. However, in the future, it could be considered that a systematic study or survey is conducted on this topic to ensure that no obstacles to mobility exist in this regard.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

Recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility is at the discretion of IVET providers, and may be granted on a case by case basis according to the specific learning agreements between sending and receiving institutions.

The majority of learning mobility at upper secondary level is short-term (2-4 weeks), focused mainly on work-based learning. Learning outcomes acquired during the learning mobility are recognised on the basis of a pre-arranged learning agreement. More and more schools strive to undertake assessment of the pre-arranged learning outcomes during the mobility; to this effect, learning assessment plans are included into Learning Agreements. The Learning Agreement is prepared by both the sending and the host organisation, individually for each learning mobility programme.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

IVET learners involved in international learning mobility have easy access to recognition of learning acquired abroad.

Learning outcomes acquired during learning mobility are recognised on the basis of the Learning Agreement. They are recognised as work-based learning (partially or completely) or as part of a professional module. In some cases, learning mobility is included in the assessment of general subjects (e.g., presentation of experiences in a foreign language, geography, history etc.).

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in the country applies to:

- Units
- Modules

Schools recognise formally assessed knowledge acquired in publicly

recognised institutions in other countries. Subjects or modules may be recognized if an individual can provide appropriate documentation.

Regarding learning acquired during mobility periods, a Learning Agreement is prepared, and it comprises of learning units. A learning unit acquired during learning mobility can be recognised as part of a module or work-based learning.

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

The approach to recognition of learning acquired abroad during mobility periods is not coordinated countrywide, and there is no formal document prepared at government level supporting a uniform method of recognition.

However, the country promotes the recognition of learning acquired abroad at upper secondary level through supporting tools such as ECVET and Europass. There is a handbook aimed at mobility prepared by ECVET experts in 2014: Handbook to use ECVET tools in mobility projects in VET at upper secondary level²⁷⁰. ECVET experts also organise seminars and workshops on ECVET use for teachers and mobility coordinators, which also include the use of ECVET in the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad.

At upper secondary VET level, learning mobility is short-term and recognition of learning acquired abroad is the responsibility of schools (schools are issuing certificates). In addition, guidelines for the recognition of prior learning at upper secondary VET level are being prepared. These guidelines cover a much wider context of recognition, but nevertheless they will also be of use for the recognition of learning acquired through mobility.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

There is no regulatory time limit for the recognition process.

In practice, the recognition process of learning acquired abroad at upper secondary level is carried out by the school, shortly after the exchange, until the end of the assessment period at the latest (in accordance with

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<http://www2.cmepius.si/files/cmepius/userfiles/ECVET/ECVET%20prirocnik%20za%20sole1.pdf>

the school legislation).

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

Slovenia does not currently have policy actions for the visibility of contact points for information on the recognition of learning acquired abroad.

Regarding learning mobility at upper secondary level, the acquired skills and competences are recognised by the schools on the basis of a Learning Agreement. Given the small scope and short duration of learning exchanges, contact points have not been set up. Recognition of qualifications falls within the responsibility of the ENIC-NARIC centre at the Slovenian Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

There is no visibility policy, so no evaluation thereof.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Europass Mobility certificates are awarded to most of upper secondary students who undertake training abroad. The certificates are issued at the initiative of a teacher-mentor, who must make a request to the National Europass Centre. Mentors can find the information on the Europass Mobility certificate through Erasmus+ workshops organised by the CMEPIUS, on the website of the National Europass Centre (www.europass.si) and at various events (fairs, presentations). The certificate is used as a basis for determining the activities for students abroad. It contains a reference to the desired activities students would like to perform abroad during their mobility periods.

Since 2012 it has been possible to receive the Europass Certificate Supplement for all programmes of upper secondary VET. The educational institutions are informed about this possibility through regular annual circulars of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. All the information in this document is available on the national Europass website²⁷¹. Students receive the Certificate Supplement at the end of their

²⁷¹ www.europass.si

education. In 2014, approximately 88% of all Slovenian institutions providing upper secondary VET programs were issuing the Certificate Supplements, and the documents were awarded to around 77% of students who had completed upper secondary VET programs. The Certificate Supplement issued in Slovenia is personalised and a reference to the accomplishment of the mobility programme is added to the Europass Certificate Supplement of those students who have participated in international mobility programmes.

For the last three years, ECVET has been the main tool for mobility projects. The National ECVET expert group issued a handbook for the use of ECVET tools in mobility projects; they also organize trainings for teachers and mentors.

For short exchanges at upper secondary level, the Slovenian qualifications framework is not used (the unit of the SQF is a qualification), but it is used in the communication between partners to determine/indicate the level of educational programmes when defining the learning outcomes units of the Learning Agreement.

Learning outcomes are used in learning mobility through the ECVET principles and also otherwise, as upper secondary VET programs are based on learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are included in mobility projects to define learning outcomes units in the preparation of the Learning Agreement.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

In Slovenia, IVET learners involved in international learning mobility have easy access to recognition of learning acquired abroad, on the basis of the Learning Agreements signed between the sending and receiving institutions. The recognition approach is not coordinated countrywide, although there are guidelines and tools for recognition, such as those provided in the frame of ECVET. The country makes use of the range of EU tools for the visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad. Among the challenges that could be tackled in the future is the scope of recognition, currently limited to units and modules. Also, although in practice the recognition is done shortly after the exchange and until the end of the assessment period at the latest, there's no regulatory time limit for the recognition process. Another step ahead in this thematic area would be to make sure that information on recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad is visible and easily accessible to all IVET learners, and that the visibility policy for the contact points on

recognition is evaluated.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

Slovenia has taken actions aimed to support the creation of partnerships for organising international learning mobility projects in IVET.

CMEPIUS organises workshops for schools with the aim of assisting them to find partners. In practice, these workshops also offer networking opportunities for schools to exchange contacts and share experiences on project work. The Centre also publishes on its website the names of reliable partners and links to portals where lists of partners are published. In addition, it also conducts projects aimed at searching for and connecting with partners (e.g. eTwinning).

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The actions aimed to support the creation of partnerships for organising international learning mobility projects in IVET are not subject to evaluation.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

In Slovenia, there are policy actions aimed to provide IVET learners with financial support for their international mobility.

For upper secondary level, besides the Erasmus+ mobility projects for youth, since school year 2009/10 there are scholarships for upper secondary students for all forms of study visits which are not financed from other sources (from summer language schools to mobility lasting a

whole semester). Study visits are at least 2 weeks in duration, and the sending school has to evaluate the mobility and to recognise it as a part of a student's programme requirements. There is also an annual tender for scholarships at Benjamin Franklin International Summer Institute available to upper secondary students (vocational or general programmes).

A small share of funding for international student mobility is provided by the schools themselves (grants from companies or their own assets from market activities), often indirectly, as a way to co-fund project coordination in schools, as well as to provide substitute teachers for the teachers accompanying exchange students.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The policy initiatives and actions aimed to provide IVET learners with financial support for their international mobility are subject to monitoring.

CMEPIUS and the Public Fund are both public institutions and, as such, they report to the corresponding Ministry regarding their work and activities. As a national agency, CMEPIUS obtains funding for co-financing European Commission projects. The funds are then allocated in accordance with the regulations (Regulation Guide for national agencies, Guide for Applicants etc.) set by the European Commission, including the delivery of detailed reports by CMEPIUS on the use of allocated funds.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

IVET providers in Slovenia receive support for organising mobility projects in the form of information and assistance, from CMEPIUS.

CMEPIUS organizes info days, workshops, and annual thematic events for VET institutions, and from time to time also for SMEs. Through these activities, they provide and disseminate information about the Erasmus+ programme, and offer support for the preparation of applications and for project management.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

The evaluation of actions aimed to provide stakeholders with support is conducted in accordance with the regulations for key actions or funding.

Based on this evaluation, adjustments are made in the support offered. After the tender is closed, CMEPIUS prepares a questionnaire and a promotion plan for the following year on the basis of feedback received from project beneficiaries.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

In the area of Partnerships and Funding, Slovenia has taken actions to provide IVET learners with financial support for their international mobility. Besides the mobility actions in the frame of Erasmus+, IVET learners can participate in study visits and can benefit from scholarships aimed at upper secondary students. These initiatives are monitored through regular reporting by the managing institutions. In the future, it should be considered that the evaluation of the funding policy is used to further adjust the financial means available for the mobility of IVET learners. The country has taken steps to support the creation of partnerships for organising learning mobility projects, mainly through the work of the Centre for Mobility and European Educational and Training Programmes (CMEPIUS). A further step that would enhance the mobility policy in this area would be to set in place some form of evaluation for these actions. Finally, IVET institutions and their staff involved in organising international mobility projects are provided with support in the form of information and assistance, provided by CMEPIUS. The support offered is evaluated and adjusted on the basis of the feedback provided by project beneficiaries.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

Slovenia has a mechanism for information and guidance on international mobility for IVET learners. This provision is ensured through schools, and the Slovene Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund (Public Fund). The Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Mobility and European Educational and Training Programmes (CMEPIUS) provides information on mobility to IVET providers, and organises events on mobility aimed at youth. The main aspects that could be considered for improvement in the

future are the lack of countrywide coordination of the information and guidance provision, and the lack of specific policy actions to improve information and guidance on international mobility for IVET learners.

In the area of Administrative and Institutional issues, the country has measures in place to facilitate the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries, and to alleviate the administrative burdens. The international learning mobility can be integrated in the curricula of IVET programmes as part of the “open curriculum”, and targets for IVET mobility are set at institutional level by CMEPIUS. Although the procedure for sending minor IVET learners abroad does not appear to represent a challenge, in the future it could be considered that a systematic survey or study is conducted on this topic, to ensure that no obstacles exist for the mobility of minor IVET learners.

In the area of Recognition of Learning Outcomes, Slovenia makes good use of the range of EU tool for visibility, transfer and recognition, and IVET learners involved in international learning mobility have easy access to recognition of learning acquired abroad. Although there are guidelines and tools for recognition that IVET providers may use, there is no common framework for recognition of learning acquired abroad. Other aspects that could be considered for improvement in the future are the scope of recognition, currently limited to units and modules, and the lack of a regulatory time limit for the recognition process. Another issue that could be considered is the lack of policy actions aimed to increase the visibility of contact points for information on recognition of learning acquired abroad.

In the area of Partnerships and Funding, Slovenia has taken actions to provide IVET learners with financial support for international mobility, through Erasmus+ mobility projects, but also through study visits and other scholarships aimed at upper secondary students. In the future, it could be considered that the evaluation of the funding policy is used to further adjust the financial means available for the mobility of IVET learners. IVET institutions and their staff involved in organising international mobility projects are provided with support in the form of information and assistance, and these measures are evaluated. Support for the creation of partnerships for organising learning mobility projects is provided mainly through the Centre for Mobility and European Educational and Training Programmes (CMEPIUS), and a step for improvement in this thematic area could be to set in place some form of evaluation for these actions.

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IVET level(s) covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary
- Post-secondary non-tertiary
- Tertiary

Main schemes for international IVET mobility in Spain

Mobility scheme	Source of funds	Target group
Erasmus+	- European	- IVET learners - IVET teachers
Scholarships schemes from the Ministry of Education ²⁷²	- European - National	- IVET (upper secondary and tertiary) - Teachers
Bilateral VET Mobility programme with Germany ²⁷³	- European - National	- IVET learners (Dual VET schemes)
Youth programmes from the Ministry of Employment (DG for Migration)	- National	Spanish youngsters (under 35) leaving for mobility periods of at least 1 month. These scholarships do not target IVET learners specifically.

