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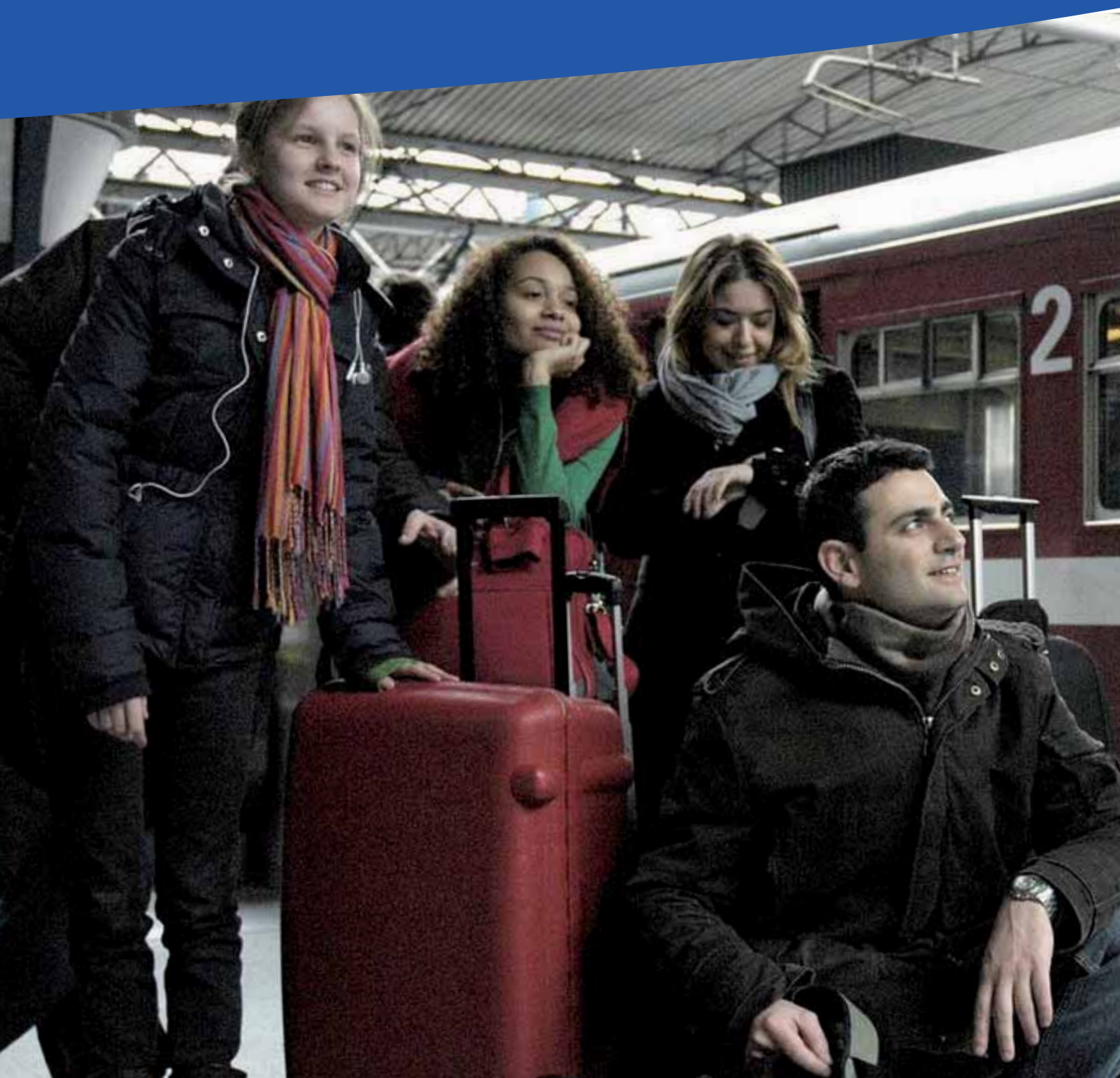
Education and Culture DG

The Magazine

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N°30

Europe in gear for more mobility



The Magazine 30

SUMMARY



Europe in gear for more mobility
PG 3



Conference on mobility:
new opportunities and wider horizons
PG 7



Study visits let's talk
PG 13



Migration in EU schools:
turning challenges into opportunities
PG 16



Erasmus Mundus
sets sail towards new horizons
of academic excellence
PG 18



Artists on the move
PG 20



Boosting cross-border volunteering in Europe
PG 23



Taking your training qualifications
abroad with you
PG 27



Languages and mobility
turning a dilemma into a virtuous circle
PG 30



Tempus flies to phase 4
of higher education cooperation
PG 32



Hands across the sea Europe's pivotal role in
international education
PG 34



Adult education a growing need
PG 38



European regions exchange good practice
in school education
PG 40



Measuring the success of education and train-
ing for individuals and for systems
PG 42



How good are Europe's universities
and how can you tell?
PG 46



2008
The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue
PG 48



Mobility for Active European Citizenship
PG 50



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European Documentation Centres
PG 54

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Europe in gear for more mobility

Everyone who wants to move, has the right to move. That's one basic principle that the EU not only guarantees its citizens. It goes further, and actively promotes movement. Mobility can bring multiple advantages on a personal level. It is also an important part of the flexibility Europe wants for its labour force. It is a vital advantage in an economy of knowledge and rapid change.

Mobility contributes to many important EU policy objectives, ranging from personal development and fostering a sense of EU citizenship to innovative thinking and linguistic ability.

What's more, mobility can bring:

- **Personal development:** it allows people to acquire new knowledge, learn from different sources, and test their own assumptions and competences in new situations. One of the obvious consequences is a boost to their skills and employability.
- **EU citizenship:** it breaks down barriers between people. Interacting with different cultures helps to find the common ground that binds Europeans together and the distinctions that make each of us unique.
- **Languages:** it promotes language learning, important both for building European integration and citizenship and also for the functioning of the single market. There is a close link between language and mobility: languages can be seen as a barrier to mobility but they may also provide the stimulus to travel, and be developed by wider exposure to new ways of expressing oneself.
- **Independent thought:** mobility triggers change and modernisation by provoking questions about established ways of seeing things. Institutions are opened up to a wider range of European and global influences, easing rigidities in national or local patterns, and ultimately leading to a higher quality of life.
- **Efficient exchanges among businesses:** mobility among enterprises can deliver benefits by promoting valuable clusters – as has occurred in Silicon Valley or the Paris fashion industry. Increased circulation of people within businesses strengthens Europe's competitiveness and capacity for innovation – and clustering today does not require proximity. The most remote regions and the smallest companies can be part of networks built around the mobility of individuals.



Mobility has not been Europe's forte. Compared to other leading economies, its workforce is reluctant to pursue new opportunities. But this pattern looks set to change. Young and educated Europeans are increasingly willing to move, and this is a trend that deserves encouragement across the widest range of society.

The Education and Culture Directorate General (DG) leads the way in convincing Europe's citizens of the merits of mobility. It places particular importance on the young, but promotes mobility right through the life-long learning cycle.

The Education and Culture DG promotes mobility in every form of personal development:

- *Comenius* supports mobility, networking and e-twinning at the level of secondary education;
- *Leonardo* promotes mobility of trainees and trainers in the vocational, education and training sector;
- *Erasmus* oversees university student exchanges – and is highly popular;
- *Erasmus Mundus* opens Europe up for higher education students and teachers across the world;
- *Grundtvig* supports mobility and exchanges in continuous learning for adults.

Through schemes such as Erasmus and Comenius, the DG brings mobility within reach of all stages of learning and personal development. It supports young people undertaking voluntary service abroad through its Youth in Action programme. It builds a sense of common citizenship by bringing together towns and local communities from across Europe as part of Europe for Citizens. The DG has also committed itself to improving mobility in the world of culture – a central objective of Member States when they launched the Open Method of Coordination on Culture last year. The common thread through the work of the DG is to support mobility with a purpose – mobility for learning, for Europe's competitiveness, for citizenship, and for artistic expression.

In the coming years, the DG intends to expand its work, both in scope and volume. The benefits of mobility for individuals and for Europe will be increasingly evident in tomorrow's knowledge-based economy. New techniques will become available to widen the scope and impact of mobility.

In particular, mobility must be thought of not just in terms of physically moving to another country, but of "virtual mobility", using new tools from communications technology to bring people and organisations within a mouse click of each other. For instance, the Comenius project's rapidly growing e-twinning actions between schools (<http://www.etwinning.net/ww/en/pub/etwinning/index2006.htm>) has been highly successful. The excitement this simple and cost-effective action has generated among pupils and teachers suggests many other possible applications in the future.



Odile Quintin,
Director General for
education and culture



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Conference
Quality in mobility
within the Lifelong
learning programme



CONFERENCE ON MOBILITY

new opportunities and wider horizons

Being mobile opens new opportunities for learning and working across Europe. So how far are EU students taking advantage by studying in other Member States? How much has staff mobility been able to improve educational organisations? How easily can qualifications gain recognition across the Member States? How many more opportunities could be created by pooling available resources? Answers to some of these questions emerged from the conference on “Quality in Mobility within the Lifelong Learning Programme” in Ljubljana last June.



Dr. Milan Zver, Minister of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia, and Mr Ján Figel, European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth with the European Lifelong Learning awardees.

Photographer: Nada Žgank

The conference, which took place on 13 June 2008, was organized by the Slovene National Agency, CMEPIUS, and the Ministry of Education and Sport, with the support of the European Commission. The event brought together more than 400 people with an interest in the subject from

all 31 countries involved in the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme, as well as countries getting ready to join it – at present Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.



...moving towards a sense of European identity...

The conference's broad agenda took account both of current achievements and future prospects. Today, it emphasised, many workers, teachers, students and researchers have already left their home country to explore new opportunities – a veritable “mobile force”. Their travels enrich Europe's labour market. At the same time, this mobility develops openness, flexibility and understanding among different cultures across the EU. Over and above the obvious economic benefits, the feeling of belonging to a united Europe may prove to be mobility's biggest benefit, it was suggested.

Studying abroad has become an important asset in today's labour market. Each year thousands of students, trainees, pupils and adult learners, as well as teaching staff and other professionals, experience new environments and develop language skills by taking part in Life-long Learning Programme actions. The programme dedicates over 70% of its total budget (€7 billion until 2013) to mobility actions. A good example of its work is the well-known “Erasmus” programme for students. But it also organises mobility actions for teachers, trainers and trainees, and its actions frequently offer new possibilities to marginalised groups.

- 450,000 young people, of which half were pursuing initial vocational training, were awarded Leonardo da Vinci mobility grants in 2000-2007
- 50,000 adult learners and staff, including 7,000 adult educators, took part in Learning Partnerships under the Grundtvig programme in 2000-2007
- 12,430 schools were involved in Comenius partnerships in 2006 alone
- 160,000 students and 26,000 teachers go abroad each year with the Erasmus programme

... mobility for teaching staff...

