



**PROPOSAL FOR A CHARTER OF EUROPEAN REGIONS AND LOCAL  
AUTHORITIES TO PROMOTE THE MOBILITY  
OF STUDENTS AND APPRENTICES IN PROFESSIONAL TRAINING**

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## **1. Relevance and justification of the importance of mobility**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century society, mobility has acquired a determining relevance for people involved in the processes of teaching, training and apprenticeships.

The inherent characteristics of society and the global economy entail the need to have access to adequate training systems for the preparation of professionals and technicians, researchers and workers and endow them with the appropriate capacity to participate and function in a job market which is becoming increasingly more international.

In order to achieve this, training activities and experiences of mobility of training that facilitate the acquisition of social, linguistic, technical and cultural skills should be included in the educational and training processes.

Until now, the main players involved in mobility actions in Europe have been university students. The number of participants in the ERASMUS programme and the enormous popularity of this Community Programme are proof of this.

The European Parliament has recognised the importance of mobility and has highlighted the need to extend its benefits to a significant number of students and apprentices undergoing professional training, as well as to workers and young researchers.

With this in mind, the new Community Programme ILLP/ Integrated Lifelong Learning Programme is in line with this political orientation and proposes the inclusion of a much greater number of participants from these groups in mobility of training actions in the 2007/2013 period.

## **2. Growing role of the regions and local authorities**

Over the last 30 years, a general characteristic of the innovation in European training and education systems has been a growing decentralisation and new competences acquired by regional authorities and other local authorities in the organisation of these systems.

The degree of this decentralisation is very varied and is linked to the power structure of each Member State. The level can range from the simple decentralisation of the organisation and implementation of training and education mechanisms and resources (states with a centralistic nature) to exercising general and complete competence not only regarding the management and organisation but also in its definition and content (confederal and federal states).



In all cases throughout Europe, the intervention of the intermediate authorities has been observed between the training centres and the national relevant ministries that are acquiring a fundamental relevance in the development and innovation of the mechanisms that operate the training and education system at local level.

These authorities can be the regional ministries that form part of the authorities directly elected by the citizens living in this region, or authorities at a level higher than local authorities (inter-municipal or others) with the function of sectoral management in a determined territory or even, in states with a bigger concentration of power, local decentralised delegations of the national ministries.

### **3. Contribution of the regions and local authorities to the development of mobility of training actions**

With regard to mobility, the participation of the said authorities, regardless of the extent of their competence, is constituted by essential agents who can act as intermediaries for promotion and development, as follows:

- Firstly, to guarantee the **internal transparency of the offer** of mobility between the potential users within the local framework of intervention.

Indeed, the information and dissemination of resources available to the mobility programme requires the active participation of the relevant public authorities who can guarantee that it be offered across the board and that the principle of equal opportunity be fully respected.

This transparency will also have an impact on the appropriate utilisation of the financial resources invested in the development of mobility, on its evaluation and application in accordance with effectiveness and efficiency criteria.

- Secondly, in order to facilitate the creation of a European framework that will facilitate the implementation of mobility of training projects under **conditions of security and quality**.

These quality and security criteria are listed in the *“European Quality Charter for Mobility”* (Recommendation nº 2006/961/EC of the European Parliament and Council, dated 16.12.06, relating to transnational mobility in the Community for the purposes of education and training). (1)

The development of mobility actions presupposes the setting up of the necessary conditions, so that the training centres and students can participate in these mobility actions under conditions of security and quality that are identical to those in force in their own national systems.



- Finally, the effective setting up of these conditions entails the creation of a **framework of external transparency** for the development of mobility actions between training centres and students throughout the European Union.

The regions and local authorities constitute an essential reference in order to guarantee the external transparency regarding the security and quality of the welcome given to all those who are considering developing mobility projects in their area. Thus, these authorities can organise common **cooperation networks** to serve all users of the mobility actions.

(1) European Quality Charter for Mobility, OJEU L 394 dated 30.12.2006.