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

In Spain, there are several national and regional institutions promoting the mobility of IVET learners and providing learners with information and

²⁷² <http://www.mecd.gob.es/educacion-mecd/areas-educacion/actividad-internacional/convocatorias-trabajo-formacion.html>

²⁷³ <http://www.empleo.gob.es/movilidadinternacional/es/continentes/europa/alemania/index.htm>

<http://www.goethe.de/ins/es/es/lp/kul/mag/mig/au/20515875.html>

guidance on international learning mobility. Information and guidance on IVET mobility is also provided through several online public services.

Students receive face-to-face information and guidance on international mobility from their schools and training providers. Teachers are directly responsible for engaging students in learning mobility programmes. VET centres and institutions manage their own websites with information on mobility programmes and they also rely on a team which manages information and documentation on mobility, both for teachers and students. Tutors in charge of the Erasmus+ programme have direct communication with students, enterprises and families in order to carry out mobility projects, internships, and periods of learning in the workplace. This communication is usually achieved by regular meetings, tutoring, visits to enterprises and online communication. Depending on the region, once the students have been selected, the management of mobility differs. It can be managed by the Autonomous Department of Education or by the Centres themselves.

Education authorities at national and regional level provide information and guidance on IVET mobility for students and teachers. The General Directorate has made available to individuals an Information and Professional Guidance Service which delivers information and guidance online and by email, and also offers telephone support²⁷⁴. This Information and Professional Guidance Service manages the content and clarifies the information about mobility schemes, which is then uploaded on a dedicated web page²⁷⁵. Individuals interested in any kind of mobility scheme can use the following communication channels, all of which are managed by education advisors of the Service: email, live communication via social media (Twitter and Facebook) and phone.

Education administrations of the autonomous communities (regions), who are responsible for the management of mobility schemes of IVET students in their respective regions, provide online information through 17 websites of the regional administration.

EU mobility programmes are managed by SEPIE (The Spanish Service for Internationalisation of Education), which is the National Agency for Erasmus+. SEPIE offers all the information regarding Erasmus+ projects to VET schools and local/regional educational authorities. It may also provide information and advice directly to learners, on request, by email, phone and through its website.

²⁷⁴ <http://www.mecd.gob.es/servicios-al-ciudadano-mecd/catalogo-servicios/becas-ayudas-subvenciones/movilidad.html>

²⁷⁵ <http://www.todofp.es/todofp/orientacion-profesional/movilidad.html>

Other actors providing information for young people are Eurodesk and the Youth Resource Centres.

Mobility for training purposes and labour mobility is also promoted within the Ministry of Employment, and information is provided through a special webpage for international mobility for youngsters²⁷⁶.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

In Spain professional and educational guidance are in the competence of the different regions. There is certain coordination at national level through the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Employment in their respective sectoral Committees attended by the 17 regional authorities. For example, the Sectorial Conference of Education (*Conferencia Sectorial de Educación*) is attended by the highest education representatives (*consejeros de educación*) from the regions. However, there is a variety of mechanisms and channels for information and guidance on IVET mobility and every region adapts them to its particular features and necessities.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

Legal provisions in Spain include the objective of promoting international learning mobility in IVET.

Several legal provisions from education and employment legislation refer to international mobility and its impact on quality. The main Law of Education (Ley Orgánica 2/2006, modified by the last educational reform, Ley Orgánica 8/2013 de 9 de diciembre para la mejora de la calidad educativa) refers to mobility, the need to open the education system to mobility, foreign language promotion, and mobility of students and teachers within the EU. The Royal Decree 1147/2011 referring to the VET education system, in article 56, also refers to the necessary development of mobility of students, workers, teachers and trainers through national and international mobility for innovation and quality improvement. Moreover, during 2014 a Common Portfolio Services for the National Employment System has been discussed and new legislation has been

²⁷⁶ http://www.empleo.gob.es/movilidadinternacional/es/menu_principal/programasjovenes/index.htm

approved: the Royal Decree 7/2015 of 6 of January. This decree refers to 4 services:

- a) Professional guidance and counselling
- b) Placement and employers support
- c) Training and qualifications for employment
- d) Counselling for self-employment and entrepreneurship.

In relation to point c) Training and qualification for employment, there is a specific activity referring to mobility. The responsibilities within the regional public employment system to promote training mobility and the EU instruments are agreed.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

Spain has initiated steps to improve the information and guidance provision for IVET learning mobility.

The education authorities at national level (General Directorate for VET and SEPIE) and at regional level (Autonomous Communities) are discussing and planning the design of an integrated system of information and guidance within the national context, taking into account the efforts done for international mobility by the regional education authorities. A first stage has been to research the state-of-play at national level in terms of international mobility.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

No information is currently available on the evaluation of the specific actions taken to improve the information and guidance provision for IVET learning mobility.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

Information and assistance on IVET mobility is provided to IVET institutions and companies through the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Employment, and the regional education and employment authorities.

SEPIE organises informative meetings with possible applicants and beneficiaries to provide information about Erasmus+ actions and provides documentation on its website. It also offers support by email and telephone.

The main target group for Euroguidance Centre Spain is the guidance community (guidance practitioners) and, because of the devolved powers to the regions, those in charge of guidance at the regional education administrations.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE “INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE” THEMATIC AREA

In Spain, IVET learners receive information and guidance for international mobility from their schools and training providers, and through a variety of other information channels at national and regional level. SEPIE (the National Agency for Erasmus+), The Ministry of Education, and the education administrations of the autonomous communities (regions) also provide information and guidance to IVET learners, both directly and through a variety of public online services. Although there is certain coordination of educational policies through the Ministry of Education, such as through the Sectorial Conference of Education attended by all regional education representatives, it appears that the information and guidance mechanisms for IVET mobility are not coordinated countrywide. The country appears to have initiated steps to improve the provision of information and guidance on IVET mobility. An integrated system of information and guidance that includes the objective of international mobility is currently being discussed and planned by education authorities at national (General Directorate for VET and SEPIE) and regional level (Autonomous Communities).

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

In Spain, international learning mobility periods can be integrated in the curricula of IVET programmes.

Formal qualifications in IVET are designed following the recommendations of the Council of the EU about ECVET. Although there is no reference to numerical credits, IVET curricula are defined by learning outcomes, and IVET programmes are modularised. Learning modules undertaken by students during mobility periods abroad are included in the agreements between the sending and receiving training institutions. In the case of Advanced IVET programmes there is reference to ECTS in each module.

Most VET mobility schemes within the educational system are focused in the fulfilment of a training module in the workplace. This module is compulsory for everyone taking part in education or training leading to a VET diploma. Therefore, parts of the curricula of IVET programmes can be completed through mobility schemes, making the completion of this module abroad a non-compulsory matter. This possibility has been fostered and developed by the education administrations, both at regional and national level.

Moreover, education is a specific area in the Spanish External Strategy of the Ministry of Foreign affairs²⁷⁷. There are possibilities of “double degrees” with training periods in Spain and another country. These “double degrees” are well developed at the tertiary education level. There are also bilateral agreements with certain countries in education, such as the bilateral agreement with Germany in the field of VET.

²⁷⁷ See reference to actions section 6. On education Page 96

<http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Portal/es/SalaDePrensa/Multimedia/Publicaciones/Documentos/ESTRATEGIA%20DE%20ACCION%20EXTERIOR%20ingles.pdf>

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

The country aims to promote IVET international mobility among all VET students, but no specific targets for mobility have been set. At the Erasmus+ Programme level, objectives are defined every year in the Work Programme of SEPIE.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

The country has no specific measures to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries.

The entrance into the country of IVET learners from non-EU Member States is subject to study permissions defined by the Ministry of External Relations²⁷⁸. IVET learners are not specifically mentioned.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

The country has taken measures to reduce administrative burdens that may hinder the international learning mobility in what regards Erasmus+ Partner countries.

SEPIE (The Spanish Service for Internationalisation of Education) is trying to resolve administrative burdens specifically for IVET students. There is an IVET policy, which mainly focuses on Advanced IVET programs²⁷⁹. The SEPIE Higher Education Unit works in collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior and its immigration department to reduce administrative burdens in relation to IVET mobility with Erasmus+ Partner countries²⁸⁰. These measures do not apply to mobility for Intermediate and Basic IVET level programmes, because at these levels of VET, mobility is carried out mainly with Erasmus+ Programme countries.

²⁷⁸ <http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Portal/en/ServiciosAlCiudadano/InformacionParaExtranjeros/Paginas/Inicio.aspx>

²⁷⁹ There are Advanced, Intermediate and Basic IVET level programmes in Spain.

²⁸⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/documents/erasmus-plus-eligible-countries_en.pdf

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

The country has no specific measures to remove possible legal obstacles to the mobility of minor IVET learners.

For the mobility opportunities under Erasmus+ and managed by SEPIE, project beneficiaries normally request a parental authorisation for students under 18 years of age who undertake an international learning mobility.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social security

In Erasmus+, there are well-defined regulations on student insurance. All participants to Erasmus+ should have adequate insurance coverage (ARTICLE 5 – INSURANCE from the Student Agreement) for accidents, health and other liabilities.

In relation to Spanish IVET students who do the “On the Job” module in companies outside Spain, a special insurance is done in relation to personal responsibility and work accidents they may have during their traineeship.

Labour protection

Incoming EU students benefit from work and safety protection during their apprenticeship or IVET studies, according to existing labour regulations.

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE “ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES” THEMATIC AREA

In Spain, international learning mobility periods can be integrated in the curricula of IVET programmes. A part of the curricula of IVET programmes is formed by a training module in a workplace, which can be completed

through mobility abroad. Education authorities encourage students to take advantage of this possibility. Although there are objectives for IVET mobility set by SEPIE in accordance with the general objectives of Erasmus+, the country does not have specific targets for IVET international mobility. Some measures have been taken to reduce administrative burdens for IVET students attending Advanced IVET mobility programmes with Erasmus+ Partner countries. SEPIE works in collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior and its immigration department to reduce administrative burdens for this type of mobility. So far no specific measures have been taken to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries or to reduce possible legal obstacles to the mobility of minors. Although it may be deemed that no such measures are necessary, there has not been any fully-fledged investigation targeted at checking the situation on the ground and surveying users' needs and stakeholders' views. In future, it could be investigated, e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys, whether the existing conditions for delivering visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries and for the exit of minor learners are easy enough, or instead require putting in place support measures for assisting learners (or their institutions) in their mobility process.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

In Spain, recognition of learning outcomes acquired by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility is regulated by law, but it also depends on the VET providers.

There is a procedure for recognition of learning acquired abroad that leaves this authority to VET providers. Memoranda of Understanding need to be signed and agreed upon by the sending and receiving institutions.

For the educational part of VET, the competent authority in charge of establishing the memorandum of understanding and recognition of learning acquired abroad is the Directorate General for Guidance and Vocational Education and Training of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport.

Nevertheless, in order to promote and facilitate mobility, agreements between different educational institutions have been developed, with the permission of the relevant regional authority. Thus, the completion abroad of the module corresponding to training in the workplace (FCT – Módulo de Formación en el Centro de Trabajo) has been made possible. This is also mobility of shorter duration, where the student goes abroad to complete only a certain part of a training module. In these situations, the responsibility of evaluating and recognising the learning outcomes falls in the responsibility of teachers.

If the intention is to go abroad for a full academic year or a full training module, the standards set by the Ministry of Education regarding the validation or recognition of these studies must be followed. In order to guarantee such recognition of long-term mobility, it is convenient to obtain the Ministry's approval and to establish a suitable memorandum of understanding before departure.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

IVET learners involved in international learning mobility have easy access to recognition of learning acquired abroad.

In Erasmus+, the recognition of learning acquired abroad by IVET learners is compulsory for all institutions taking part in a mobility project. The recognition of learning outcomes is done through the use of the Europass Mobility document, in which all the tasks carried out and competences acquired (job-related, linguistic, personal, communicative, organisational) are reflected. The two organizations involved in the mobility fill the document taking into account the agreement reached and described in the Erasmus+ project. Once this is done, the Spanish National Europass Centre validates the document so that it can be used as certification of the mobility.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in the country applies to:

- Courses
- Credit points
- Modules
- Qualifications/diplomas/degrees

Of the learning components above, credit points (ECTS) are used only in

the case of Advanced IVET programmes, for the work-based learning (FCT) module in Higher Technician Diplomas.