The conference also focused on mobility for education staff, and on the roles for policy and for individuals. It is important that teachers, trainers, professors and adult education staff are given the opportunity to see how teaching and training are conducted in other countries. That way they can bring new approaches to education and experience back home. One of the recommendations from the conference was for a quality charter that could advance this process, though key mechanisms including:

- integrating staff mobility into the development strategy of organisations
- designing courses that meet the needs of participating organisations
- identifying the impact of mobility on organisations and on the professional expertise of participants
- giving official recognition to professional development
- sharing feedback from participants and publishing outcomes

... behind barriers...

Having the right to move is one thing. Actually deciding to move is quite another, which depends on a huge range of factors, many of them intensely personal. Many people, for instance, come from families or backgrounds that have no tradition of changing location. Others work in an environment where travel is not encouraged. For many people, financial constraints, language problems, or even just reluctance to deal with unfamiliar administrative procedures are strong disincentives to a change of country. Concerns that previous work experience or qualifications may not be recognised abroad merely add to the reluctance to contemplate change.

Mrs Odile Quintin, Director General for Education and Culture
at the plenary session.
Photographer: Nada Žgank



But these considerations are often a problem of perception rather than reality. Many Europeans remain unaware of the support the EU already offers in terms of mobility, and, more importantly, of the work and study opportunities available to them abroad.

The conference formulated a number of key recommendations to address these problems. It underlined the need for a comprehensive strategy that would include:

- A communication strategy to inform citizens about mobility and its benefits
- More simple and user-friendly programme structures to suit the needs of target groups
- More funding to encourage mobility among people from the widest range of socio-economic backgrounds, accompanied by more systematic promotion of private sector sponsorship and new funding models such as European loan schemes for students.

...looking beyond the horizon...

Ján Figel', European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, set out a clear view of where mobility stands when he addressed the conference: "With only two years left in the 'Lisbon agenda decade', this is the perfect time to think about the future of its central policies beyond the horizon of 2010", he said. He insisted on the importance for European citizens of learning foreign languages. He also remarked that better recognition of qualifications abroad is necessary to further encourage mobility. The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System and the newly adopted European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning have been very successful, but it is necessary to go further, the Commissioner underlined.

Assessing how to go further was part of the agenda of the high-level group that the Commissioner set up in early 2008. Its focus was on how to boost mobility, in particular by targeting specific groups such as young entrepreneurs and artists. Maria Joao Rodriguez, who chaired the Forum, outlined the approach. She highlighted the merits of

- multiplying the opportunities for learning mobility
- organising European pathways for mobility
- strengthening the support conditions for learning mobility

...making mobility the norm...

The work ahead may seem daunting, but as Odile Quintin, Director General for Education and Culture, pointed out, "Erasmus is an example of how mobility can become the norm in a training pathway. I would like to see a similar development for staff training, vocational training and adult learning." She underlined the importance of using new tools to achieve this goal, going even further than creating schemes for recognising qualifications across borders (such as ECTS and ECVET - see pages 27 and 29 for details). Her vision extends to partnerships with the EU Member States and cooperation with the European Social Fund and the European Investment Bank. She also stressed the important role of national agencies in promoting mobility, as they are in direct contact with the public. In short, all resources available should be mobilised to ensure that, as Mrs Quintin puts it, "Mobility becomes the norm".

Mr Figel', European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth at the press conference.
Photographer: Nada Žgank



Winners of the Awards for Quality in Mobility

15 imaginative projects from all over the EU have identified some of the real promoters of mobility, and how mobility can broaden horizons, enhance skills and create opportunities.

The categories for the competition were Comenius for school education, Erasmus for higher education, Grundtvig for adult education, Leonardo da Vinci for vocational training, and the transversal programme 'Languages'. The five projects to claim gold were:

- A partnership between a Latvian and a Czech school in which pupils translated songs into each other's language and rehearsed together
- Intensive study programmes organised by the Portuguese Instituto Politécnico de Tomar and its partner universities
- A staff exchange scheme between a Danish fire services provider and its UK counterpart
- The Religious Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Training organised by the Centre Européen Juif d'Information in Brussels

- Lingu@net Europa Plus, a London-based project that guides learners in a choice of over 3,700 online learning resources

Milan Zver, Minister of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia, and Jan Figel', European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, handed out the European Lifelong Learning Awards for Quality in Mobility at the conference.

Detailed descriptions of the projects are available in German, English, French and Slovene in the "Mobility creates opportunities-European Success Stories" brochures.

Conference website:

• <http://www.qim.si/eng/>

Brochures "Mobility creates opportunities", with detailed descriptions of all the award-winning projects:

• http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/index_en.html

Press release "European Awards for Lifelong Learning recognise outstanding mobility projects" (on RAPID site):

• <http://europa.eu/rapid/>

Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP):

• <http://ec.europa.eu/llp>

2008 European Lifelong Learning Awards for Quality in Mobility
Photographer: Herta Adam



THE ERASMUS PROGRAMME: 20 YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENT

Established in 1987, Erasmus, the EU's flagship education and training programme for mobility and cooperation in higher education across Europe, continues to expand. A few figures give a feel for what it has achieved so far:

- **1.7 million** students have benefited from the programme since 1987
- **3,000** higher education institutions (or 90% of institutions in the participating countries) hold the Erasmus University Charter
- **160,000** students participated last year with another 20,000 following an Erasmus business placement as part of their studies
- **166,000** teachers have been supported to teach abroad since 1997 (university staff can now be supported to train abroad as well)
- **26,000** teachers participated last year

- **270** Erasmus Intensive Language Courses took place last year in 23 countries
- **18,000** Erasmus students benefited from Erasmus Intensive Language Courses before embarking on their studies abroad
- **270** intensive programmes were organised across Europe for higher education students and teachers
- **50** multilateral projects have been funded each year to develop curricula, modernise higher education, and to set up virtual campuses and co-operation between universities and enterprises
- **10** Thematic Networks promoted co-operation and innovation in areas of particular importance to European higher education

More information:

• http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/erasmus/index_en.html







Study visits

LET'S TALK

Over the past 30 years, study visits have provided a forum for specialists and decision makers to discuss education and training in Europe. They have given the people taking part the opportunity to exchange experience and to benefit from mutual learning.

Since the start of the EU Lifelong Learning Programme, the Commission has reinforced study visits and aligned their themes with the priorities of the Education and Training 2010 Work Programme and the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-13. These steps aim to turn study visits into an effective tool for policy cooperation and innovation.

Study visits bring together groups of 10-15 specialists and decision-makers in education and vocational training. Together, for three to five days, they study an aspect of lifelong learning or policy development in another country.

Between March and June 2008, the programme organised 154 visits as part of a pilot phase, bringing together over 1,500 specialists in education and training from 31 countries. Seventeen visits focused on vocational education and training, 121 on general education, and the others were relevant to both.

Following the latest call for applications in May, the programme will allocate its €3.65 million budget, enabling some 2,600 of the 4,600 applicants to take part in study visits over the course of 2008-2009.

Each year, Cedefop - the EU agency that coordinates study visits - analyses reports of what the participants learnt from their study visit. The examples in the following boxes ["Feedback"] illustrate the themes addressed by the visits and the benefits participants took away with them.

Feedback: Guidance in the region of Oresund (Denmark and Sweden, 2007)

Malmo University, a Swedish university offering a degree in career guidance, and Cirius, a department within the Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, organised

a study visit covering their national systems for offering career guidance to young people. After exchanging observations and comparing different approaches, the participants returned to their countries with new ideas to explore further. It emerged from the discussions that all countries involved were working towards a coherent, effective and integrated system for guiding young people, although they were all at different stages of its development.

Setting up a study visit: who does what?

A study visit can be initiated at local level by any professional. For instance, an education and training study visit can be hosted by institutions involved in education, vocational training, and teacher training, as well as guidance services, local educational administrations, trade unions or employer organisations.

The theme of the visit is proposed to national agencies which, in turn, select the participants. In the case of an education and training study visit, they will tend to include figures having an impact on education policy*, such as:

- directors of education institutions and guidance centres;
- head teachers, heads of departments and teacher trainers;





- representatives of local, regional and national authorities;
- educational and vocational training inspectors;
- representatives of companies, chambers of commerce or trade unions.

The same agencies are also responsible for running the study visits programme in their country.

This involves:

- launching calls for theme proposals and applications,
- defining national priorities for the themes addressed,
- organising evaluation and assessment procedures,
- selecting beneficiaries and managing the grant agreements
- providing information and support to the organisers
- disseminating and exploiting the results
- monitoring the implementation of the study visits in their countries

The Commission then oversees the management of the overall programme. Since 2008, it has merged the separate study visit initiatives and placed them under the coordination of Cedefop, the EU agency that takes care of:

- preparing the catalogue of events,
- coordinating calls for proposals on new study visits,
- overseeing the list of study visit participants,
- assessing the outcomes of each visit and its organisation,
- developing the programme's future

*Employers and trade unions play a decisive role in vocational training, where close links with businesses are of particular importance. For this reason, the Commission encourages their involvement in study visit programmes. Cedefop provides specific support, including seminars on themes of common interest and advice on the national agencies designed to support the participation of social partners.

Feedback: Sustainable development and institutional certification in education (Finland, 2008)

The Finnish education authorities set up a study visit focusing on the importance of education in sustainable development. It involved a case study of Muurame upper secondary school, the first Finnish school awarded a national certificate for its activity promoting sustainable development and environmental studies.

Participants admitted that although efforts for sustainable development were encouraged in the schools of all their countries, none had progressed so far as to establish an official accreditation process. Many viewed the criteria used by Finish schools to assess the progress made towards environmental sustainability as a useful tool to build on in similar initiatives in their own countries.

Impact of the programme

The visits give participants the chance to exchange ideas and experience related to their work, making them aware of how education and training systems operate abroad, and often generating ideas that can be exploited back home. Contacts made with foreign institutions with similar priorities and agendas are helpful subsequently when developing new projects. Contacts can also lead to follow-up activities such as partnerships. Hosting a study visit offers institutions a positive learning experience with the increased benefit of enhancing their profile.

Surveys suggest that participants find the knowledge, ideas and contacts they acquire during the study visit have a positive long-term effect on their work. In 2005 and 2006, more than three in four of them felt they had acquired new knowledge on the theme of the visit they attended, that they had become aware of new themes during the visit, and that they had established new contact networks. Most participants also found the study visit useful for their own development as well as that of their organisations.



Back home, organisations most frequently used the ideas acquired in study visits to introduce new activities and reforms in their vocational education and training systems, and to establish more international cooperation. The visits also have a marked effect on developing new approaches to services, new ways of learning, wider training or service offers, new policies, and new approaches in relations with employers and unions.

The experience is also rewarding for the host country, as it offers an opportunity to show off national assets and tackle problems of national interest. National and regional authorities stand to gain from providing financial and logistic support to their organisers.