#### **4. Organisation of mobility activities and function of the regions and local authorities**

Often the training centres, and to an even greater extent the individuals who are considering developing a mobility project, do not have sufficient information regarding the legal conditions or other important aspects concerning the area where they would like to develop the project in question.

It would therefore be appropriate to make available a trustworthy and objective interlocutor who would provide the knowledge and precise information needed in order to organise a mobility project. The regions and local authorities are, by definition, the privileged interlocutor to provide all types of legal information. They could also act as a go-between interlocutor between those centres wishing to participate in the mobility actions.

In addition, the regions and local authorities can also contribute very effectively to the organisation of mobility of training actions in a two-pronged manner:

- a) in the scope of the EU entity,
- b) in the geographical scope of their area of activity.

a) Within the framework of the EU, promoting cooperation among regional authorities and local authorities so that together they create mobility actions and projects and organise the exchange of students and apprentices in professional training, workers and adults following training courses, etc.

Three essential instruments exist to facilitate the intervention of the regions and local authorities in the promotion of mobility of training in Europe:

- Participation in Community programmes, particularly in ILLP/PAP and in other activities covered by the lines of transnational cooperation of the FSE and the FEDER.
- Participation in regional authority networks of a thematic nature on professional training and lifelong learning.



- Establishment of bilateral collaboration agreements for the development of mobility and the implementation of joint projects.

It should be added that the networks of the authorities and local authorities can also cooperate effectively with the sectoral organisations, particularly in mobility projects designed for students and apprentices in professional training. Thus, cooperation between the regions and sectoral organisations can, to a great extent, facilitate collaboration from business in many mobility projects.

b) Within its geographical territorial scope, through the development of actions targeting information, awareness and support for mobility of training projects. These actions can include, if required, orientation, accompaniment and training tasks geared towards the training centres or directly towards the young people and adults interested in participating in mobility activities.

In order that the regions and local authorities can successfully implement the necessary functions to generate mobility, they need to have access to the instruments needed to make this happen. To summarise, they are as follows:

- The legal instruments: basic competences for the management and organisation of training in their area.
- The financial instruments: specific budget items to finance the mobility projects and necessary accompaniment actions.
- The technical instruments: human resources to support the promotion and development of mobility activities in the training centres.

## **5. Certification of experiences in mobility of training**

A key aspect of mobility of training is the recognition of the training received within the framework of the activity in question.

The Commission has established instruments to facilitate the transparency, validation and accreditation of the training received within the framework of mobility of training activities. These are as follows:

- EUROPASS
- EQF
- ECVET

The development of their use and the ongoing improvement of such instruments would be expected to be, in the coming years, a key factor in increasing the attractiveness of mobility between the different groups following lifelong learning. Likewise, it will contribute specifically to the expansion and consolidation of the European training area.



In this open process, the regions and local authorities, within the scope of the competences granted in each case by Member States, will have an absolute capacity to intervene in order to facilitate the transparency of the training received within the mobility framework. Their intermediary function in achieving the mobility projects should make an effective contribution to the widespread utilisation of established Community instruments and to the recognition of the benefits that mobility of training brings to people and, also to businesses in the EU.

## **6. Conclusions**

The regions and local authorities, while exercising their functions and competences, are at the disposition of the authorities of the Member States and of the European Commission, to contribute to the promotion and development of mobility, particularly with regard to all those people who while not being university students still wish to have the experience of mobility of training within the scope of their lifelong learning.

This desire of the local authorities to collaborate will without a doubt have a beneficial effect on the mobility activities and will help to reach the goals set by the Council, the Parliament and the European Commission, to extend the benefits of mobility to a greater number of students and apprentices undergoing professional training, young researchers and adults following training courses and workers wishing to improve their training and qualifications by following courses in other countries of the European Union.

This document should be considered as a proposal for a Charter supporting mobility; its purpose is to highlight the commitment and contribution of the regions and local authorities with regard to mobility of training and their collaboration in attaining the goals by 2010, proposed by the EU in Lisbon, with regard to the development of lifelong learning and the establishment of a knowledge society on our continent.