Although the recognition of the learning components above is possible for VET within the educational system, in practice periods of mobility abroad are limited to the completion of the training in the workplace module or to short-term mobility projects, which involve learning of very specific competences, for a period less than a full academic year or a less than a full training module. There are practically no applications for mobility for a full academic year or for a full module, with the exception of the work-based learning (FCT) module abroad.

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

In Spain, the approach to recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET learners is coordinated countrywide.

Under Erasmus+, the approach to recognition is applied in the same way regardless the institution. When the Europass Mobility document is validated, it gets a national register number and is recognised throughout the country.

In the case of official VET programmes within the education system two cases can be distinguished:

- If it is an "On-the-Job placement module" (FCT – Módulo de Formación en el Centro de Trabajo) or smaller elements of any other module, the Autonomous (regional) Authority or even the VET School can validate the knowledge and skills acquired abroad.
- For complete modules of any VET Programme, the validation responsibility is under the Ministry of Education, through the DG for VET.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

There is no regulatory time limit for recognition. The recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad is part of the agreement signed by the centres, and it is carried out by teachers when assessing the corresponding training module.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1 STRATEGY / ACTIONS TO ESTABLISH, OR MAKE MORE VISIBLE, CONTACT POINTS FOR RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

In Spain, there are several institutions involved in the dissemination of information on recognition of learning outcomes. These are SEPIE and the National Europass Centre (which has a contact point within SEPIE), the educational institutions (through their websites, teachers and counsellors), and the validation and recognition service for studies and learning acquired abroad, within the Directorate General for VET of the Ministry of Education.

However, the country has no policy actions aimed specifically to increase the visibility of these contact points for information on recognition of learning acquired abroad.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

As there are no specific policy actions for the visibility of contact points, there is no evaluation.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Europass Mobility document is used by all the participants in Erasmus+ projects, LLP projects, and by anybody who may need to make use of the document. It is used mainly by mobility beneficiaries to certify international mobility and to reflect all the competences acquired in the period spent abroad.

The SEPIE website (www.sepie.es) provides Certificate and Diploma Supplements ready to be downloaded or templates to be filled in by institutions. The Certificate Supplement is used more and more to clarify the nature of training for a given occupation in Spain. It is very useful to many people who are nowadays moving abroad to find a job.

There is a national contact point for ECVET within the Ministry of Education, and ECVET is used as a reference. The Directorate General for VET of the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport is the body responsible for any development in the field of IVET, as well as the National Contact Point for ECVET. All ECVET principles have been applied

to the design of the VET diplomas, and the training credits are recognised by means of learning outcomes obtained from different training modules, even though no points are assigned to them.

For the VET system, there is yet no correspondence between the National Qualification Framework and EQF. Within tertiary education, EQF correspondence has been established. Advanced VET diplomas at the tertiary education level are equivalent to EQF level 5. The correspondence between the NQF and EQF for all VET qualifications is expected to be approved.

All VET Diplomas in the education system are defined in terms of learning outcomes and consequently, evaluation criteria for these learning outcomes are also defined. Learning outcomes are used to define the Learning Agreements in mobility periods. Work place training is part of the curriculum and the acquired competences are reflected in the certificate.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

In Spain, IVET learners involved in international learning mobility under Erasmus+ have easy access to recognition of learning acquired abroad, and the approach to recognition is coordinated countrywide. Four types of learning components can be recognised: courses; credit points; modules; and qualifications / diplomas / degrees. There is no regulatory time limit for the recognition process. Although there are several contact points for information on recognition of learning outcomes, there are no specific policy actions to enhance the visibility of these contact points. Spain makes use of the EU tools for visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes. However, regarding the NQF/EQF, the correspondence between the national and the European qualifications frameworks is established only for Advanced VET qualifications. In the future, it is expected that all VET qualifications will be aligned to the EQF. For further progress in future, it could be considered extending to units and programmes the range of learning components taken into account in the recognition process; setting a regulatory time limit for the recognition process; and developing specific policy actions aimed to enhance the visibility of the contact points for information on recognition.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

In Spain, the creation of partnerships and networks for IVET mobility is supported by SEPIE, according to the objectives and guidelines of Erasmus+. The Agency carries out specific activities to promote contact between training providers²⁸¹.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The actions taken by SEPIE to support the creation of partnerships and networks are evaluated as part of the overall evaluation of SEPIE activities, in accordance with the rules of Erasmus+. The Agency is subject to supervision and audits by the European Commission and an external audit body. SEPIE draws a yearly report to the European Commission on all its activities and management of Erasmus+. The European Commission may also carry out monitoring visits. As a result of the audit or the visits, the proposed improvements must be implemented.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

In Spain, financial support for the international mobility of IVET learners is available through European funds in the frame of Erasmus+.

In addition, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport offers a range of scholarships for all levels of the education system, among which there is a specific set of scholarships for traineeships in IVET. Information about these scholarships is available on the Ministry website²⁸².

²⁸¹ <http://www.sepie.es/formacion-profesional/seminarios.html#contenido>

²⁸² <http://www.mecd.gob.es/servicios-al-ciudadano-mecd/catalogo-servicios/becas-ayudas-subvenciones/movilidad.html>

Additionally, in some (but not all) regions (communities) there are other funds available. Some Autonomous Communities also offer some scholarships to promote mobility.

The Ministry of Employment, within the National Strategy for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship 2013-2015 supports youth programmes for international mobility, but these initiatives have a wider target group.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The use of the funds allocated through Erasmus+ is monitored based on interim and final reports, and dissemination and exploitation of project results.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. STRATEGY / ACTIONS TO PROVIDE INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH FINANCIAL AND NON-FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Institutions and staff involved in organising IVET learning mobility projects are offered support in the frame of Erasmus+, according to the objectives of the Programme. For example, support is provided in the form of information and assistance.

At a national level, the Ministry of Education offers scholarships for the mobility of teachers²⁸³. SEPIE also includes the activity carried out by the Foundation for the Internationalisation of Spanish Universities (*Fundación para la Proyección Internacional de las Universidades Españolas* - Universidad.es). The work of this Foundation may include support for organising mobility projects for Advanced VET, at tertiary level.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

For the support offered through SEPIE, the actions are evaluated as part of the overall evaluation of SEPIE activities, in accordance with the rules of Erasmus+. The Agency is subject to supervision and audits by the

²⁸³ <http://www.mecd.gob.es/servicios-al-ciudadano-mecd/en/catalogo-servicios/becas-ayudas-subvenciones/movilidad/de-profesores.html>

European Commission and an external audit body. SEPIE draws a yearly report that is evaluated by the European Commission in relation to all its activities and management of Erasmus+. The European Commission may also carry out monitoring visits. As a result of the audit or the visits, the proposed improvements must be implemented.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE “PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING” THEMATIC AREA

In Spain, support for the creation of partnerships and networks for IVET mobility is offered through actions carried out under Erasmus+. Activities to promote contact between training providers are carried out by SEPIE, in line with the objectives and guidelines of the Programme. Institutions and staff are also provided with support for organising IVET learning mobility projects in the frame of Erasmus+, for example in the form of information and assistance. The activities of SEPIE are subject to reporting, monitoring and evaluation, in accordance with the rules of Erasmus+. In the future, it could be considered that – and clarified how – this overall evaluation of SEPIE activities covers specifically and explicitly these support actions, and in which way it is conducted. The country offers financial support to IVET learners for their international learning mobility through Erasmus+ funds, and through other scholarships granted at national level by the Ministry of Education and from regional funds. The allocation of funds for participating in Erasmus+ projects is monitored according to the Programme rules. In the future, it could be considered that a substantial evaluation of the funding policy is put in place, covering all the financial support offered in the country for the mobility of IVET learners.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

Spain has a variety of information and guidance mechanisms for IVET mobility. This provision is ensured through schools and training providers, and through online public services of the national and regional education authorities (SEPIE - the National Agency for Erasmus+, the Ministry of Education, the education administrations of the autonomous communities etc.). Despite certain coordination of policies through the Ministry of Education, it appears that the information and guidance mechanisms for IVET mobility are not coordinated countrywide. The country has initiated steps to improve the provision of information and guidance on IVET mobility, by planning the design of an integrated system of information

and guidance that includes the objective of international mobility.

In relation to the thematic area for Administrative and Institutional Issues in Spain, international learning mobility periods can be integrated in the curricula of IVET programmes. The country does not have specific targets for IVET international mobility apart from the objectives set by SEPIE in accordance with the general objectives for Erasmus+, and this aspect could be considered in order to better promote IVET mobility in the future. Some measures have been taken to reduce administrative burdens for IVET students attending Advanced IVET mobility programmes with Erasmus+ Partner countries. No specific measures have been taken to smooth the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries or to reduce possible legal obstacles to the mobility of minors. In the future, it could be considered that a systematic study or survey is conducted to identify and reduce administrative burdens for all groups of students, and to identify and reduce possible obstacles to the mobility of minor IVET learners and of incoming students from third countries.

In the thematic area for the Recognition of Learning Outcomes, the main positive aspects in Spain are the easiness of access to recognition of learning acquired abroad during mobility periods under Erasmus+, and the countrywide coordination of the approach to recognition. The five EU tools for the visibility, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes are also used in the country, although the correspondence between the national and the European qualifications frameworks is currently established only for Advanced VET qualifications. Four types of learning components can be recognised. For further progress in future, it could be considered extending to units and programmes the range of learning components taken into account in the recognition process; setting a regulatory time limit for the recognition process; and developing specific policy actions aimed to enhance the visibility of the contact points for information on recognition.

In Spain, support is available for the creation of partnerships and networks for IVET mobility, and for IVET institutions and staff involved in organising IVET mobility projects, through the actions carried out by SEPIE in the frame of Erasmus+, in line with the objectives and guidelines of the Programme. In the future, it could be considered that – and clarified how – the overall evaluation of SEPIE activities covers specifically and explicitly these support actions, and in which way it is conducted. The country offers financial support to IVET learners for their international learning mobility through Erasmus+ funds, and through other scholarships granted at national level by the Ministry of Education and from regional funds. The allocation of funds for participating in Erasmus+ projects is monitored according to the Programme rules. In the future, it could be considered that a substantial evaluation of the funding policy is

put in place, covering all the financial support offered in the country for the mobility of IVET learners.

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IVET level(s) covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary

Upper secondary school in Sweden refers to the level of learning and thus both to young adults in their 10th to 12th school year, and to adult education at the same level.

Main schemes for international IVET mobility in Sweden

Mobility scheme	Source of funds	Target group
Erasmus+mobilitet yrkesutbildning	European	IVET learners, including - IVET learners with disabilities - Adult IVET learners*
Athena utbyten	National budget	- IVET learners - Teachers
Atlas praktik	National budget	- IVET learners, including learners with disabilities - Adult IVET learners
Atlas partnerskap	National budget	IVET learners, including IVET learners with disabilities
Nordplus Junior Nordplus Vuxen	Other: the Nordic Council of Ministers	IVET learners, including: - Adult IVET learners; - IVET learners with disabilities; and - Other groups

* The Swedish education system has parallel paths for youths and adults. The two complement each other. From age 16 to 20 a person studies at upper secondary school, and after the age of 20 a person studies at municipal adult education if he or she has not already completed upper secondary school. Thus an adult can be enrolled in municipal adult education equivalent to vocational upper secondary school level. Both are IVET-educational paths. It is first after completing upper secondary school, a person regardless of age, continues to higher education or to CVET.