Feedback: European cooperation- Intercultural dialogue (Estonia, 2008)

A study visit organised by the Rakvere Russian Gymnasium opened the eyes of its participants to a different interpretation of intercultural dialogue. It focused on Russian-speaking minority students learning in an Estonian-speaking environment. Many participants said they had previously considered intercultural dialogue as an element of international cooperation and it was the first time they had seen the concept used to integrate different cultures within one country.

Participants were invited to school lessons, and by discussing with their hosts and listening to the presentations, they grew more familiar with the environment of Rakvere Russian Gymnasium and revised their attitude towards intercultural dialogue. Fruitful discussions with staff and local authorities generated enthusiasm about future cooperation.

Feedback: e-learning clusters in Austria's upper secondary schools (Austria, 2008)

This study visit introduced the information technology facilities that Austria had implemented in schools as part of its e-learning initiative. Participants were impressed with the overall structure of the project and with the IT support it provided. They toured vocational schools and saw e-learning applied to business and media studies. Many participants identified ideas that could be implemented in schools in their own country.

The participants concluded that Europe would benefit from a joint "education highway" - an international organization that would store and develop electronic teaching material and software. After the study visit, participants were confident this would improve their country's education system and help bring European students closer together.

More information on education and training study visits and examples of good practice are available at:

➤ www.studyvisits.cedefop.europa.eu

MIGRATION IN EU SCHOOLS

turning challenges into opportunities

EU schools have increasing numbers of students from international backgrounds. Figures for the EU15 show that one in ten of 15 year-old school pupils were born abroad or had foreign parents. In primary schools, the proportion is even higher, at 15%. And the trend is growing rapidly in some countries. In Ireland, Italy and Spain, for instance, the proportion of pupils born abroad has tripled or even quadrupled since 2000. Some cities have seen a particularly strong growth in pupils from other backgrounds. Nearly half the school population in Rotterdam, Birmingham and Brussels comes from migrant families.

...opportunities...

This is in some respects a challenge. But it is also an opportunity. Migration can bring valuable cultural and educational elements to Europe's schools. Students and teachers can gain from being exposed to different viewpoints and perspectives. And in an increasingly globalised economy, EU citizens benefit from building up early in life the intercultural skills that will allow them to maintain tolerant and respectful dialogue with people from a range of different backgrounds.

The opportunity is not always being fully exploited, and challenges remain - and particularly for Europe's education systems. The European Commission's July 2008 Green Paper on Migration and Mobility reveals that children of migrants are having difficulties integrating into educational systems. They tend to do less well at school than their fellow pupils.

...challenges...

National data and international assessments such as the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study confirm this trend. Fewer children from migrant families enrol in pre-primary education, and those that do tend to do so at a later age. Migrant pupils are over-represented in vocationally oriented schools that typically do not lead to higher education. And on average, migrant pupils will leave school earlier. In consequence, relatively low numbers of migrant students complete university studies.

The combination of all these factors undermines the chances of young migrants finding work later in life. The social bonding between different groups that is necessary to form a cohesive society is also hindered. Even more alarming is the evidence from some countries that the situation actually gets worse from the first generation of migrant pupils to the second. It is clear that education is failing to help the incorporation of migrant communities.

One aspect of the green paper is an investigation of the problems faced by these children. It finds that one factor is the low socio-economic background of many migrant families in Europe, a characteristic that is sadly consistent with poorer school performance in most European countries. Other factors include difficulties in mastering the language of the host country, and the lower expectations that families and migrant communities may place on education.

The picture is not, however, uniform. Policy appears to have a role too, as the school performance in migrant pupils of the same origin varies perceptibly from one European country to another. Segregation, for instance, can induce a spiral of poor achievements in "ghetto" schools where the level of education will deteriorate increasingly with time.

...getting the most out of studies...

What the green paper also highlights are policies that can help migrant pupils get the most out of their studies. For instance, research suggests that in general, more equitable educa-



tion systems lead to better integration. Transition classes for newcomers also help students learn the host country's language, as does encouraging pre-school attendance for young children. Similar schemes have been set up for older migrants using mentoring partnerships with the community, and offering adult education to parents. Preventing segregation also depends in part on a fair socio-economic balance. This can be promoted by ensuring quality standards in schools, with a focus on teaching and leadership. Some schools have also begun fostering intercultural education to assist integrating different communities in the classroom. And by incorporating different cultures into the curriculum, teachers can support migrant pupils' self-confidence while offering a broader range of experience to the entire class.

...cooperation...

The organisation of education and training programs remains, of course, a matter for national, not European, decision. But although strategies for migrant integration are defined and implemented at the national and regional level, Member States have expressed interest in co-operating. The European Commission can help this process. It already supports related programmes.

Some of the programmes supported by the Commission to help Member State co-operation in migrant integration

- * the European Fund for the Integration of Third-country Nationals
- * the Lifelong Learning Programme
- * the Structural Funds
- * Regions for economic change in the Urbact Programme
- * the Community programme for employment and social solidarity, Progress

The Open Method of Coordination for Education and Training provides another forum for co-operation and exchange between Member States on common educational challenges. And if the consultation opened by the green paper indicates support for the concept, the new framework for this forum could accommodate exchanges at the level of policy.

The debate on language issues in the education of migrant children is also addressed in the green paper. The impact of the 1977 Directive on the education of children of migrant workers has been diminished by wide-ranging changes in the context of migration. The primary requirement, that host states should provide free tuition in one of the country's official languages to the children of migrant workers to facilitate their integration, is now widely the case across the Member States. But the second objective, to incorporate teaching the mother tongue and culture of their country of origin into normal education, has not so far been widely attained. It may be that increased intra-EU mobility over recent years will change this situation.

The green paper has launched a consultation on education policy for children from migrant backgrounds. Until the end of 2008, everyone is invited to share their views on the most important problems, the best courses of action and what the European Union can do to support the Member States. The European Commission will analyse the results and publish the conclusions in early 2009.



ERASMUS MUNDUS

sets sail towards new horizons
of academic excellence

Over the past four years, the Erasmus Mundus programme has been supporting academic cooperation and mobility across the globe. Modelled on the highly successful flagship Erasmus programme, it has provided scholarships to more than 6,000 highly talented students and professors of all nationalities. The Erasmus Mundus label has been attributed to more than a hundred European joint masters programmes across a wide spectrum of disciplines.

...a world of change for Erasmus Mundus...

The success and popularity of Erasmus Mundus are expected to convince the European Parliament and Council to back a further development of the programme before the end of 2008. The European Commission's July 2007 proposal to diversify the programme's offer while maintaining its focus on excellence is currently under examination. For this second phase of the programme, extending from 2009 to 2013, the Commission envisages Erasmus Mundus supporting joint doctoral programmes, involving more universities from beyond the EU, and offering full-study scholarships for EU nationals.

These ambitious objectives would be backed by more than €950 million of funding for universities and individuals in the EU and beyond over the next five years, with half this sum earmarked for developing countries.

The programme's broadened scope follows the recommendations of an interim evaluation and reflects a desire to match continuity and innovation. So the second phase of Erasmus Mundus will aim at excellence, promoting the worldwide appeal of European higher education, and cooperation with third-country universities.

...opening a cooperation window...

In its new form, Erasmus Mundus will incorporate the "Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window" (EMECW). Launched in 2006, EMECW has already built upon the Erasmus Mundus experience to interact with academic institutions outside the European Union to bring benefits to all parties. It promotes exchanges of people, knowledge and skills at higher education level, with a focus on regions where the European Union urgently needs to reinforce cooperation. In recent years, this has been particularly relevant with countries to its east and south, covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy.

Just as Erasmus Mundus has evolved out of Erasmus, EMECW has grown from Erasmus Mundus. EMECW has a wider scope than Erasmus Mundus, as it covers undergraduate as well as post-doctoral level courses. It also provides a more flexible framework that allows participants to travel for three months or even three years for training at all levels.



...visibility and solidarity...

Erasmus Mundus already plays an important role in raising Europe's visibility as a study destination. As well as promoting excellent education within the EU, the programme welcomes students from all over the world, which ultimately spreads the reputation abroad of European higher education.

There is another innovation planned for the next phase of Erasmus Mundus, with a similar intention. The Global Promotion Project aims to complement national promotion abroad of higher education by making information on Europe as a study destination easily accessible and available. The first step has been taken. The "Study in Europe" web portal (www.study-in-europe.org) has already been launched to showcase study opportunities in 32 European countries.

The European Commission now intends to use EMECW to boost the international visibility of its own involvement in higher education. Instead of proposing diverse regional programmes (such as Asia-Link for Asia, and Alban for Latin America), Erasmus Mundus will now bring these efforts together under a single brand synonymous with quality and consistency.

EMECW is also designed to support the European Commission's development and solidarity objectives. It will add value to the Erasmus Mundus programme by supporting students from vulnerable social groups. And it will help the development of national education systems in emerging countries, because it will encourage international students to put their skills to advantage in their home countries after their studies.

With tangible achievements behind it and great prospects ahead of it, Erasmus Mundus is now on a voyage to becoming a globally competitive model for international academic cooperation and mobility, marrying excellence and solidarity in a uniquely European way.

ARTISTS ON THE MOVE

Europe's cultural scene relies heavily on cross-border mobility. Many artists and cultural workers need to travel to meet new audiences, find new sources of inspiration, exchange experience and learn from each other. Member States and the European Commission are working hard to make this easier for them.

...unusual obstacles...

Travelling abroad has never been easier. Owning a car, purchasing an air ticket or speaking a foreign language used to be considered privileges of the elites. Today, they are the norm. But although it is easier to move around, artists and cultural workers may find that working abroad remains a challenging path strewn with bureaucratic obstacles.

Studies suggest the main difficulties artists face when working abroad are regulatory and administrative discrepancies on taxes, social security, work permits and visas¹. Some of these problems are common to workers in other sectors, or students studying abroad. But what makes artists particularly vulnerable is the sudden and unpredictable nature of their professional movements. This is particularly the case in the live performance sector. Actors and opera singers may, for example, be called in from abroad at short notice to fill in for a performer who has fallen ill. Artists and cultural workers often stay to work for only brief periods – often as little as two or three days. This unusual type of mobility can complicate organisational, practical and social arrangements.

Careers in the sector are often short, especially for dancers, and interrupted, due to the short-term nature of most contracts. The employment status of artists is often precarious, with higher than average rates of temporary, part-time and self-employment. Their status may also vary between employment and self-employment, being sometimes both at once. Each of these peculiarities adds an impediment to working across borders. The cultural sector is an extreme case of the challenges facing mobility in the EU.

...a European strategy for culture – at last...

People working in the cultural sector have long stressed the need for adaptations to social and tax legislation, and

to better information about support for trans-national mobility for artists and cultural workers. In response, the Council already included mobility in its 2004 work plan. The European Parliament has repeatedly highlighted the subject, and the Commission has included it as a priority in the Communication on a European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World, adopted in May 2007.

When they endorsed this Communication's objectives in November 2007, Member States set out the first coherent strategy for culture at the EU level. The Commission, Member States and civil society stakeholders share the objectives in this Communication. New methods of working have been developed for the task, including an "open method of coordination" among the Member States and a structured dialogue with civil society.

Member States have set up a new working group to provide feedback to policy makers on improving mobility in the field of culture. In 2008-2010, the working group will identify and share best practices. It will propose new policies, new methods of evaluating progress, and new cooperation initiatives between Member States. Every six months, the working group will report its findings to the Council. It will also submit a mid-term report on its progress in July 2009.

...backed with money...

The Commission is taking its own initiatives to help improve mobility of artists and cultural workers. These will feed into the work of Member States in the context of the new open method of coordination.

The Culture Programme for 2007-2013 has been given a budget of €400 million by the Commission and the Executive Agency for Education, Audiovisual and Culture to address problems relating to mobility. It will promote the

¹ For example, 'Study on Impediments to Mobility in the EU Live Performance Sector and on Possible Solutions', 2006, Richard Poláček, Performing Arts Employers Associations League Europe (PEARLE)



trans-national mobility of cultural players, encourage the trans-national circulation of works and cultural and artistic products, and encourage intercultural dialogue².

The new programme offers to cover up to half the costs of international cooperation projects. To be eligible for grants (of €50-200,000), projects must link at least three EU countries in a cultural endeavour for up to 24 months. Larger multi-annual cooperation projects, lasting up to five years, are eligible for up to €500,000 a year if they involve at least six countries. The programme also co-funds up to 80% of operating costs for permanent venues that promote a sense of shared culture in Europe. This may appeal to orchestras on European tours or festivals bringing together artists from different Member States. The Culture Programme for 2007-2013 also encourages mobility beyond EU borders. Every year, a separate call for proposals is published to promote an international cooperation project with a partner from outside Europe.

...can more mobility fly?...

The Commission is also investing €1.5 million (voted by the European Parliament at the end of 2007 as an amendment to the 2008 EU budget) in a pilot project on mobility, which will address legal, regulatory, procedural, fiscal and financial obstacles later this year. The administrative problems faced by artists and cultural workers are already well documented. Now the Commission wants to examine which scenarios for future action may succeed in solving them. The project will carry out a feasibility study for a Europe-wide information system and advise the Commission and Member States as to whether the system should be developed, what form it should take, and who needs to act.

The pilot project has also called for proposals to support networking among cultural agencies in the public sector

and civil society, to make the most of their knowledge and experience of mobility. Exchanging information can help stimulate their own work, identify new niches and find new partners. Grants will support networking and exchange of best practice, as well as the evaluation of methodologies, exploitation and sharing of results, and joint actions to improve artists' mobility.

Mobility also helps forge a sense of European identity and improves employability. So the Commission is planning further financing for the mobility of individual artists and cultural workers. The Commission will benefit from results of a new study on mobility, due for release in the autumn, which will provide an overview of mobility schemes in Europe. It will identify gaps in local initiatives and make recommendations for action at EU level that do not crowd out national funding sources.

...the curtain rises on Act II...

Tackling problems of mobility for artists and cultural workers will be challenging, not least because the causes often lie beyond the remit of national ministries of culture. But the efforts from many sides promise to make a difference in the years to come.

The Culture Programme for 2007-2013 is set to trigger new dynamism in the area. Information and exchange of good practices among the Member States and cultural operators will occur at unprecedented speeds. The Commission is committed to help, but ultimately the key to better trans-national mobility of cultural players lies in the hands of the Member States. They alone can make a common "European cultural area" a reality.

² http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc411_en.htm





Boosting cross-border VOLUNTEERING IN EUROPE

More and more young Europeans are interested in volunteering. So many, in fact, that the demand for cross-border volunteering is now outstripping the supply of places. In response, the EU has taken a new initiative to promote the mobility of young volunteers, to strengthen cooperation among EU member countries, and to ensure the benefits of participating in voluntary activities are officially recognised.

On 2 July 2008 the European Commission adopted a proposal for a Council Recommendation on mobility of young volunteers across Europe. The underlying vision is for all the EU's 96 million people aged between 15 and 29 to be offered the chance to volunteer.

...no money, but much to gain...

Youth volunteering provides cultural and economic support to local communities. But it does more than that. It helps integrate the people who do it: they also benefit, socially, professionally and economically. For young people with limited traditional opportunities, the engagement often offers a particularly valuable chance to acquire new skills and improve their employment prospects.

The benefits are even greater in the case of cross-border volunteering. Voluntary engagement in another country can be a major asset in the personal development of young people, and improves their chances of finding jobs in the international marketplace, in part due to the language skills they pick up abroad.

Nearly two-thirds of the young people who had taken part in the European Voluntary Service (EVS) agreed that the scheme had changed their career possibilities for the better. More than three out of four thought it had made them generally more active in youth, societal or political organisations,

and had given them a greater sense of responsibility for helping people in other countries.

...growing interest...

With so much to gain, it is no surprise volunteering opportunities are in increasingly high demand. The number of EVS requests grew by 17% over the past year. In 2007, a Eurobarometer survey in the Member States indicated interest in volunteering way beyond what existing programmes can offer. Although only 16% of young Europeans surveyed were participating in a voluntary activity, 74% said they would like to take part if there were more programmes encouraging it. The Commission estimates that, in the coming years, some 5% of young EU citizens will be interested in volunteering abroad. That may sound a small percentage - but it amounts to close to 5 million people.

...obstacles ahead...

Despite the popularity of volunteering across the EU member countries, numerous obstacles currently face young people considering voluntary work. These include:

- Socio-economic factors: Incomplete healthcare coverage and the threat of losing social security benefits (in





particular unemployment benefits) are an important disincentive. This is especially problematic for young people with fewer opportunities, a point that targeted and tailor-made promotional measures should address.

- Lack of visibility: The information available on volunteering needs to be deeper and broader. The procedure to take part in volunteering opportunities needs to be simplified too, and communication between stakeholders should be improved.
- Lack of recognition: Young people are deterred from becoming involved because they fear it will damage their chances of getting a job afterwards with employers that have a negative perception of volunteering. Proper acknowledgement and recognition of non-formal learning experience could help offer a smooth transition from education into voluntary work and then on to employment.

...recognition...

Despite the lack of official recognition for volunteering, there is a growing understanding that it can contribute to the personal development and employability of young people.

EVS has been an integral part of the European Union's youth programmes since 1996 and is highly regarded both by EU member countries and the people who have taken part in it. But it remains limited in scale and has yet to achieve the wide brand recognition of better-known EU programmes such as ERASMUS.

To ensure the non-formal learning experience acquired in voluntary programmes such as EVS is recognised, the EU has developed the Youthpass certificate. This certificate is a portfolio describing the skills and competencies acquired by participants during their project.

Interpreting qualifications and volunteering skills

The European Union works hard to promote its citizens' mobility. One aspect of this is making sure the qualifications of EU citizens are recognised across its borders. It has recently adopted the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) that will act as a translation device between the Member States' qualifications systems. It has also equipped students with a Europass, which enables them to provide proof of their qualifications and skills clearly and easily anywhere in Europe. This will help employers and educational establishments across the continent understand and compare the qualifications.

Likewise, for volunteer work, the EQF helps validate non-formal learning and the Youthpass will provide volunteers with proof of the skills acquired during their project.

...reaching across borders...

Volunteering schemes for young people are usually developed at national or local level. In some Member States, civil services play the prominent role. In others, volunteering is implemented almost completely by private organisations, with the state involved only in running EVS.

There is little interaction between national schemes, so it is not easy for volunteers to find out about schemes abroad, or to take part in them, even where the opportunities exist. For many Member States, EVS is the main – if not the only – tool of trans-European youth volunteering.

The European Commission's Recommendation does not aim at replacing national schemes. It is designed to help member countries strengthen them. It would provide a platform on the basis of which countries could exchange good practices and develop bilateral and multilateral agreements and partnerships, allowing more projects and more young people to benefit from voluntary work in the future.



European Voluntary Service (EVS)

EVS gives young people the opportunity to carry out full-time voluntary service in another country. As part of the EU Youth in Action Programme, it supports local communities while offering volunteers the chance to develop important skills for their personal and professional development.

- Open to young people aged 18 to 30
- Duration: up to 12 months
- Free of charge for the volunteer
- Learning outcomes recognised through the Youthpass certificate

➤ http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc82_en.htm

The European Youth Portal



➤ <http://europa.eu/youth>

- Offers information about volunteering opportunities in 31 countries

What can the EU member countries do?

- Provide more information on national and cross-border volunteering opportunities for young people
- Increase exchange opportunities for young volunteers
- Ensure a level of quality in cross-border volunteering activities
- Officially recognise skills acquired by young volunteers
- Ensure targeted cross-border support for young people with fewer opportunities, and for youth workers

What can the European Commission do?

- Support the EU member countries in pursuing these priorities
- Organise and coordinate systematic exchange of information and experience
- Develop the European Youth Portal to match offer and demand for volunteering opportunities.





Taking your training qualifications ABROAD WITH YOU

It sounds like a great idea to get some experience abroad during your training. It can be invaluable in broadening your contacts, deepening your knowledge, and making you more flexible in employment. But if your achievements do not win any recognition, much of their value is lost.

That is where ECVET is stepping in to fill the gap. The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training, to give it its full name, is a new system aimed at giving EU-wide validity to national qualifications. Like Europass and the European Qualifications Framework, it improves legibility and accessibility of certifications. The result will be better conditions for citizens who choose to take advantage of the possibilities of transnational mobility.

The merits of mobility

Geographical mobility is essential to promote the economic and social integration of Europe, to increase the sharing of experience on a European scale, to develop a sense of European citizenship, and to make a reality of the concept of a European Training and Employment Area. Many young people have shown interest in benefiting from mobility programmes like Leonardo Da Vinci and Erasmus. It proves that there is a sharp public appetite for what is often a first experience of mobility.

ECVET is aimed particularly at apprentices and trainees who - at any stage of their life - want to obtain certification that takes account of the competences and know-how they acquire in widely varying situations and in more than one EU country. People frequently encounter difficulties when they want to obtain formal identification, validation or recognition of experience they have acquired from apprenticeships during a stay abroad or in non-formal contexts at work, or even in informal contexts in daily life. ECVET can provide a solution. It is designed to overcome official reticence about admitting that experience acquired from apprenticeships in different contexts has value and can be validated and taken into account. In this way, ECVET will support and promote transnational mobility and access to lifelong apprenticeship.

The European Parliament and the EU Council are scheduled to give ECVET their approval in the months ahead. The pilot projects already implemented mean that ECVET should be able to come into operation as from 2012.

ECVET will supplement the European Qualifications Framework, adopted recently by the European Parliament and the Council, and which provides a reference grid for the translation of certifications in Europe. ECVET will provide a similar common framework for transferring from one certification system to another the experience acquired during apprenticeships. Certification, teaching and professional training systems will become more transparent and more compatible. It will apply to all certifications, whatever their level or professional sector.