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Swedish education is based on goal-steering and equality principles. The legislation stipulates that all students, regardless of age, should have access to adequate career guidance. International learning is a goal provided for in the curriculum for upper secondary education and adult upper secondary education, the two curricula that govern IVET. Each school organiser is obliged by law to provide study and career guidance to its students according to the individual's needs. Study and career guidance is defined widely and narrowly: The wide definition includes all school activity that contributes to the student's ability to make informed choices, and is the responsibility of all adults working in the school. The narrow definition is the personalised guidance provided to an individual (or group) by a study and career counsellor, a regulated profession limited to those who have graduated from a counselling programme at teachers college. The aim of the counselling, and thus the content covered, is to widen the student's view about his or her own abilities, different educational paths and vocations, but also challenge the student's notions of education and vocations from a gender, a social and a cultural perspective. The goal is to develop the ability for the student to take different perspectives into account in order to make informed choices about his or her future education or vocation.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

The Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR) is assigned to coordinate and make information and guidance available about all mobility programmes, including those available for IVET-learners, funded by the EU, the Nordic Council of Ministers or the Swedish State. Information is geared directly to VET-providers but also through a network of local and regional international coordinators. According to legislation, career guidance for international learning should be available for all students nationwide. It is up to each school organiser to meet the goals. To ensure that school organisers meet the goals, and thus that students have access to adequate guidance in a decentralized educational system, the Swedish School Inspectorate has a controlling function to ensure convergence.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

International learning is a goal provided for in two curricula that govern IVET: upper secondary education and adult upper secondary education. School organisers are expected to provide IVET-student with international learning guidance. One of the head-teacher's explicit responsibilities, according to the curricula of upper secondary school and adult education, is to "encourage international contacts, co-operation and exchange in education." It is, furthermore, stated in the regulations for study and career counselling, that an international perspective is needed in career counselling.

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

UHR (the Swedish Council for Higher Education) regularly updates and improves its means of information and guidance about mobility, provides workshops for applicants and dissemination seminars about mobility programmes. On the other hand, improvement also takes place locally at school level through systematic quality assessment and is the responsibility of the school organiser. In this process, BRUK is one tool developed by the National Agency for Education to aid schools.

School organisers are required to ensure that the work performed in schools is followed up by means of systematic quality assessment. The National Agency for Education has published general guidelines for systematic quality assessment, and developed BRUK, an e-learning tool for self-evaluation, to aid schools and organisers in the systematic quality assessment. BRUK is an acronym in Swedish for Assessment, Reflection, Development, Quality. In BRUK, one of the 58 questions for self-assessment addressing the curriculum goal that schools should strengthen is if the school strengthens the students' knowledge about the possibility to further education, practical training and work in Sweden and other countries. This question applies to both upper secondary education and adult upper secondary education. Quality assurance process is decentralized. Although schools are mandated to have quality assurance process, they are not required to use BRUK.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Evaluation is ensured by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate, which examines the work performed in schools as well as the process of systematic quality assessment. The Inspectorate ensures that the assessment is carried out and has positive impact on the activities. The role of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate is to inspect if schools live up to the quality standards as mandated by the legislation which includes the curriculum, and to ensure that the school organisers and schools have a systematic quality assurance process that lead to quality improvements. If the Inspectorate finds deficiencies, these are reported in order for the school to improve them. If schools do not meet the qualitative goals and deficiencies remain, the Inspectorate can fine the school organiser or, in worst cases, revoke the permit for the organiser to organise the school, i.e. close the school.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

The Swedish Council for Higher Education is assigned to coordinate and make information and guidance available about all mobility programmes, including those available for IVET learners, funded by the EU, the Nordic Council of Ministers or the Swedish State. Information is geared directly to VET providers but also through a network of local and regional international coordinators. There is no particular information and assistance developed for companies. The information and assistance is general about the education system and provided by the National Agency for Education. It is mainly targeting institutions, which includes IVET institutions. If a learner has participated in a mobility program, it is the school that validates the learning and integrates the learning during mobility in the grades and the exam. Information and assistance about the mobility programmes, how to apply, eligibility, etc., is provided by the National Council for Higher Education, UHR.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

Sweden meets the criteria of the Information and Guidance indicator. The country provides IVET learners with information and guidance for their international learning mobility. Consistency and convergence of information and guidance policies and practices is ensured by the National

Council for Higher education (UHR) and the Swedish School Inspectorate. To improve the quality of provision, the Swedish Council for Higher Education regularly updates and improves its means of information and guidance about mobility. Guidelines for quality assessment have been put in place, and schools have been provided with BRUK, a tool for self-evaluation. The quality assessment process itself is monitored by the School Inspectorate, which ensures that the provision can improve overtime.

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

The Curricula for Upper Secondary School and Adult education has the status of an Ordinance and is part of the legislation. Its coverage includes IVET. It encourages international contacts, co-operation and exchange in education. Responsibility for implementing this direction at school level is delegated to the head-teacher.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

Statistics Sweden follows up the EU goal according to which 6% of all 18-24-year olds by 2020 in IVET should have had at least a two-week long period of training abroad. This target seems to be already met, however no other one has been set to date.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

No such facilitating measure has been taken. Citizens from countries other than the Nordic and EU countries are required to apply for residence permit if they intend to study in Sweden for more than 3 months. In addition, there are more than 130 countries from which citizens need a visa to enter Sweden, through the Schengen agreement. There are no exceptions for students who have been granted financial aid through

programs targeted for IVET mobility for students from countries outside EU.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

The Swedish Council for Higher Education, the agency that administers Erasmus+ and other programmes for financing mobility, offers workshops to aid schools in the application- and reporting processes. At local level, some organisers, often municipalities, have international coordinators or facilitators that aid schools in the process, others do not.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

No such measures have been taken so far. The school or mobility programme cannot include students under the age of 18 if the parent or custodian is disapproving of mobility. Legal obstacles that may prevent international learning for students aged below 18 are, however, have not been in focus.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social security

Students that have received a permit and will stay in Sweden for at least one year may register in the Swedish population register. The Swedish Tax Agency can register the individual as a resident of Sweden according to the Population Registration Act, and the same benefits apply thereafter as for Swedish citizens. If so, they are eligible for the same social benefits, e.g. medical care, as anyone else. Students are eligible for Swedish financial aid for studies, if they meet the requirements for the basic right to Swedish financial aid for studies according to Swedish regulations. Non-EU-nationals that have a permanent residence permit or refugee status are also qualified. These rules apply to students in general, including IVET-students.

Students staying in Sweden less than one year have to have their own insurance and need to be able to show that they can support themselves.

There is no difference between EU/non-EU-citizens, but the European Health Insurance Card is sufficient to show that insurance is provided.

Labour protection

The legislation covers work-related safety in general and is not limited to Swedish or EU citizens. For students training in IVET in Swedish workplaces, safety is governed by the Work Environment Act.

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES" THEMATIC AREA

Swedish Education policy has a clear orientation to integrating international mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes. Sweden uses the European 2020 benchmark of 6% of IVET learners having at least two weeks of training abroad. The country has taken measures to help schools cope with the administrative burdens induced by international mobility. However, no step has been taken to facilitate the delivery of visas and residency permits to IVET students from third countries, or to remove possible obstacles that may hinder the international mobility of minor apprentices and IVET students. Although it may be deemed that no such measure is necessary because no difficulty was officially reported, there has not been any fully-fledged investigation targeted at checking the situation on the ground and surveying users' needs and stakeholders' views. In future, it could be investigated, e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys, whether the existing conditions for delivering visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries and for the exit of minor learners are easy enough, or instead require putting in place support measures for assisting learners (or their institutions) in their mobility process.

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

The process of recognizing learning outcomes is nationwide and regulated by the legislation, but the recognition itself is performed locally. IVET takes place in 12 vocational study programmes in upper secondary school or adult upper secondary education. Each programme is built by a number of courses, which partly, or in full, can be taught in a workplace. Each school organiser is free to organize the education in a school or in a workplace, as long as the goals of the courses are met. The teacher marks the grade of the course regardless if it is taught in the school or as workplace based learning. It is possible to locate whole or parts of courses in another country, as long as the organizer provides mechanisms for the teacher to assess the learning that has taken place. Thus the recognition is performed by the teacher and the learning outcome is taken into account when a course is graded. The process is regulated in the Ordinance of upper secondary school, chapter 4, 12-14§.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

IVET learners involved in international learning mobility have easy access to recognition of learning acquired abroad. It is the student's ordinary IVET-teacher that assesses the learning abroad, since the learning is part of the regular IVET programme.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in Sweden applies to:

- Courses
- Credit points
- Units
- Modules
- Programmes
- Qualifications/diplomas/degrees

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

The process of recognizing learning outcomes acquired abroad is nationwide regulated by legislation, although the process is implemented locally by schools (it is the responsibility of each school organiser to recognize the learning acquired abroad).

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

There is no regulatory time frame set for processing recognition requests.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

Recognition is operated by teachers in schools. So learners can get information from their teachers, and no policy is required to make these contact persons known to learners.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

There is no visibility policy, so no evaluation thereof.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Europass Mobility document is used at the discretion of each school. It is mainly issued by the schools that are supported financially by the Erasmus+ programme, to document the students' work-placed based learning during mobility.

The Europass Certificate Supplement is used to clarify the contents of the vocational programme during mobility. The National Agency for Education that is responsible for the Europass supplements has made the documents and information available through its webpage and other information channels.

ECVET is used by schools as an aid to write learning agreements. The National Agency for Education and the Swedish Council for Higher Education have, together with the ECVET-experts, organized workshops for schools that have international IVET-projects on how ECVET can be used to assess the learning taking place during mobility.

The Swedish NQF was recently adopted by the Swedish government and is now recognized as SeQF. The National Agency for Education is presently working to incorporate the SeQF-level into the Europass Certificate Supplements for IVET-exams. It is too early to confirm that the SeQF-level has been used for visibility, transfer or recognition in IVET mobility.

In the Swedish educational system the subject syllabi are written from a learning outcome perspective. The student's achievements, knowledge and competence are evaluated in relation to the goals for each course of the subject.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

Sweden has in place a nationwide regulated mechanism for recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET learners. Recognition applies to courses, credit points, units, modules, programmes and qualifications / diplomas / degrees. It makes use of a range of existing EU tools for visibility, transfer and recognition, i.e. the Europass Mobility Document and Certificate Supplement and ECVET. It is easily accessible to students as it is operated by school teachers.

The country has no specific measures for the visibility of contact points for information on recognition of learning outcomes acquired during mobility periods. Such a visibility policy seems to be un-necessary as recognition is operated by the school teachers themselves. However, in future, it could be made sure (e.g. through user surveys) that the mechanism actually works as expected, and that in practice learners know where to get (and manage to get) the recognition-related information they may need.

The Swedish approach to recognition of learning acquired abroad could also take some other steps forward in future. Introducing a maximum time limit for schools to handle applications and speed up the recognition process could be considered. Making use of the EQF/NQF and the learning Outcomes approach for visibility, transfer and recognition purposes would

be a progress too.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The Swedish Council for Higher Education is the national agency for EU programmes and other international programmes for the education sector, including IVET. The Swedish Council for Higher Education provides information and support for international exchanges and collaborations, which includes support to actors that initiate, strengthen or deepen an international perspective in their work and operations. The support measures are general and aimed to help potential actors to establish their own partnerships and networks. In this supportive work The Swedish Council for Higher Education communicates the available programmes, advises potential and existing actors of international projects and distributes financial means for mobility projects.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

The Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR) administers international cooperative and mobility programmes for all educational levels in Sweden. In this work, there are four sources of funding: the European Commission, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Swedish Government (through the Ministry of Education). All these bodies require evaluation of the actions carried out. For Erasmus+, as an example, evaluation consists of reports from participants in the various projects. UHR monitors and checks, in addition, the actions and the economic conditions, during and after the projects have elapsed. Every year an annual evaluation report containing qualitative and quantitative data is sent to the Commission (by way of the Ministry of Education). The reporting varies a bit depending on the rules of the source of funding.