By boosting citizens' mobility and participation in life-long learning, ECVET will help make the Lisbon strategy for growth and employment a reality. The ECVET system has been designed over recent years on the basis of work aimed at simplifying the so-called Copenhagen process of enhanced co-operation in the field of professional teaching and training. It has been developed through an extensive and comprehensive consultation process, and the Commission's formal proposal last April is now under examination by the European Parliament and the EU Council. Countries will be invited to implement ECVET as from 2012, on a voluntary basis.

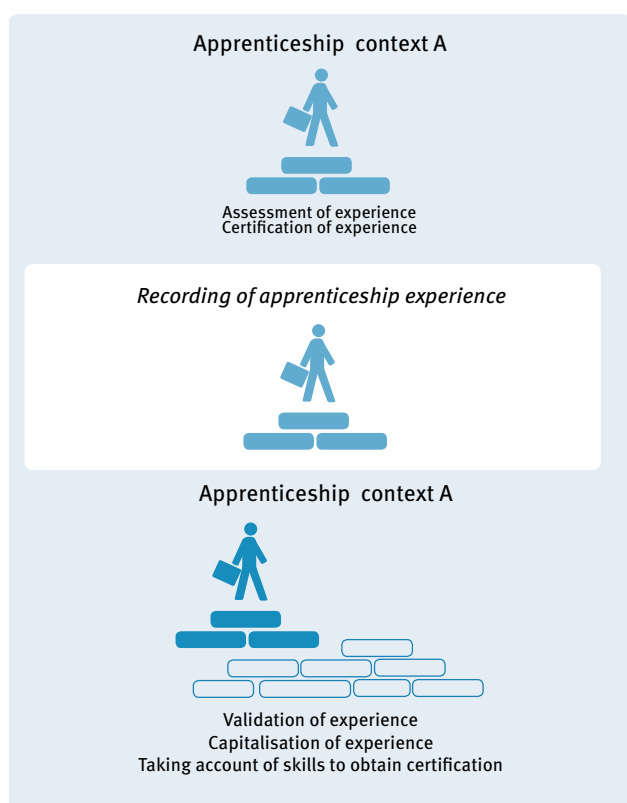
...centred on experience...

Unlike more traditional systems, ECVET covers the knowledge, aptitudes and skills acquired from apprenticeships, rather than focusing on the duration, teaching method or



type of training. And its certifications are based on a qualitative and descriptive approach, with formalised evaluation and validation in every type of apprenticeship context, combined with a quantitative approach using points associated with units and certifications.

The experience obtained and evaluated as satisfactory in one context can then be transferred to another context, with validity as a recognised component of a certification. This way, apprenticeship experience can be accumulated in line with national sectoral or regional regulations. The new legislation lays down procedures for evaluation, validation, accumulation and recognition of experience units by the relevant institutions.



Taking account of skills to obtain certification

This ideal scenario runs into the problem that there are numerous and divergent certification systems across Europe, and many different mechanisms for evaluating and validating experience. ECVET's proposal of 'experience units', with associated points, validation and accumulation of experience, offers a common grammar of certification, allowing dialogue, mutual comprehension and confidence between systems.

An experience unit consists of part of the knowledge, aptitudes and competencies required for a given certification. Certification can be obtained by accumulating the necessary units in distinct countries and contexts. A unit may be specific to only one certification, or common to several. The experience for a unit can be obtained independently of location or method of completion. But the rules for defining the experience units, and for combining and accumulating them for a particular certification, are fixed by the relevant institutions in accordance with current national, regional or sectoral regulations.

Because it is based on experience, the unit-based system is compatible with all certification systems, all apprenticeship contexts and all approaches to training. It permits flexible individual training courses in different countries and in different types of apprenticeship, so that students can experience mobility as part of their vocational training. At the same time, ECVET's principles guarantee that the consistency and integrity of each certification will be maintained, and undue fragmentation of the apprenticeship experience will be avoided.



ECVET points

The use of ECVET points makes apprenticeship experience more tangible. Points provide information on the overall weight that the apprenticeship experience must attain to permit the issue of a certificate, and at the same time allow the relative weight of each of their constituent units to be established. In general, ECVET points will have a value only in relation to experience specific to an individual unit or certification.

Points will be assigned in two stages: first to the certification, and then to each of its constituent units. By convention, 60 points will be allocated to the experience gained from one year of full-time vocational training. ECVET points will be granted regardless of the time actually devoted to the related unit. Transfer of a unit will generally transfer the corresponding ECVET points.

...partnerships...

Developing and implementing ECVET depends upon partnerships and networks of institutions, authorities, social partners, sectors and service providers. They provide a means of working together for the broad range of professional, educational and training institutions. They help create a climate of mutual confidence, and provide a framework for optimum use of ECVET.

The Commission will help Member States adopt and apply the principles and technical specifications of ECVET, through a European ECVET network, experimentation, co-operation, mutual apprenticeship and promotion, and the launching of information and consultative action. In addition, a handbook and tools for users will be compiled.

LANGUAGES AND MOBILITY

turning a dilemma into a virtuous circle

Which comes first, mobility or language skills? EU citizens often say that language barriers are the main impediment to working abroad. Paradoxically, they also quote living abroad as the best way to learn languages. This is the dilemma that has repeatedly been examined by the Business Forum for Multilingualism since its foundation in 2007.

The Single Market has been a success, but not all its fundamental freedoms have yet been fully implemented. Goods and capital circulate around Europe without too much difficulty. In the area of services, legislation is taking shape to encourage cross-border business. But for free movement of people, the situation is more ambiguous. Short-term mobility (tourism, business contacts, and cross-border mobility) has increased considerably since the early 1990s, when the Single Market was largely instigated. But the proportion of Europeans working in another Member State remains today as low as 2%. One central factor in this is that Europeans speak different languages.

...better skills...

The Business Forum for Multilingualism was established by the Commission to examine how companies can improve their performance on foreign markets through better language strategies. It played a part in preparing the chapter on multilingualism and prosperity in the strategic Communication "Multilingualism – an asset for Europe and a shared commitment" which was adopted in September 2008.

The Communication identified mobility and language skills as major drivers of employability. The text concludes that "mobility schemes should be widely offered to European citizens. Studying or working abroad is one of the most effective ways of learning other languages and making contact with other cultures. Erasmus students have ranked improvement of language skills as the foremost benefit of their period abroad. Education and training curricula should make the most of exchanges, partnerships and E-twinning with schools in other countries."

According to Viscount Etienne Davignon, chairman of the Forum and former Vice-President of the European Commission: "Language skills are crucial for employability. European business needs a diversified workforce, feeling at ease with flexicurity and considering all of Europe its home base. What I believe we need to emphasize more, is the cultural competence that comes with mobility. In today's business world, much more work is carried out in international project teams, through networking or strategic partnerships. In such teams, people who can act as cultural mediators are crucial for speed and efficiency."

...wide benefits...

There are wide benefits from travelling abroad. And not just for students. Practical work experience and traineeships for young professionals are important too, in many different ways. They offer, for instance, the opportunity to practice foreign languages in real situations, which is enriching for individuals and for their employers. There are projects underway to examine how exchange programmes can be developed for wider categories of people, and how exchanges can be integrated in vocational training as well as in academic education.

Mobility fosters language learning, because languages are learned better and faster in the countries where they are spoken. At the same time language skills facilitate mobility. They are linked like the two sides of the same coin. Lack of language skills can be an impediment to mobility, but mobility can itself be an opportunity and an incentive to deepen and widen the knowledge of other languages. Combining mobility and languages creates a virtuous circle.



Sabina Klimek

member of the Business Forum for Multilingualism

Sabina Klimek from Poland is a member of the Business Forum for Multilingualism. She has worked with many small companies in the craft sector, helping them develop their business. DG Education and Culture has benefited from her advice in setting up a mobility project for apprentices and young people in initial vocational training. Sabina stresses how important the linguistic aspects are: "I have talked to frustrated people at local Chambers of Commerce who have helped small companies with export strategies and given them visibility at trade fairs in different countries. More often than they would like to admit, it was all wasted as the companies didn't have anybody with language skills, not even basic English".



Caroline Jenner

CEO of Junior Achievement Young Enterprise Europe

"Another member of the Forum is Caroline Jenner, CEO of Junior Achievement Young Enterprise Europe, a network teaching entrepreneurship in schools. She stresses the importance of languages in the context of entrepreneurship education, which often has an element of international mobility and networking. She says that more than two-thirds of people who took part in entrepreneurship education programmes said the experience motivated them to improve their language skills, and more than a third said that their language skills have helped them to find new business or career opportunities."

Tempus flies to PHASE 4 of higher education cooperation

The EU's Tempus programme of cooperation in higher education is moving into a new phase of development. In the nearly 20 years since it started, it has continued to spread its impact more widely, and is now boosting its budget to new heights.

...beyond the EU's borders...

The Tempus programme is creating an area of cooperation in higher education that stretches beyond the EU's borders. Created in 1990, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, it established bonds with universities in countries of central and eastern Europe. The programme has expanded widely since then, and funded 6,500 projects involving 2,000 universities from the EU and 28 partner countries stretching from the Balkans and Central Asia to North Africa and the Middle East. Between 2000 and 2006, Tempus set up 788 Joint European Projects, supported 270 structural reforms in institutions, and funded 1,492 mobility grants for individuals. It also promotes links with the Bologna Process.

Over the past eight years, Tempus has brought students, teaching and management staff from partner countries into touch with their counterparts in the EU. The programme also involves independent higher education organisations, research institutions, enterprises, social partners and NGOs. Together, they have modernised thousands of curricula in a wide range of disciplines. Tempus projects have introduced quality assurance measures to ensure alignment with the needs of labour markets. The programme has also assisted universities in streamlining their management and creating new partnerships with the business sector.

...creating "model universities"...

Most people interviewed in Tempus' partner countries see the programme as one of the most important instruments for developing their higher education institutions. The reforms, they say, go beyond developing curricula and attracting faculty. As national initiatives in education have picked up speed, "Tempus universities" have been selected as model universities on which to base modernisation processes at a national level. Many universities have seen their status raised by their involvement in Tempus. Many have won recognition as national leaders in their field, and others have been included in expert bodies of their country's ministry of education.

How it all comes together

The Tempus programme complements European Union programmes in higher education such as ALFA, Asia-Link or Edulink that foster international cooperation in higher education with partners beyond the EU's borders.

It is particularly well-matched to the EU Erasmus Mundus programme and its External Cooperation Window, which were launched in 2007. The External Cooperation Window focuses on individual mobility of students, professors and administrators, while Tempus oversees the broader interaction between institutions.



...the fourth phase...