UHR evaluates its own activities, in particular its thematic seminars, informational meetings, writing application workshops, seminars for exchange of experiences, advice provision, and seminars on strategic

work during mobility. Results of evaluation have an impact on how future plans and activities will take shape.

UHR evaluates its activities and operations with regard to budget and stated missions and priorities.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

The legislation on the curricula for Upper Secondary and Adult Education states that the head-teacher should encourage international contacts, co-operation and exchange in education. The state offers financial means to support these goals. State funding for mobility is available for countries outside the EU/EEA-area in addition to the EU-programmes, like Erasmus+. These programmes include Nordplus for mobility in education in general, which includes IVET, in the Nordic countries; Athena that provides financial resources for reciprocal mobility for IVET-learners in Sweden and low- to middle-income countries worldwide; and Atlas that provides financial support for IVET-mobility and workplace-based learning in both EU/EES and non-EU countries. The programmes are administered by The Swedish Council for Higher Education.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR) administers international cooperative and mobility programmes for all educational levels in Sweden. In this work, there are four sources of funding: the European Commission, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Swedish Government (through the Ministry of Education). All these bodies requires evaluation of the actions carried out. For Erasmus+, as an example, evaluation consists of reports from participants in the various projects. UHR monitors and checks, in addition, the actions and the economic conditions, during and after the projects have elapsed. Every year an annual evaluation report containing qualitative and quantitative data is sent to the Commission (by way of the Ministry of Education). The reporting varies a bit depending on the rules of the source of funding.

UHR evaluates its own activities, in particular its thematic seminars, informational meetings, writing application workshops, seminars for exchange of experiences, advice provision, and seminars on strategic work during mobility. Results of evaluation have an impact on how future plans and activities will take shape.

UHR evaluates its activities and operations with regard to budget and stated missions and priorities.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

Information is provided through a special webpage²⁸⁴, developed for the purpose of providing information about and coordinating all programmes for mobility. The webpage is administered by The Swedish Council for Higher Education. Other agencies, like the National Agency for Education, also provide information through their channels about mobility, targeted to groups that the agency works for.

The support does not only cover web-based information. It also includes information and practical aid through conferences, seminars, and workshops. The goal is to aid institutions on the 'how to' before applying for the programmes; for achieving high quality during mobility once grants have been received; and for reporting afterwards.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

The Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR) administers international cooperative and mobility programmes for all educational levels in Sweden. In this work, there are four sources of funding: the European Commission, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Swedish Government (through the Ministry of Education). All these bodies requires evaluation of the actions carried out. For Erasmus+, as an example, evaluation consists of reports from participants in the various projects. UHR monitors and checks, in addition, the actions and the economic conditions, during and after the projects have elapsed. Every year an annual evaluation report containing qualitative and quantitative data is sent to the Commission (by

²⁸⁴ utbyten.se

way of the Ministry of Education). The reporting varies a bit depending on the rules of the source of funding.

UHR evaluates its own activities, in particular its thematic seminars, informational meetings, writing application workshops, seminars for exchange of experiences, advice provision, and seminars on strategic work during mobility. Results of evaluation have an impact on how future plans and activities will take shape.

UHR evaluates its activities and operations with regard to budget and stated missions and priorities.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

Sweden has in place policies for providing companies, VET institutions and learners with financial and non-financial support for international mobility, creation of partnerships and networks, and organisation of international mobility projects. These policies are subject to evaluation targeted at improving support actions over time.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In the thematic area of Information and Guidance, Sweden meets all criteria of the indicator. The country provides IVET learners with information and guidance for their international learning mobility. Countrywide consistency and convergence of information and guidance policies and practices is ensured by the National Council for Higher education (UHR) and the Swedish School Inspectorate. To improve the quality of provision, the Swedish Council for Higher Education regularly updates and improves its means of information and guidance about mobility. Quality assessment has been put in place and is subject to regular evaluation.

Regarding the area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, Sweden has a clear policy orientation to integrating international mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes. Sweden uses the European 2020 benchmark of 6% of IVET learners having at least two weeks of training abroad. The country has taken measures to help schools cope with the administrative burdens induced by international mobility. However, no steps have been taken to facilitate the delivery of visas and residency

permits to IVET students from third countries, or to remove possible obstacles that may hinder the international mobility of minor apprentices and IVET students. Although it may be deemed that no such measures are necessary because no difficulty was officially reported, there has not been any fully-fledged investigation targeted at checking the situation on the ground and surveying users' needs and stakeholders' views. In future, it could be investigated, e.g. through users/stakeholders surveys, whether the existing conditions for delivering visas and residency permits to IVET learners from third countries and for the exit of minor learners are easy enough, or instead require putting in place support measures for assisting learners (or their institutions) in their mobility process.

In the area of Recognition of Learning Outcomes, Sweden has in place a nationwide regulated mechanism for recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET learners. Recognition applies to courses, credit points, units, modules, programmes and qualifications / diplomas / degrees. It makes use of a range of existing EU tools for visibility, transfer and recognition, i.e. the Europass Mobility Document and Certificate Supplement and ECVET. It is easily accessible to students as it is operated by school teachers. The country has no specific measures for the visibility of contact points for information on recognition of learning outcomes acquired during mobility periods. Such a visibility policy seems to be un-necessary as recognition is operated by the school teachers themselves. However, in future, it could be made sure (e.g. through user surveys) that the mechanism actually works as expected, and that in practice learners know where to get (and manage to get) the recognition-related information they may need. The Swedish approach to recognition of learning acquired abroad could also take some other steps forward in future. Introducing a maximum time limit for schools to handle applications and speed up the recognition process could be considered. Making use of the EQF/NQF and the learning Outcomes approach for visibility, transfer and recognition purposes would be a progress too.

Finally, in the area of Partnerships and Funding, Sweden has in place policies for providing companies, VET institutions and learners with financial and non-financial support for international mobility, creation of partnerships and networks, and organisation of international mobility projects. These policies are subject to evaluation targeted at improving support actions over time.

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IVET level(s) covered in this fiche:

- Upper secondary
- Post-secondary non-tertiary
- Tertiary

The terms IVET and CVET are not officially defined within the formal education systems in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. In Wales, vocational qualifications have now been categorised into IVET and CVET groups from January 2015. IVET programmes in Wales are introductory and do not lead to occupational competence, whilst CVET programmes lead to occupational competence. Only IVET should be available to learners at 14 to 16, with either category available as appropriate post-16. Moving from IVET to CVET should be recognised as progression even where learning remains at CQFW²⁸⁵ level 2 (EQF level 3). This fiche refers to policies and initiatives that relate to secondary, post-secondary and tertiary level vocational education. Secondary VET represents the majority of UK vocational students registered on programmes relevant to this fiche.

Main schemes for international IVET mobility in the United Kingdom

Mobility scheme	Source of funds	Target group
Erasmus+	European	IVET learners and other groups (general)
Europass	European and national budget	IVET learners and other groups
ECVET	European and national budget	IVET learners and other groups
International Exchange Programme UK (IEPUK)	Private	IVET learners and other groups

²⁸⁵ Credit and Qualifications Framework Wales

PART 1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

1.1.1. MECHANISM(S) TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Schools and colleges are the principal providers of career advice, information and guidance to learners. Education and training providers direct learners to information from websites and printed material, invite external speakers and information officers, and arrange for learners to attend career fairs. Some providers also deliver dedicated careers lessons. Career advice and guidance about further study opportunities are mostly provided by internal school and college staff in England, including professional career advisers, teachers, tutors, and student services support staff, but also by externally contracted professional career advisers. The majority of colleges provide individualised career advice and guidance, as well as career education classes. Whilst guidelines from national authorities regarding the inclusion of information on periods of study or placements abroad exist, the content and extent of information and guidance vary from provider to provider. In Northern Ireland all post primary school and further education college learners can avail of impartial career guidance provided by professionally qualified career advisers from the Department for Employment and Learning. The information, advice and guidance provided is tailored to the needs of the individual, outlining the opportunities available both locally nationally and internationally to help them achieve their career aspiration.

Several information and guidance mechanisms accessible to IVET learners and career information and guidance officers at education and training providers are in place. The National Agencies for Erasmus+ in the UK – British Council and Ecorys – maintain the UK Erasmus+ website containing information about EU VET mobility funding opportunities. Careers Europe provide information to career advisers, students and anyone interested in going abroad on their website and at events, such as careers fairs. The National Europass Centre informs individuals and education providers of tools that can be used to document periods of mobility and aid recognition of learning. The UK Eurodesk centre is run by Ecorys. Its website contains information about mobility opportunities for HE and VET within Europe. The British Council has a UK facing website for individuals interested in studying or working overseas. This isn't specifically for IVET students but includes IVET in its scope. It is a source of information and guidance for UK students. The outward facing website is Education UK. This has a lot of information and practical advice and

guidance for individuals wanting to study in the UK

In Scotland, guidance is available through organisations such as the Scottish European Education Network and Scotland Goes Global, the latter of which provide “Ambassadors” who go into schools, colleges and universities to provide advice – and a global citizenship and study abroad module delivered in schools.

1.1.2. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PROVISION

Whilst much information and guidance to learners about international mobility opportunities is delivered by education and training providers in the UK, there are several organisations and contact points that promote and distribute information across the UK, with the four UK education jurisdictions retaining responsibility. UK-wide coordination is ensured through regular meetings, such as the UK European Coordination Group for VET Initiatives, which brings together the coordinators of initiatives and their government counterparts for exchanging information. The group’s role includes ensuring that, both from a user perspective as well as a policy perspective, the synergies between these initiatives is optimised and communicated.

1.1.3. DO LEGAL PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET?

The document *Careers guidance and inspiration, Guidance for general further education colleges and sixth form colleges*, issued by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Department for Education in March 2015 requires that colleges in England ensure that all their students have access to and are taking advantage of information about further study and work opportunities, including work and study abroad.

Other documents address more narrowly career mobility rather than learning mobility. The Welsh Government issued the document *Careers and the world of work: a framework for 11 to 19-year-olds in Wales* in 2008. The document asks providers to ensure that learners research a range of information about careers and the labour market, and “explore how opportunities in Britain, Europe and the rest of the world might impact upon their career ideas”. For Northern Ireland, the document *Preparing for success: Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance* issued in 2008 states that school leavers and adults will “have developed information handling skills and be aware of career

opportunities locally, nationally and internationally.”

1.1.4. ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY FOR IVET LEARNERS

Challenges related to providing learners with face-to-face guidance regarding mobility opportunities in England are reported to include a lack of funding for dedicated careers advisers and sufficient face-to-face sessions, time constraints and advice delivered in an impartial manner from an adviser that keeps up-to-date of all relevant mobility opportunities. In Northern Ireland there is no restriction on learners accessing face-to-face impartial guidance from careers advisers, who are up to date with mobility opportunities.

The policy of the UK Erasmus+ National Agencies, Ecorys and British Council, is aligned to the overall aims of Erasmus+, and will respond flexibly to changing UK requirements and priorities up to 2020. It will be monitored and reviewed annually in line with the National Agency Work Programme cycle, and comprise measures such as:

- Build evaluation baseline for marketing and communications activities;
- General promotion of Erasmus+ and Key Actions;
- Targeted promotion responding to emerging and existing gaps;
- Promotion of cross-sectoral approaches and projects; and
- Building learning networks.

To support the work of VET providers and enhance quality, the UK Erasmus+ National Agencies have also developed guidelines on how to apply for Erasmus+ funding and how to ensure quality mobility. UK guidelines have also been produced on recognising achievements during mobility periods.

1.1.5. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

The Erasmus+ National Agencies (Ecorys and British Council) monitor and review communications activities. They have a philosophy of continuous improvement and always look for ways in which to improve their service to their customers. This includes obtaining feedback from participants of information and guidance sessions. Monitoring and impact measurement take place in the following ways: (a) Capture and analysis of data for online and digital activities; (b) Capture of feedback.

The Erasmus+ National Agencies are required to report formally on a quarterly basis to the UK government on UK performance on international IVET as well as activities that include programme promotion and guidance to applicants. The UK National Agencies are also required to report on a yearly basis to the European Commission on the performance of the programme that includes numbers of types of international IVET. This report is supported by an audit of the National Agencies from an independent auditing body.

A UK Programme Board (made up of UK and Devolved Administration Government departments), Sector Consultative Groups and Country Advisory Groups (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) work to improve the provision of information and guidance in conjunction with the Erasmus+ National Agency function.

CollegesWales makes use of the Erasmus+ country statistics produced by the UK National Agency to monitor and increase participation in mobility programmes in Wales.

The Careers Service in Northern Ireland has achieved matrix accreditation. The matrix Standard is the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills' quality standard for organisations to assess and measure their advice and support services, which ultimately supports individuals in their choice of career, learning, work and life goals.

1.1.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON IVET INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY TO COMPANIES AND IVET INSTITUTIONS

Stakeholders mentioned in Section 1.1.1 maintain websites, distribute promotional and information material, hold and attend events, and act as contact centres dealing with direct questions.

The Erasmus+ National Agencies receive ongoing feedback on the quality of their assistance from stakeholders through regular sector consultative group meetings that aim to ensure assistance materials meet the need of the VET institutions and organisations.

1.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE" THEMATIC AREA

UK has in place several mechanisms to provide IVET learners with information and guidance for their international learning mobility. This provision is coordinated countrywide through regular meetings, such as

the UK European Coordination Group for VET Initiatives, which brings together the coordinators of initiatives and their government counterparts for exchanging information. Several activities are carried out by the UK Erasmus+ National Agencies, Ecorys and British Council, to improve the provision. Evaluation of provision and improvement actions takes place through a range of channels (capture of users' feedback, statistical monitoring, reporting).

PART 2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

2.1.1. EXISTENCE OF A POLICY ORIENTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

2.1.1.1. INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN THE CURRICULA OF IVET PROGRAMMES

The Northern Ireland Strategy on Apprenticeships (*Securing our Success: The Northern Ireland Strategy on Apprenticeships*) from June 2014 sets out a policy commitment that includes to "fully utilise opportunities for international placements and exchanges." It goes on to explain that the "Government will establish links with partner countries across Europe, and internationally, to provide opportunities for placements and exchanges through exploring the use of EU programmes, such as Erasmus+ and considering incentives for participating employers".

The Developing Scotland's Global Citizens project has produced a draft outward mobility strategy, which encourages colleges to create more accessible study abroad opportunities, and encourages secondary schools to raise the profile of mobility opportunities and emphasise the benefits of language skills.

The Scottish government's Outward Mobility Fund (OMF) that is available to university and college students is part of the lifelong learning strategy, and aims to provide Scottish students with support for new opportunities to study overseas by funding mobility projects.

2.1.1.2. TARGETS SET FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY IN IVET

Neither quantitative nor qualitative targets have been set countrywide in the UK. Mobility is the responsibility of individual organisations that may

set their own targets, although international learning mobility is encouraged and supported by national organisations, such as ColegauCymru (CollegesWales) in Wales, at VET level in further education colleges. In Northern Ireland, responses to a consultation on the development of a new Further Education Strategy are currently under consideration. This strategy includes a policy commitment for the further education colleges to enhance the learner experience, as well as the professional development and industrial knowledge of their staff through placements and exchanges with institutions in other countries.

Although there aren't any specific targets for international IVET mobility, there is an interest at the policy and institutional level to increase the current low level of mobility. Targets are set for programmes such as Erasmus+ and include targets for widening participation as well as the overall number. It is an objective for the UK National Agencies for the Erasmus+ programme to ensure maximum take up of the funding is achieved in the UK. To ensure this is achieved, the National Agencies promote the programme widely and offer support and guidance to UK organisations and institutions.

2.1.2. MEASURES TO SMOOTH THE DELIVERY OF VISAS AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO IVET LEARNERS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

No significant initiative has been taken at country level. The UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) and the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) provide some information about visa requirements and how to apply for one, but assistance with visa and study permits mainly come from colleges and other education and training providers. The administration teams of colleges vary in size, depending on the size of the institution. Colleges that focus on attracting foreign students may have a dedicated team dealing with admission, visas and other issues related to international students. These teams are established and funded by the individual providers.

All the requirements for applying for visas to the UK are available from the UK Government's visas and immigration website. Prospective students must meet certain criteria to be offered a visa, such as having been offered a place on a course of study, possess an adequate level of English language, and have sufficient finance to live and pay course fees.

2.1.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS THAT MAY HINDER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING IVET LEARNERS

The use of Erasmus+ mobility application forms and Europass documents have standardised the documentation processes of international mobility periods. User manuals and events organised by the Erasmus+ national agencies and the National Europass Centre are designed to assist the administrative work associated with organising international mobility periods.

2.1.4. MEASURES TO REMOVE THE LEGAL OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF INCOMING OR OUTGOING MINOR IVET LEARNERS

Trial projects using ECVET memoranda of understanding in which it is clarified which organisation(s) have responsibility for issues such as travel, accommodation, and insurance for travel, health and work, have taken place. Clearly defined responsibilities along with the fact that accompanying staff take part in mobility periods abroad in accordance with Erasmus+ regulations, help organise mobility periods abroad for young people under the age of 18.

2.1.5. SOCIAL AND LABOUR PROTECTION OF APPRENTICES AND IVET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING MOBILITY

Social security

EU and European Economic Area (EEA) nationals qualify for free National Health Service (NHS) treatment. The UK has reciprocal health care agreements with certain other countries as well. Nationals from other countries must take out health insurance to cover medical care²⁸⁶.

To be eligible for maternity leave payment, the mother must be a UK resident and have worked for 26 weeks and earn in excess of £112 per week²⁸⁷.

Employees and apprentices aged over 22, and earning more than £10,000 per year in the UK will automatically be enrolled onto a pension scheme in

²⁸⁶ (a) *Who Pays? Determining responsibility for payments to providers*, NHS England, 2013; (b) Health and Social Care Act 2012.

²⁸⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave>

which both the employer and employee contribute to the pension pot²⁸⁸.

Labour protection

When employing a young person as an apprentice, UK employers have a responsibility to provide the same protection for their health, safety and welfare as for other employees. If an employer currently employs a young person, or has done so in the last few years, their existing risk management arrangements should be sufficient if a new young person is of a broadly similar level of maturity and understanding, and has no particular needs. If employing a young person for the first time, or employing one with particular needs, an employer will need to review their risk assessment, taking into account the specific factors for young people before they start their apprenticeship²⁸⁹.

2.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES" THEMATIC AREA

UK IVET policy promotes the integration of international mobility experiences into the curricula of IVET programmes. However the country has not set target for international mobility in IVET. Also, no significant measures have been taken at country level to facilitate IVET learners' international mobility whether through smoothing the delivery of visas and study permits to third country nationals, alleviate the administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility, or ease the movement of outgoing minor learners. In future, progress in this area could be made through setting countrywide targets for international mobility in IVET (e.g. promoting the EU 2020 IVET mobility benchmark of 6% learners having achieved at least a two-week learning period abroad). It could also be checked, e.g. through users/stakeholders survey, whether there are needs for support measures to assist incoming and outgoing IVET learners coping with the possible legal and administrative issues they might be faced with.

²⁸⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/what-is-auto-enrolment>

²⁸⁹ See the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and the website of the Health and Safety Executive

PART 3. RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

3.1.1. APPROACH TO THE RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

3.1.1.1. REGULATION BY LAW OR CASE BY CASE TREATMENT?

The decision to recognise learning completed abroad is taken by individual learning providers in the UK. No uniform national mechanism of recognition of learning has been agreed upon. The process of recognition of learning is influenced by independent awarding organisations who design qualifications, and rules of combination of learning and credit within national qualifications frameworks. The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) allows for formative and summative recognition of learning, and a Recognition of Prior Learning Toolkit was developed by the SCQF Partnership to assist this process. The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)²⁹⁰ rules are currently under review, and may result in more freedom for awarding organisations in creating qualifications, and less rigid regulations in terms of unitisation and credits. ECVET pilot projects have been experimented with transfer of learning and credits across borders.

3.1.1.2. EASINESS OF ACCESS TO RECOGNITION OF LEARNING ACQUIRED ABROAD BY IVET LEARNERS

Learning acquired abroad by IVET learners involved in international learning mobility may be recognised, but the process is felt by users as somewhat difficult. The processes of recognition are not automatic and standardised nationally within each of the four education jurisdictions nor, indeed, across the UK. The effectiveness and ease of recognition is therefore dependent on how well providers' processes and the learning acquired are aligned with the requirements and regulations of awarding organisations and national qualifications frameworks in the UK.

3.1.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The recognition approach in place in the country applies to:

- Courses

²⁹⁰ The national credit transfer system for education qualification in England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

- Credit points
- Units
- Modules
- Programmes
- Qualifications/diplomas/degrees

In principle, the systems of recognition allow for learning to be recognised for all the above components; however, in practice, actual recognition of IVET acquired abroad is not as common as envisaged when the systems of recognition were designed.

3.1.3. COUNTRYWIDE COORDINATION OF THE APPROACH TO RECOGNITION

No countrywide coordination exists currently. Four separate education systems exist in the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), so different recognition methods, authorities, qualifications frameworks and regulations exist within the UK. Ecorys (the joint Erasmus+ national agency) coordinates a team of ECVET Experts (which includes members from the National Contact Points for each of the four countries of the UK, as well as independent VET experts). This Expert team promotes the use of ECVET nationally through workshops, events and direct support visits to VET stakeholders to explain how they can use ECVET. However, ECVET pilot projects have not resulted in a standard national, or UK-wide, and compulsory, mechanism of recognition. UK NARIC provides an informed opinion of the comparable levels of completed national qualifications from abroad to the UK systems of education, but final decisions regarding recognition of foreign credentials are taken at institutional discretion.

3.1.4. TIME FRAME FOR THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

UK VET providers operate with a high level of autonomy, and the timeframe to decide on recognition of learning acquired abroad is set by the learning provider.

3.1.5. VISIBILITY OF CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

3.1.5.1. ACTIONS TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE CONTACT POINTS FOR INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION

There is no policy actions aimed to establish or make more visible contact points where IVET learners could obtain information on how learning

outcomes and qualifications acquired abroad can be recognised and certified. Recognition of learning is coordinated through established channels within individual learning providers. As part of Erasmus+, the work plan envisions actions to make the ECVET Experts more visible, however the ECVET Experts team works with institutions, and not directly with learners.

3.1.5.2. EVALUATION OF THE VISIBILITY POLICY

There is no national visibility policy, so no evaluation thereof.

3.1.6. USE OF EU TOOLS FOR VISIBILITY, TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The National Europass Centre provides information about the Europass Mobility Document and how to use it. The Centre also maintains the online database where the mobility document is produced by registered sending and host organisations. The Europass Mobility Document describes and shows the skills gained during individuals' placements abroad. It records the linguistic, practical, IT, personal, social, work-based and 'soft' skills that the participant has gained during a placement. Host organisations describe the skills and competences an individual has gained as a result of the experience, and record these in the Europass Mobility Document.

From October 2015 the Unique Learner Number (ULN) has been included as part of the Europass Mobility System. A section has been included in the European Mobility Registration System along with appropriate guidance for users to reflect this. The ULN is provided by the UK Learning Records Service (an agency of the Skills Funding Agency) and is initially sourced for the learner by the learning provider and then matched to the learner by subsequent learning providers. The ULN is used by Awarding Organisations to allocate qualification achievements.