Conscious of the success of Tempus, the Commission sees the programme as an important element in the European Neighbourhood Policy. In consequence, it has launched the fourth phase of Tempus covering the period 2007-2013. The programme will continue to build on its achievements and consolidate current programme activities. But its scope has been modified to focus on projects which have a greater impact on higher education reforms in partner countries. This new focus will include:

- structuring priorities around the main components of the EU's agenda for modernising higher education - curriculum reform, governance reform, and higher education and society;
- boosting each grant up to a maximum of €1,500,000, to increase the impact of the projects;
- increasing the number of partners required to at least five higher education institutions;
- admitting applications directly from higher education institutions in partner countries and permitting them to be principal recipients of grants for both Joint Projects and Structural Measures;
- enlarging the range of eligible organisations to include more stakeholders in higher education;
- reinforcing requirements on disseminating information and on sustainability;
- focusing both Joint Projects and Structural Measures to address the needs of partner countries and to demonstrate a clear impact on higher education at institutional or system level;
- eliminating mobility grants for individual students and academic staff; these are now provided by the Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window.

Three categories

The activities of the Tempus programme will now fall into three categories.

Joint Projects transfer knowledge between higher education institutions in the EU and in the partner countries, in, for instance, new curricula, teaching methods and materials. Joint Projects often promote a culture of quality assurance and help modernise the management and governance of higher education institutions. They can strengthen the role that higher education institutions play in society as well as their links with research and the labour market.

Structural Projects provide support to networks of higher education institutions and to ministries of education to help develop and reform education institutions. They can contribute to improving the efficiency of these systems and keep them in touch with EU developments.

Accompanying measures are designed to spread information, disseminate results, and organise thematic conferences and studies.

What is to come?

The first call for proposals in this new phase of Tempus concluded in April 2008. €51 million is to be shared out among the participants, with each receiving between €0.5 and €1.5 million to fund a two-to-three-year project starting in the academic year 2008/9.

The next call will be made towards the end of 2008. Conditions and criteria on how to apply appear on the Commission's website:

➤ www.ec.europa.eu/tempus





Hands across the sea Europe's pivotal role in INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

A major international conference on education in Washington DC in May provided a showcase for European programmes on educational mobility, and an opportunity for strengthening EU links with education professionals from around the world. The EU delegation to the meeting was headed by Jan Figel', EU Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth.

This special report highlights the Commissioner's speech, the background to the conference, the EU presence in the international exhibition, the EU programmes with special relevance to international collaboration in education, and the Commissioner's contacts with senior US officials and other prominent figures in international educational collaboration.

Figel' spells out the role of education in international integration.

Jan Figel', EU Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, was invited to speak at the 60th conference of the Association of International Educators in Washington, DC, in May. This was the first time that a European Commissioner had ever been invited to take part in this leading world forum for networking and cooperation in higher education.

Taking part in the session on "International Student and Scholar Mobility: Programmes, Trends, Challenges and Impact", Commissioner Figel' stressed Europe's role in advancing international education - in particular the Bologna process, the Erasmus Mundus programme, and the EU-US cooperation programme Atlantis. Promotion of education cooperation within Europe has produced "success stories for European integration", he said.

"The 21st century could be better and should be a better century, but we have to invest in and value education, culture, and cultural diversity, and promote cultural dialogue and openness", he told the audience. Discussion of the challenges "is an invitation to act so as to change the situation for better", he said. Commissioner Figel' recalled

Jean Monnet's statement "Nous n'unissons pas des Etats, nous unissons des hommes", adding that "international education unites people and make them understand and value diversity".

The Commissioner noted that "It is now common for bright and talented students from Boston, Bologna or Bangkok to look for the best match for their skills and interests half-way across the globe. Promoting international education is among the best ways to fight prejudice and advance mutual understanding and dialogue among nations and peoples."

His intervention amounted to a strong European signal of openness to both qualitative and quantitative improvements in international education opportunities over the coming years. His presence in the US was also an invitation - not only for university professors and students to come to Europe, but also to collaborate on joint study programmes and joint degrees, allowing for wider recognition of European degrees and diplomas that could bring more closely together the advanced education systems in America and Europe. Joint debate "may be a contribution to a better international world of education", he said. The session also offered the opportunity to highlight the opportunities for American students to study in Europe through the Erasmus Mundus and Atlantis programmes.

Read the full speech at the following link:

● http://www.eurunion.org/eu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1764&Itemid=26



What is NAFSA?

NAFSA, the Association of International Educators, is the leading professional organisation promoting the international exchange of students and scholars. It hosted its 60th Annual Conference and Expo in Washington, DC from 25 to 30 May 2008, with more than 9,000 delegates from over 100 countries - making it the largest gathering of international educators in the world. Over the years it has become a must for international educators interested in global higher education trends, joint and dual degrees, networking and mobility programmes.

The name of the association has changed since its inception in 1948 as the National Association of Foreign Student Advisers. The current name, Association of International Educators, reflects its expanding role into all aspects of international education and exchange.

Atlantis

More than 4,000 European and American students have used the Atlantis programme since 2005, typically to spend one semester of study on the other side of the Atlantic. It has given EU and US universities a unique opportunity to integrate their structures and study programmes, said Commissioner Figel. "Moreover, Atlantis blazed a trail," he added. "It is the only program of its kind jointly funded by two public authorities - the European Commission and the US Department of Education - with balanced flows of students." The programme stems from the new eight-year EU-US agreement on higher education and training, and is setting standards for joint/dual transatlantic degrees. It is used as a model for cooperation with other countries with highly advanced education systems such as Canada, Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea.

Some 700 European and American students and 200 scholars will be exchanged through the new round of Atlantis projects for 2008, which were selected during the NAFSA conference by officials from the European Commission, the Agency for Education Audiovisual and Culture and the US Department of Education. The 16 projects will be launched in October 2008. The

EU is contributing €4.5 million (up from €3.8 million in 2007) and an equivalent amount in US dollar terms will come from the US. Eight projects, each due to run for four years, relate to transatlantic joint-dual degrees. There are also six four-year mobility projects and two policy oriented projects that will run for two years. Altogether 44 institutions from 16 EU countries are represented in the chosen projects - including, for the first time, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

The EU presence at NAFSA

The NAFSA conference included an International Education Expo at the Washington Convention Center, showcasing more than 400 exhibitors from all round the world. The European Union had the second largest group (after the US), with 117 exhibitors. European universities, other higher education institutions and organisations promoting international education and student mobility presented opportunities for foreign students to study in Europe. Spain, France, Germany, the UK and Italy were particularly prominent.

The European Commission's Directorate General of Education and Culture also hosted a stand, together with the EU Delegation in Washington, DC, giving visibility particularly to the Erasmus Mundus and Atlantis programmes, and demonstrating the role of the European Commission in advancing international cooperation in education. Commissioner Figel visited the EC stand on Tuesday 27 May.

For next year's NAFSA Annual Conference in Los Angeles it may be worth exploring a European Commission pavilion, connected to the national and regional European stands, in which a wide range of European initiatives from other parts of the Commission could also be presented.

International perceptions of the Bologna process

Workshops and sessions at NAFSA presented European higher education in general and the Bologna reforms in particular, with their aim of making European higher education more compatible and comparable, more competitive and more attractive for Europeans and for students and scholars from other continents.





The Bologna reforms have made European higher education more visible and more attractive. Thousands of master programmes are offered in English and their number is increasing rapidly. Quality reviews are being put on the web and a register of trustworthy quality assurance agencies has been created. There is a large and growing interest from North America and other world regions in the changes taking place in Europe. Most American universities now consider the European three-year bachelor as an acceptable basis for admission to a master programme.

Meanwhile, EU member states are progressing at varying speed towards consistent use of the Bologna transparency tools (such as ECTS and the Diploma Supplement) designed to help put in place a single European Higher Education Area by 2010.

Commissioner Figel' meets Diane Jones, US Assistant Secretary for Education

Commissioner Figel held talks with Diane Auer Jones, Assistant Secretary at the US Department of Education, on 28 May. [PHOTO AVAILABLE?]. They agreed that transatlantic people-to-people mobility in education and training is important not only for students, faculty and staff, but also for facilitating recognition of degrees and qualifications. They recognised the growing appetite for joint or dual degrees in Europe and in the US, and the vast scope in Europe and in the US for open dialogue on common interests such as promotion of Life Long Learning, assessment of learning outcomes for both traditional and non traditional students, problem of early drop outs, and university-industry cooperation. They also shared the view that quality in higher education is central to the policy debate, and that reliable information on quality and learning outcomes is needed.

Commissioner Figel' at the German Marshall Fund

While he was at the NAFSA meeting, Commissioner Figel' spoke at an event at the German Marshall Fund on the subject of "Educating Our Youth to Compete in Tomorrow's Economy". He described recent policy developments in the Bologna process for higher education and Copenhagen process for vocational education and training, as well as the European Institute of Technology and the evolution of the international Atlantis and Erasmus Mundus programmes.

He insisted on the need to balance equity with efficiency, and to reconcile egalitarian and elastic approaches.

He also took part in a debate with Dr Allan Goodman, President and CEO of the Institute of International Education - who noted the strong influence on the world scene of the Bologna process. "Education is one of the key mechanisms towards individual and societal empowerment", said the Commissioner. "If we want to increase people's employability, quality and access to education become priority issues. The system and the content of education are the responsibility of member states, but the modernisation, mobility, exchange of best practises and recognition of knowledge can be helped by collaboration at European level. Also, we can do much more as the European Union, not only internally but also externally, with partners in the industrialised world and with developing countries."

Commissioner Figel' identified the EU's guiding priorities as access, quality and relevance of education. "We are also focusing on the connection between education, research and business, so as to promote creativity and innovation", he said.

The Commissioner also underlined the essential complementary role of culture. It is culture, he said, that defines countries, communities, and values. "So cultural awareness, cultural expression is a very important part of the key competences for lifelong learning". Particularly in a Europe that has grown rapidly in size and diversity, "it is an invitation to know, to understand others and not to feel threatened". Intercultural dialogue, he said, should be an issue for every citizen - "not just for some culture operators or protagonists of cultural cooperation". This should, said the Commissioner, be part of education on all levels, not least because intercultural skills are linked to linguistic skills: "The more languages we know, the more ready we are for living in the multicultural world".

Dr Goodman remarked: "We could learn a lot from what Europe is doing and the way Europe is approaching the question of how you teach people the skills and the knowledge to work and live in this century".

A podcast interview with Commissioner Figel and Dr. Goodman can be heard on

🔊 <http://web.gmfus.org/mp3s/20080528Figel.mp3>



ADULT EDUCATION

a growing need

Adult participation in lifelong learning has never been more urgently needed than it is today. Europe has an ageing workforce and is increasingly confronted with shortfalls in skills. Training is the solution. The situation would benefit from giving socially disadvantaged young people a second chance to acquire qualifications, and from promoting worker mobility. The European Commission is rising to this challenge. Following its twin Communications on adult learning over the past two years, the Council of Education ministers has also recently adopted a set of new policy conclusions on the subject. From 2009, the Grundtvig branch of the Lifelong Learning Programme will offer exciting new opportunities to adult learners, adult education staff and learning institutions.

...staff mobility...

Encouraging mobility among adult education staff has been at the heart of the Grundtvig programme since its launch in 2001. It has offered European educators the possibility of spending up to six weeks in another Member State to develop their work skills. Teaching is provided in the form of in-service training courses, or less formal methods of building competences, such as job shadowing. In addition to helping education staff improve their practical skills in teaching, counselling and management, these training activities help consolidate and expand professional networks.

Following its success to date, the Grundtvig programme will offer two new opportunities for adult education staff as from 2009.

- Grundtvig Assistantships will award individual mobility grants to spend up to ten months at an adult education organisation in another country participating in the Lifelong Learning Programme. These are offered to people training for a position in adult education, or who

have just completed a qualification. They also extend to people coming into adult education from other occupations, retirement, or childcare. Their goal is to improve the quality of adult education in Europe by strengthening the qualifications profile of staff.

- Grundtvig Visits and Exchanges for Adult Education Staff will offer grants for periods of up to three months to promote “visits and exchanges” in adult education. In addition to training-related activities, these cover teaching assignments and other forms of experience-sharing visits to adult education establishments.

With these new possibilities, the Grundtvig programme will now encompass mobility activities addressing all the needs of people working in adult education.

...mobility of adult learners...

New opportunities are also being offered to adult learners themselves – consistent with the need to “place the learner at the centre” of the programme:



- Expanding the Grundtvig Learning Partnerships. Many of the organisations working in the field of adult education are small local institutions for which a Learning Partnership opens up the first opportunity to cooperate with international partners. As of 2009, the number of learners who can participate in the Partnerships will be considerably increased.
- Grundtvig Initiative on Volunteering in Europe for Seniors (GIVE). Volunteering is increasingly recognised as a valuable informal learning experience. A number of former projects, including one winner of the 2007 European awards for Lifelong Learning, confirmed that transnational volunteering is suited to offering senior citizens informal learning. GIVE will take advantage of this to increase learning opportunities in Europe. At the same time, its actions will promote active ageing and help recognise the contribution of seniors to European society.

• See project “Still active!” in http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/educ-training_en.html#Grundtvig-success

The programme will award grants to support new Volunteering Partnerships. The partnerships will bring together local volunteering organisations from two countries participating in the Lifelong Learning Programme. Each organisation is expected to send and host two to six volunteers aged 50 or above, for periods of three to eight weeks.

GIVE will allow new types of organisations to join the Grundtvig programme, enrich their work through the exchange of good practice, and become involved in sustainable European collaboration.

...Grundtvig Workshops...

The Grundtvig Workshops model is a means of stimulating increased adult learner mobility with a genuine European dimension. Over time, this completely new form of adult learner mobility is expected to become a centre-piece of Grundtvig mobility.

Each workshop will bring together learners from several countries for an innovative multinational learning experience relevant to their personal development and learning needs. Learners will also be encouraged to share their competences and insights with others. Workshops will last five to ten days and may be organised on any subject or theme. A catalogue of approved workshops will be available to help potential learners identify an event of interest to them.

European regions exchange good practice in school education

COMENIUS REGIO

In 2009, the European Commission will start to promote joint projects for school children across Europe. The Comenius Regio Partnerships will involve education authorities, schools and other providers of learning in the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme devoted to school education. The purpose is to offer children a wider picture of education in different countries, by taking cooperation beyond the classroom.

...Regional cooperation...

Regional cooperation in education is nothing new. Schools along Europe's borders have long developed common activities and exchanges of teachers and pupils. The same is true for more distant regions working together in frameworks such as twinned towns. These pioneering initiatives in regional educational cooperation have until now been limited in scale, but their success has convinced the European Commission of their potential.

...Non-formal and informal learning for children...

Children learn everywhere, not only in schools. Sports and youth activities often have a positive influence on their school life, and help them integrate into the school community and develop an interest in school activities. Cooperation between schools and independent local learning providers such as youth clubs, cultural institutions or non-governmental organisations can make everyday school-life more stimulating for pupils and improve their learning experience. This is why Comenius Regio Partnerships will involve these non-formal or informal learning providers.

Project idea: Cross-border cooperation

Secondary level students will be offered the chance to learn about the possibilities for work and study in their neighbouring region, just by crossing the border. Schools, career services, local employers, universities and vocational training centres will cooperate under the guidance of the local educational authorities. They will hold information days and provide direct contacts with representatives of various local industries and businesses, linguistic preparation and short-term internships. Students are also encouraged to visit information sessions at universities and technical colleges and to meet students from the partner country. Local authorities may apply for Comenius Regio grant assistance for meetings with institutions involved, to finance promotional material, implement initial activities and assess progress and results.

...how the programme works...

Comenius Regio Partnerships bring together partners from two countries participating in the Lifelong Learning Programme, of which at least one is an EU Member State. To be eligible, educational authorities in each region



must cooperate with at least one school and one local organisation involved in children's education. The range of possible projects is huge. The regions can exchange good practices, develop new approaches to tackle critical issues in school education, set up sustainable cooperation across borders, strengthen the European dimension in school education and offer European learning experiences to teachers, pupils and education administrators. Local authorities will coordinate the activities in each region and ensure that cooperation results have a sustainable impact on school education in their region. Support will be provided to help formulate the projects proposals. And opportunities to exchange experience among all participating regions will be organised.

Project idea: Integration of pupils with migrant backgrounds

The participating regions collaborate on new ways to integrate pupils with migrant backgrounds. They provide tandem teaching involving teachers from the pupil's ethnic background, and cooperate with parents' associations and community organisations, sports clubs and youth theatres. Together with their partners, school education authorities create local networks to explore ways of implementing new methods and structures of cooperation. Within the Comenius Regio Partnership, the partners compare practices, organise study visits, teacher training seminars and job-shadowing. They also set up a permanent structure to continue joint work beyond the end of the project.

...themes & activities...

The Comenius Regio Partnerships impose few limits on the range of joint activities considered. These could include exchanges of school staff, research and small studies, peer learning activities and common training sessions, conferences, seminars and workshops, summer schools, or awareness raising campaigns. The themes for these projects should be related to current developments and discussions within the regions. In essence, projects should be of common interest to partner regions and should help all partners improve education for school children.

Interested regions are welcome to contact the national agencies for the Comenius programme in their country for more information.

• http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/comenius/index_en.html



B7

The Classics
FICTION

Plus 400
/GHIJK/

B7

The Classics
FICTION

Plus 400
/K L M/

Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

For to the y

REL



MEASURING THE SUCCESS

of education and training for individuals and for systems

Education and training is essentially about people - about helping individuals achieve their personal potential. But measuring the success of systems can make education and training more efficient, both in meeting policy objectives, and in giving wider opportunities to individual citizens. This is why the EU uses targets and benchmarks, and monitors how closely they are being met.

Regular monitoring of performance and progress using indicators and benchmarks is a central aspect of the Lisbon process for boosting the EU's competitiveness. These are tools that identify strengths and weaknesses, and allow evidence-based policymaking at European level. With a view to providing strategic guidance for the Education and Training 2010 work programme, the EU Council adopted five benchmarks in May 2003, setting measurable objectives in the policy areas where it expected to see clear progress by 2010. They are:

- A decrease of at least 20% in the percentage of low-achieving pupils in reading literacy;
- No more than 10% early school leavers;
- At least 85% of young people should have completed upper secondary education;
- An increase of at least 15% in the number of tertiary graduates in mathematics, science and technology (MST), with a simultaneous decrease in the gender imbalance;
- 12.5% of the adult population should participate in lifelong learning.

Where the data come from

Since 2004 performance and progress in these fields

is monitored via corresponding indicators in an annual progress report of the Commission and via bi-annual joint reports of the Commission and the Council. Data for monitoring progress are currently available for the period 2000-2006/07. For four of the five indicators corresponding to the benchmarks the data source is Eurostat, while the percentage of low achievers is measured via data from the OECD PISA study.

...still a challenge...

Meeting these benchmarks still poses a serious challenge. Only in increasing the number of mathematics, science and technology graduates has enough progress been made so far. Significantly greater efforts are required on early school leaving, completion of upper secondary education and key competences to reach the school level benchmarks - which are essential for social cohesion and economic growth.

The graph illustrates progress achieved so far with the progress required to reach the benchmarks in 2010 (set as 100%). The number of low achievers in reading has increased since 2000 and performance has deteriorated accordingly. Progress on early school leavers and on upper secondary attainment will have to be faster to reach the goals by 2010. In lifelong learning performance has stagnated since 2005.



Graph 1: Progress towards meeting the five benchmarks for 2010 (EU average)



Source: DG Education and Training

...reading...

A specific benchmark relates to reading literacy. The benchmark to be reached by 2010 is to decrease the percentage of low-achieving 15-year-olds in reading literacy by at least 20%, compared to the year 2000.

The indicator for measuring progress in this benchmark is based on data taken from the PISA survey administrated by the OECD and carried out since 2000 every three years, which defines reading literacy as “understanding, using and reflecting on written texts, in order to achieve one’s goal, to develop one’s goals, to develop one’s knowledge and potential and to participate in society.” Pupils performing at level 2 are able to locating straightforward information, making low-level inferences of various types, working out what a well defined part of a text means and using some outside knowledge to understand it (PISA 2006). Pupils who fail to reach level 2 (reaching only level 1 or lower) can therefore be considered to be inadequately prepared for the challenges of the knowledge society and for lifelong learning. The benchmark is measuring the share of pupils with reading literacy proficiency level 1 or lower in the PISA reading literacy scale.

The benchmark performance deteriorated since 2000 on an EU level and in many Member States. The only EU country where average performance improved significantly was Poland. Finland is the best performing Member State with only 4.8% low achievers, while in Bulgaria and Romania low achievers represent over 50% of 15 year olds

....early leavers...

In 2007 the share of early school leavers (defined as young people aged 18-24 with only lower secondary attainment and not in education or training) was 14.8% for the EU-27, 2.8 percentage points lower than in 2000. There has been constant upward progress, but the benchmark of no more than 10% early school leavers will not be attained by 2010 without additional efforts. The best performing countries are Slovenia, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, all of which have fewer than 7.5% early school leavers - well below the EU benchmark. The highest rates are found in Malta and Portugal, although these two countries show good progress since 2000.

...upper secondary attainment...

This benchmark still poses a significant challenge. The share of young people aged 20-24 completing upper-secondary education improved only slightly (by 1.5 percentage points) between 2000 and 2007. The 2007 average for the population aged 20-24 is 78.1%, and females outperform males by more than 5 percentage points. There is an evident link with the figures for early school leavers: the best performers (upper secondary attainment rates of over 90%) are again Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia, while Malta and Portugal show the lowest performance, although again with some rapid catch-up. The share of early school leavers has fallen slightly more quickly in 2000-2007 than the share of young people with upper secondary has increased. This implies that more young people are in education and training but not all of these additional learners attain an upper secondary qualification.