The National Europass Centre provides information about the Certificate Supplement (CS), and assists UK awarding organisations wishing to use the Supplement to describe their qualifications. UK awarding organisations design and award qualifications, and work independently of the state. There is no requirement for awarding organisations to use the CS in the UK, but a handful of organisations do publish the CS on their websites. A UK CS template was developed by the National Europass Centre in the UK after consulting UK awarding organisations.

There is no legal requirement for UK VET providers and awarding organisations to use ECVET as a tool for recognition and visibility of periods of learning abroad. However, a team of ECVET experts coordinated by Ecorys and the British Council are available to present ECVET and assist organisations wishing to use the system. A number of organisations in the UK have trialled the use of ECVET elements through pilot projects. The aims of the ECVET activities in the UK are as follows: (a) To continue to raise awareness of ECVET to key stakeholders, culminating in a UK conference on ECVET to celebrate the work of Experts and highlight best practice by practitioners; (b) To promote and encourage organisations involved in mobility to use ECVET in geographical mobility, linking ECVET to Erasmus+; (c) To provide specific support to organisations in understanding ECVET within the UK context via a suite of guidance materials, events and ad hoc support visits; (d) To consolidate the work of ECVET in the UK and to encourage ECVET principles are embedded into organisations management systems for geographical mobility; (e) To develop an ECVET community of practice within the UK.

National qualifications frameworks in the UK are benchmarked to the EQF²⁹¹. The frameworks require qualifications to be unitised and credit-based. Education and training providers subsequently have the possibility to recognise learning outcomes and transfer credit from abroad.

Formal VET programmes in the UK are based on learning outcomes. ECVET projects in the UK have experimented with recognition of learning outcomes across borders.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "RECOGNITION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES" THEMATIC AREA

UK has mechanisms for recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET learners. The UK approach makes use of all existing EU tools for visibility, transfer and recognition (i.e. the Europass Mobility Document and Certificate Supplement, ECVET, National qualification frameworks, and the Learning Outcomes approach). It takes into account the range of learning components considered in this review, i.e. courses, credit points, units, modules, programmes and qualifications / diplomas / degrees. However, the UK approach to recognition fails to meet several criteria of the reference indicator. It is not coordinated countrywide, and has no regulatory time frame for processing recognition requests. No policy has been put in place to make visible to users the contact points where they

²⁹¹ Qualifications can cross boundaries:

http://www.rewardinglearning.org.uk/docs/regulation/guidance/cross_boundaries_leaflet.pdf

can get information on recognition. Finally the recognition process seems to be felt as difficult by users: learning completed as part of a period of study abroad may be more easily recognised at one education and training provider than another. Addressing these issues in future could be a good way to improve IVET international mobility in the UK.

PART 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

4.1. DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY STRUCTURES AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4.1.1. PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1.1. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES AND IVET PROVIDERS IN THE CREATION OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

Information and assistance about possibilities for establishing partnerships for mobility is distributed as printed material, via websites, at events, seminars and webinars by Erasmus+ and ECVET agencies in the UK at events and through online and printed information material.

4.1.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

Feedback is provided by national steering groups such as the UK European Coordination Group for VET Initiatives, which brings together the coordinators of initiatives and their government counterparts for exchanging information. The group's role includes ensuring that, both from a user perspective as well as a policy perspective, the synergies between these initiatives is optimised and communicated.

4.1.2. FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

4.1.2.1. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

4.1.2.1.1. ACTIONS TO FUND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF IVET LEARNERS

Financial support to IVET learners is provided within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme. Under the programme, organisations applying to send VET learners may receive a student grant to contribute to the costs that can be incurred on an international mobility placement. These costs

include contributions to VET learners' travel and subsistence as well as contributions to the organisations management costs. Funding is set at European level and is based on lump sums and unit costs and varies depending on the numbers of VET learners.

4.1.2.1.2. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE IVET LEARNERS WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Erasmus+ National Agencies (Ecorys and British Council) monitor and review activities performed as part of their work plan. They have a philosophy of continuous improvement and always look for ways in which to improve their service to their customers. Monitoring and impact measurement take place in the following ways: (a) Capture and analysis of data for online and digital activities; (b) Capture of feedback. A number of guidance documents and events are given to organisations to successfully manage a mobility project. The National Agencies reports on these activities on a quarterly basis to the UK government and yearly to the European Commission.

4.1.2.2. SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS AND STAFF

4.1.2.2.1. ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPANIES, INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF WITH SUPPORT FOR ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

Eligible organisations are encouraged to apply for Erasmus+ funding for periods of learning and training abroad. In Scotland, organisations such as Scotland Goes Global also provide information, advice and guidance, as well as a study abroad module to be delivered in schools and colleges. The study abroad module is often delivered by a young person with experience of studying abroad, and aims to raise students' understanding of why they should consider going global, either locally by opening up their minds to people in their community who might be from other cultures or online opportunities, or how they might go about trying to set themselves apart from the crowd by studying abroad as part of their future college or university choices.

4.1.2.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISING MOBILITY PROJECTS

The Erasmus+ National Agencies (Ecorys and British Council) monitor and review activities performed as part of their work plan. They have a philosophy of continuous improvement and always look for ways in which to improve their service to their customers. Monitoring and impact measurement take place in the following ways: (a) Capture and analysis

of data for online and digital activities; (b) Capture of feedback. Evaluation also takes place at organisational and institutional level in the four nations within the UK. The Erasmus+ National Agencies are required to report formally on a quarterly basis to UK government on UK performance on international IVET as well as activities that include programme promotion and guidance to applicants. The UK National Agencies are also required to report on a yearly basis to the European Commission on the performance of the programme that includes numbers of types of international IVET. This report is supported by an audit of the National Agencies from an independent auditing body.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CRITERIA OF THE INDICATOR FOR THE "PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING" THEMATIC AREA

UK has in place actions for funding IVET learners for their international mobility, and providing companies and IVET institutions with support for creating partnerships / networks, and arranging international mobility projects. These actions are evaluated, with exception however of the support to creating partnerships and networks, which is simply subject to peer's feedback. It could be made sure in future that all policies in this area are specifically subjected to full-fledged evaluation, including recommendations implemented and translated into improvement of next generation of policies.

PART 5. SYNTHESIS - POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In the thematic area of Information and Guidance, UK has in place several mechanisms to provide IVET learners with information and guidance for their international learning mobility. This provision is coordinated countrywide. Several activities are carried out by the UK Erasmus+ National Agencies, Ecorys and British Council, to improve the provision. Evaluation of provision and improvement actions takes place through a range of channels (capture of users' feedback, statistical monitoring, reporting).

Regarding the area of Administrative and Institutional Issues, UK IVET policy promotes the integration of international mobility experiences into the curricula of IVET programmes. However the country has not set target for international mobility in IVET. Also, no significant measures have been taken at country level to facilitate IVET learners' international mobility whether through smoothing the delivery of visas and study permits to

third country nationals, alleviate the administrative burdens induced by arranging mobility, or ease the movement of outgoing minor learners. In future, progress in this area could be made through setting countrywide targets for international mobility in IVET (e.g. promoting the EU 2020 IVET mobility benchmark of 6% learners having achieved at least a two-week learning period abroad). It could also be checked, e.g. through users/stakeholders survey, whether there are needs for support measures to assist incoming and outgoing IVET learners coping with the possible legal and administrative issues they might be faced with.

In the area of Recognition of Learning Outcomes, UK has mechanisms for the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad by IVET learners. The UK approach makes use of all existing EU tools for visibility, transfer and recognition (i.e. the Europass Mobility Document and Certificate Supplement, ECVET, National qualification frameworks, and the Learning Outcomes approach). It takes into account the range of learning components considered in this review, i.e. courses, credit points, units, modules, programmes and qualifications / diplomas / degrees. However, the UK approach to recognition is not coordinated countrywide, and has no regulatory time frame for processing recognition requests. No policy has been put in place to make visible to users the contact points where they can get information on recognition. Finally the recognition process seems to be felt as difficult by users. Addressing these issues in future could be a good way to improve IVET international mobility in the UK.

Finally, regarding Partnerships and funding, UK has in place actions for funding IVET learners for their international mobility, and providing companies and IVET institutions with support for creating partnerships / networks, and arranging international mobility projects. These actions are evaluated, with exception however of the support to creating partnerships and networks, which is simply subject to peer's feedback. It could be made sure in future that all policies in this area are specifically subjected to full-fledged evaluation, including recommendations implemented and translated into improvement of next generation of policies.

CHAPTER 8. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the method that was followed to set up the maps, indicators, scorecards, overview tables and country fiches.

8.1. Maps

The maps are aimed to feature the variety of countries' situations with regard to IVET mobility issues. They were developed following the basics of *categorical data mapping (thematic mapping)*. The overall principle of thematic mapping is to represent the spatial distribution of categories (types) of a theme using numerical qualitative coding.

The procedure comprises four steps. In step 1, the various categories of a topic are listed and attributed numerical qualitative code numbers. For example, one category receives the code number 1 (e.g. countries with centralised provision information and guidance on mobility), while another category receives the code number 2 (e.g. countries with decentralised provision of information and guidance on mobility). These codes are numerical but not quantitative as 2 here is not the double of 1 (decentralisation does not equate to two times centralisation). In step 2, each geographical area to be represented is attributed the code number of the category to which it belongs (for example all countries where provision is decentralised receive the code number 2). In step 3, on the list of geographical areas with respective code numbers, each code number is assigned a distinct colour (all areas with same code number thus receive the same colour). In step 4, the map is produced (either manually or using a mapping software), with each geographical area receiving the colour attributed to its categorical code number.

It has to be outlined that, unless otherwise notified, and even when gradation in colour is used for two or more categories, colours and their gradations should not be interpreted as a relation of order (category A is "more something" or "something less" than category B). Once again, different colours or nuances just mean different categories, nothing more.

Finally, since maps on the one hand, and indicators / scorecards / overview tables on the other hand have their own distinctive objectives and specific logics while colours could be used for each of both tool groups, the colours used for maps were different from those used for indicators / scorecards / overview tables, so as to avoid any

misinterpretation.

8.2. Indicators, scorecards and overview tables

Indicators are aimed at identifying countries' performance with regard to developing IVET mobility along the lines prescribed by the "*Youth on the move*" Recommendation. The method used to build the indicators is the "*Bologna Scorecard*", which was set up in 2005 by the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) for the monitoring of the Bologna Process²⁹². The Bologna Scorecard was also the method used by Eurydice (though with some adaptations) to build the indicators for the Mobility Scoreboard for Higher Education²⁹³. This method was also adopted for the IVET Mobility Scoreboard, in order to keep consistency with these previous works.

The basic principles of the Bologna Scorecard are presented in Section 8.2.1 below. Sections 8.2.2 to 8.2.5 present the outputs which the method allows for. Section 8.2.6 addresses the comparability issue.

²⁹² *Bologna Process Stocktaking*, Report from a working group appointed by the Bologna Follow-up Group to the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, Bergen, 19-20 May 2005.

<http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/Documents/BPStocktaking9May2005.pdf>

²⁹³ European Commission – Eurydice (2013), *Towards a Mobility Scoreboard: Conditions for Learning Abroad in Europe*,

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/162EN.pdf

8.2.1. Reference method: the *Bologna Scorecard*

The method²⁹⁴ is based on five principles. An indicator is set for each thematic area of interest (a). Each indicator is based on several criteria which, when all fully met, represent the best possible situation in the area of interest, i.e. the reference goal to be reached (b). As a criterion might not be fully met, five possible levels of performance ("benchmarks") are defined for each criterion (c). The benchmarks are colour-coded (d) as shown in Table 8.1. A score is attributed to each benchmark (e) as also shown in the table.

Table 8.1. Benchmarks for criteria of indicators	
Scores and colour codes	Interpretation
5	Green: Excellent performance
4	Light green: Very good performance
3	Yellow: Good performance
2	Orange: Some progress has been made
1	Red: Little progress has been made yet

For example, in the 2005 BFUG report, the criterion "Stage of development of quality assurance system" used for the area "Quality assurance" was defined as shown in Table 8.2.

²⁹⁴ The general form of the model can be described as follows:

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l}
 \forall C: C \rightarrow (S_{1_1}, S_{1_2}, \dots, S_{1_K}, S_{2_1}, S_{2_2}, \dots, S_{2_K}, \dots, S_{I_1}, S_{I_2}, \dots, S_{I_K}) / \\
 1 \leq S_{i_k} \leq B, \quad S_{i_k} \in \mathbb{N}, \quad B \in \mathbb{N} \\
 \text{and} \\
 S_i = \frac{\sum_{k=1}^K S_{i_k}}{K} \\
 S_C = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^I S_i}{I} \\
 \text{where} \\
 S_{i_k} \text{ represents the score in criterion } k \text{ of indicator } i; \\
 B, \text{ the maximum number of benchmarks per criterion} \\
 (B \text{ is constant} = 5 \text{ in the Bologna Scorecard}); \\
 S_i, \text{ the average score in indicator } i; \\
 K, \text{ the number of criteria for indicator } i \\
 (K \text{ may vary across indicators}); \\
 S_C, \text{ the overall average score obtained by country } C; \\
 I, \text{ the total number of areas of interest in the Scoreboard.}
 \end{array} \right.$$

Table 8.2. Definition of a criterion in terms of benchmarks Example of Criterion “Stage of development of quality assurance system” for Action line “Quality assurance”	
5	A Quality Assurance system is in operation at national level and applies to all Higher Education (as defined in the Lisbon Recognition Convention), with responsibilities of bodies and institutions clearly defined - Fully functioning dedicated QA agency in place, <u>OR</u> - Existing agencies have QA as part of responsibility
4	QA system is in operation, but it is not applied to all programmes
3	- Legislation or regulations prepared, awaiting implementation, <u>OR</u> - Existing system is undergoing review/ development in accordance with Bologna action lines
2	- Preliminary planning phase, <u>OR</u> - No QA system in place yet, but initial debate and consultation has begun
1	No QA system in place and no plan to initiate

It is therefore possible to set:

- For each country (see Table 8.3)
 - A scorecard;
 - An average score per indicator (indicator’s score);
 - An overall average score (average of indicators’ scores); and
- For the set of countries monitored
 - Tables of country *categorisation* and *distribution* per indicator (see Tables 8.8 and 8.9);
 - Overview tables (see Tables 8.10 to 8.13).

8.2.2. Scorecard, indicator’s score and overall average score

Table 8.3 gives an illustration of a scorecard and how indicators’ scores and overall average scores are calculated.

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Table 8.3. Example of a scorecard with average scores per indicator and an overall average score for a country (Based on two indicators, i.e. I1 with 4 criteria and I2 with 2 criteria)			
Indicators	Criteria	Performance levels observed	Scores attributed
Indicator 1 (I1)	Criterion 1.1		1
	Criterion 1.2		5
	Criterion 1.3		2
	Criterion 1.4		4
	<i>Average score for I1</i>		3 $= (1+5+2+4)/4$
Indicator 2 (I2)	Criterion 2.1		5
	Criterion 2.2		3
	<i>Average score for I2</i>		4 $= (5+3)/2$
Overall average score for country			3.5* $= (3+4)/2$

* Any score greater than 3 and less than 4 would yield the light green colour.

8.2.3. Particular cases

The method is flexible and can be adapted to particular cases, i.e. (a) when a criterion cannot be split into five benchmarks; and (b) detailed information on the actual performance levels is missing.

8.2.3.1. Case of incomplete number of benchmarks

This is the case in which the criterion can be split in three or four benchmarks only instead of five, and information on the identified levels of performance is available. The reference procedure applies except that any non-defined level of performance is disregarded. For example, in Table 8.4 below, Criterion 1 is defined with 4 benchmarks only.

Table 8.4.**Example of an indicator with two criteria among which one is defined with 4 levels of performance only**

	Criterion 1- A mechanism is in place	Criterion 2 – The mechanism is evaluated
5	Mechanism in operation with full-scale implementation	Mechanism is monitored, recommendations are drawn, implementation and results of recommendations are followed-up
4	Mechanism in operation with partial / incomplete implementation	Mechanism is monitored and recommendations are drawn, but no follow-up of implementation and results
3		Mechanism is monitored but no recommendations are drawn
2	No mechanism in place but preliminary preparation has begun, for example initial debate, consultation, preliminary design, planning, etc.	No evaluation at all but preliminary preparation (initial debate, consultation, design, planning, ...) to set one has begun
1	No mechanism in place and no plans to initiate any	No evaluation and no plan to initiate any

The country will anyway receive a mark for each criterion. The indicator's average score (and hence all other ensuing outputs, i.e. the overall average score, the country categorisation, etc.) can then be processed normally following the reference procedure. Table 8.5 provides an example.

Table 8.5.**Example of an average score for an indicator with two criteria among which the first one has no benchmark 3**

Indicator	Criteria	Performance levels	Scores
Indicator	Criterion 1		5
	Criterion 2		3
	Indicator's average score		4 =(5+3)/2

8.2.3.2. Case of lack of information on the actual levels of performance

If detailed information on the actual levels of performance for a criterion is systematically missing in most countries, the criterion can be expanded

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in only two benchmarks (instead of five), i.e. “Met” or “Not met” (Table 8.6).

Table 8.6. Benchmarks for criteria for which information on the actual levels of performance is missing	
5	Criterion met
1	Criterion not met

The average scores per indicator and the overall average scores are processed the same way as in the reference method (Table 8.7).

Table 8.7. Example of information on actual levels of performance missing for all criteria – Scorecard, average scores per indicator and overall average score (Example based on two indicators, i.e. I1 with 4 criteria and I2 with 2 criteria)			
Indicators	Criteria	Performance levels	Scores
Indicator 1 (I1)	Criterion 1.1		1
	Criterion 1.2		5
	Criterion 1.3		5
	Criterion 1.4		5
	Average score for I1		4 $= (1+5+5+5)/4$
Indicator 2 (I2)	Criterion 2.1		5
	Criterion 2.2		1
	Average score for I2		3 $= (5+1)/2$
Overall average score for country			3.5 $= (4+3)/2$

8.2.4. Country categorisation and country distribution per indicator

Countries' average scores for an indicator allow for setting a country categorisation for this indicator (Table 8.8). Categories represent closeness/distance with respect to the reference goal. Closeness is maximum in the dark green category, and decreases downwards.

Table 8.8. Example of a country categorisation table for an indicator (Countries' positions result from countries' average scores for this indicator)		
	Countries per category	
Degree of closeness / distance to full implementation of Recommendation		Average EU 28
		Average EU 28+IS+NO
	Austria, Croatia, etc.	

This information can also be presented in the form of a *Country distribution Table* (Table 8.9).

Table 8.9. Example of a country distribution table for an indicator		
	Number of countries by performance level	
Degree of closeness / distance to full implementation of Recommendation		Average EU 28
		Average EU 28+IS+NO
	2 countries	
	3 countries	
	4 countries	
	20 countries	
	1 country	

Presenting in terms of distribution avoids having to name countries (which however veils in which countries exactly action would need to be taken), but still allows for assessing whether the majority of countries is in rather good or instead critical situation, and the overall amount of needed efforts ahead.

8.2.5. Overview of countries' performance

Countries' performance over all indicators can be synthesised in overview tables. Four types of overview tables can be set up.

The first type of overview table presents all countries, detailing for each of them the average performance for each indicator, and the country's overall average performance (Table 8.10). The table also presents the

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average performance for the whole group of countries monitored.

Table 8.10. Overview of countries' performance across indicators (Example)				
	Indicator 1	Indicator 2	...	Country overall average performance
Country A				
Country B				
⋮				
Average EU 28				
Average EU 28+IS+NO				

The second type of overview table is a bit more detailed. It presents, on top of the abovementioned information, the performance of countries for each criterion of each indicator (Table 8.11).

Table 8.11. Overview of countries' performance across indicators and criteria (Example)						
	Indicator 1	Criterion 1.1	Criterion 1.2	Indicator 2	...	Country overall average performance
Country A						
Country B						
⋮						
Average EU 28						
Average EU 28+IS+NO						

The third type of overview table present countries by categories of overall average performance (Table 8.12).

Table 8.12.								
Country categorisation in terms of overall average performance (Example)								
Levels of overall average performance		Countries						
		Country G, Country P	<table><tr><td>Average EU 28</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Average EU 28+IS+NO</td><td></td></tr></table>		Average EU 28		Average EU 28+IS+NO	
	Average EU 28							
	Average EU 28+IS+NO							
		Country Y, Country M, etc.						
		Country B, Country F, etc.						
	Country A, Country D, etc.							
	Country C							

Finally, Table 8.12 can also be presented in terms of country distribution (Table 8.13)

Table 8.13. Country distribution in terms of overall average performance (Example)								
Levels of overall average performance		Number of countries						
		2 countries	<table><tr><td>Average EU 28</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Average EU 28+IS+NO</td><td></td></tr></table>		Average EU 28		Average EU 28+IS+NO	
	Average EU 28							
	Average EU 28+IS+NO							
		3 countries						
		14 countries						
	10 countries							
	1 country							

8.2.6. The comparability issue

The method is essentially targeted at checking a country's situation against a reference goal. It aims to measure the distance between an actual position and a reference, i.e. the distance at which a country stands from a reference performance which it is supposed to reach. As outlined in the BFUG 2005 report²⁹⁵, although this method allows for a broad comparative picture, its comparability potential is limited as it is not designed to make comparisons between countries. Beyond the criterion level, two countries may reach the same average score/colour for an indicator but through different combinations of achievement per criteria. This also holds true for overall average scores (see example in Table 8.14). Therefore, it should not be expected too much of the Scoreboard in terms of cross-country comparability.

Table 8.14. Example of countries with contrasted profiles but similar scores per indicator and same overall average score					
		Country 1		Country 2	
Indicators	Criteria	Performance levels	Scores	Performance levels	Scores
Indicator 1 (I1)	Criterion 1.1		1		3
	Criterion 1.2		5		3
	Criterion 1.3		2		3

²⁹⁵ Pages 6, 13 and 24.

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	Criterion 1.4		4		3
	Average score for I1		3		3
Indicator 2 (I2)	Criterion 2.1		5		3
	Criterion 2.2		3		5
	Average score for I2		4		4
Overall average score for country			3.5		3.5

8.3. Country fiches

Country fiches are aimed to identify country-specific policy suggestions which Member States could consider and take into account to better meet in future the requirements of the “*Youth on the move*” Recommendation. One fiche is set up for each EU Member State (for Belgium 3 fiches are set up corresponding to the three communities/regions); one for Iceland and one for Norway.

The country fiches are set up in three steps.

First, country data on IVET-mobility-related policies and structures in countries are collected. The main data collection channel used is ReferNet. Complementary sources can be used as well, e.g. existing reports on specific IVET-mobility-related issues. Cedefop submits to ReferNet requests for country data, processes the responses, requests for the necessary clarifications and complements, and finally receives data validated by a country representative.

Then, based on the information collected, countries’ situations are analysed against the requirements of the “*Youth on the move*” Recommendation. The analysis leads to outlining countries’ strengths but also weaknesses in terms of the requirements set out by the Recommendation.

Finally, based on the weaknesses observed, suggestions are formulated for future country progress towards the full implementation of the Recommendation.

This approach translates in the structure of fiches. Each fiche is divided into Parts, one Part per thematic area of the Recommendation. Each Part contains two Sections, the first one devoted to describing the country’s structures and policy initiatives in the area considered, and the second

focusing on the analysis of country's strengths and weaknesses with reference to the Recommendation. At the end of the fiche, a "*Synthesis – Policy Suggestions*" section points out steps that the country could consider for further progress.