...graduates in maths, science and technology...

For graduates in maths, science and technology, a growth rate of 4% per year since 2000 has allowed the EU-27 to exceed the benchmark for growth. The increase decelerated slightly in 2006, with the total reaching about 870,000 graduates. Taking the 1999/2000 academic year as a base (when there were 686,000 graduates), the target growth of 15% implies an absolute increase of some 100,000 graduates by 2010 - or 10,000 graduates per year. But much higher growth rates and an increase of over 180,000 graduates in these disciplines have been achieved. Poland, Slovakia and Portugal showed the strongest annual growth, while Ireland,

France and Lithuania lead in terms of graduates per 1,000 young people. There has been less progress in addressing the gender imbalance, with the proportion of female graduates increasing from 30.8% in 2000 to only 31.3% in 2006.

The 'Bologna effect' (the strong growth in university degrees) has helped to boost the number of graduates in maths, science and technology, accounting for about 40% of the growth. Meanwhile, the number of graduates in emerging economies is growing even more quickly. In China it quintupled since 2000 and is now more than twice as high as in the EU.

...lifelong learning...

Adult participation in education and training appears to have progressed since 2000, but this is partly a consequence of breaks in statistical series. In recent years progress stalled. In 2007, 9.7% of 25-64 year olds participated in lifelong learning - short of the benchmark of 12.5% for 2010. Only five Member States exceeded the benchmark. The Nordic countries and the UK are the best performers with participation rates of over 20%, but Bulgaria, Greece and Romania show levels of participation lower than 2%.

The EU is not yet on track to achieve all the benchmarks, but the underlying goals remain important for improving education and training in Europe. Achieving the benchmarks would mean the EU would have 1 million fewer low achievers in reading than in 2000, 3 million more young people with upper secondary qualifications, nearly 3 million fewer early school leavers and 12 million more adults participating in lifelong learning.

HOW GOOD

are Europe's universities and how can you tell?

With more than 4,000 higher education institutions in Europe, it is hard work keeping track of what each one is doing, let alone how well they do it. But information of this sort is of vital interest to students, parents, employers, policy makers and university managers across the EU. Each member state already has extensive information on its own higher education institutions and programmes. Now the Commission envisages enhancing these national databases at the European level with information on university performance in education, research and innovation.

...a need for transparency...

At present, even the surveys by Eurydice - the EU's main information network on education - provide few insights into the performance of individual institutions, or what their missions or tasks are. The only data of this kind available to policy makers are ad hoc surveys, which typically suffer from varying response rates. In consequence, DG RTD, in cooperation with DG EAC, EUROSTAT and stakeholders' representatives, will launch a call for tender before the end of 2008 to assess the feasibility of an integrated European statistical information system on university activities.

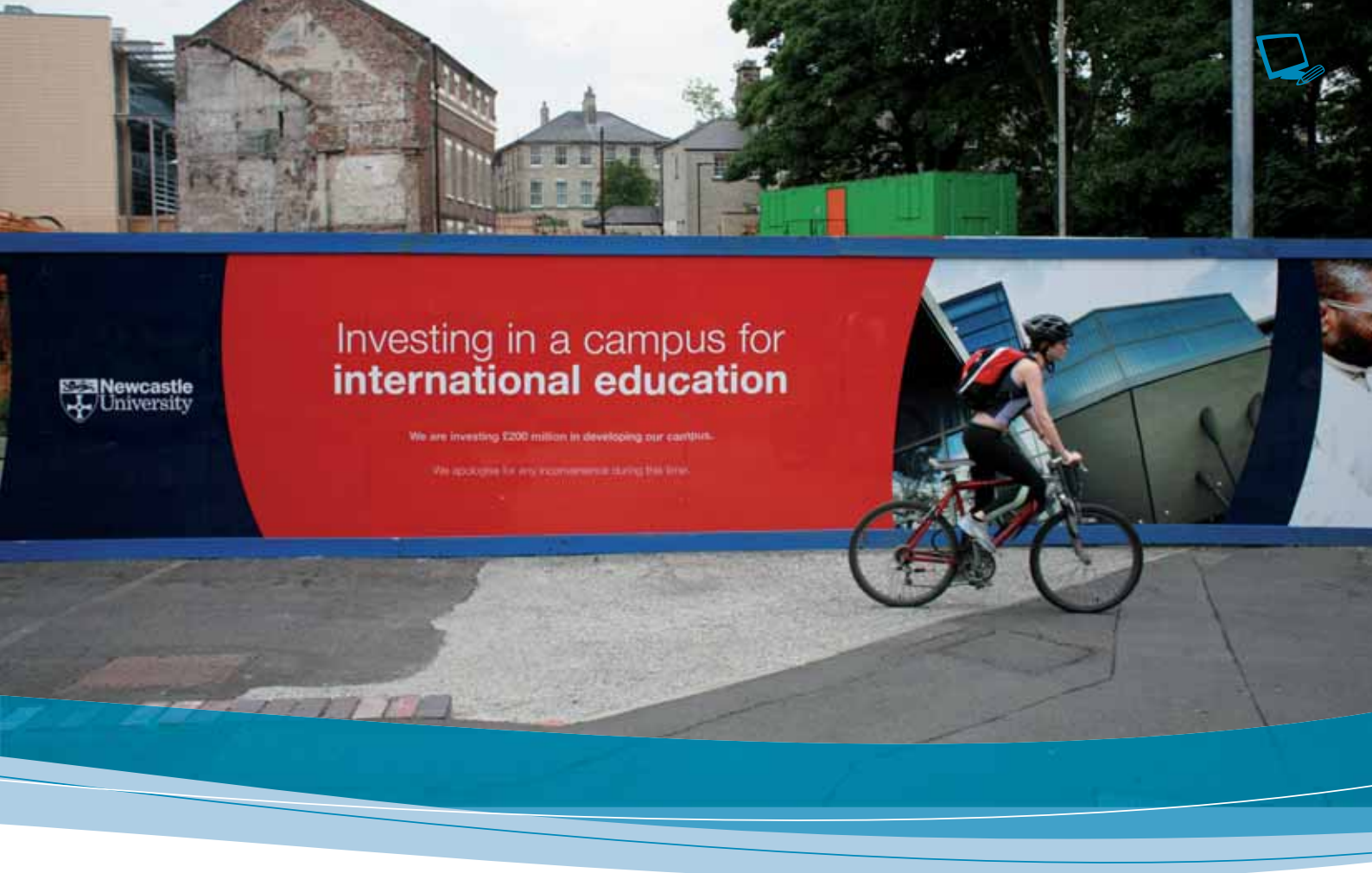
Comparing academic institutions in different countries can be a complicated matter. One obstacle is the difficulty of identifying institutions carrying out comparable work. Even the usage of terms such as universities, colleges, academies, institutes and schools can vary across borders, making it hard to perceive precisely what each of them does. Another difficulty is to devise comparison standards that everyone can adhere to.

To gain a clearer view of higher education across the EU, the Commission has taken initiatives of its own and supported initiatives through EU action programmes in education and

research. These efforts will offer a vantage point from which citizens and policy makers may better compare Europe's universities. They include a classification system to help identify the profile of institutions, a database of information about universities, and other registers and projects to simplify the process of comparing institutions.

New transparency instruments supported by the Commission:

- Crossroads is a database launched by the European Consortia for Accreditation. It invites external agencies to upload quality reviews and summaries on the activities of higher education institutions on its site, making their work openly accessible.
- The European Quality Assurance Register in Higher Education (EQAR) lists quality assurance and accreditation agencies that comply with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance adopted by the Bologna Ministers in 2005. Both the Bologna Ministers and the subsequent EU Recommendation for further cooperation in quality assurance in higher education back the Register.



- The Tuning Educational Structures in Europe Project assesses the quality of higher education courses across Europe in terms of the learning outcomes and competences they offer their participants. The Bologna Framework for higher education and the European Qualifications Frameworks for Lifelong Learning recently established an officially recognised equivalence table for EU higher education qualifications. The Tuning Project now builds on this work, breaking down the level descriptors previously used to assess qualifications. The reference points chosen provide a common language for curriculum design, teaching, learning, assessment, recognition and quality assurance. Universities are being encouraged to include the intended learning outcomes in their course catalogues, with the best courses being eligible for the ECTS label. The Tuning project has already categorised subject areas as diverse as history, nursing and mathematics. With Commission support, it is expanding its scope to courses in the Western Balkans, Turkey, Ukraine, Russia and Latin-America.
- A feasibility study on the “Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes” (AHELO) was given the green light this January, at an OECD Ministers meeting in Tokyo. The EU can contribute to this exercise by offering the experience it gained with learning outcomes from its qualifications frameworks and the Tuning project.
- The Classification Project, led by the CHEPS Research Institute of the University of Twente, aims to categorise institutions according to what they do, whether they teach bachelors’ degrees, masters’ degrees or doctorates, whether they are business-oriented or research intensive. This scheme will help create profiles of insti-

tutions, permitting fairer comparison among those involved in the same activities.

...are rankings best?...

The Commission encourages the debate around university rankings, but it also recognises their limitations. Existing versions, most famously from the Shanghai Jiao Tong University and the Times Higher Education Supplement, tend to focus on research in the hard sciences and to ignore other crucial aspects of university performance, such as the quality of teaching, research in humanities and social sciences, or outreach work offered to the community. For this reason the Commission backs the development of multi-dimensional rankings based on robust, relevant and more widely accepted methodologies.

Through the Erasmus programme, the Commission is supporting a pilot project on a ranking based on a more sophisticated user-defined approach. Developed by the German Research Institute CHE, the ‘my ranking’ concept allows the reader to set his or her own priorities. The Commission believes this interactive approach better reflects what the diversity of European higher education, and corresponds more closely to the needs of users.

2008

The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue

Following the launch of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue in January, the programme has gone from strength to strength, with activities both at national and European level.

...off to a great start...

Member states' efforts to promote intercultural dialogue have been at the heart of the action in this Year of Intercultural Dialogue. During the first half of the year, policy discussions focused on strengthening "intercultural competences" - skills helping everyone in Europe get the most out of our diverse cultural environment. These include speaking foreign languages, learning social and civil skills, and developing cultural awareness. In May, Ministers of Culture, Education and Youth urged a "sustainable and cross-sectoral approach" to intercultural dialogue, bringing together initiatives in the fields of culture, education, youth and audiovisual policy.

The inaugural conference of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, in January in Ljubljana, brought more than 500 stakeholders together with European Commissioner Jan Figel', European Parliament President Hans-Gert Pöttering, Slovenian President Danilo Türk and Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Janša. They shared their experience of intercultural dialogue. Slovenia, the first of the new Member States to hold the EU Presidency, enjoyed the opportunity to turn the spotlight on successful intercultural dialogue initiatives in its own neighbourhood. Short films screened at the conference are now available on the event's official homepage (www.dialogue2008.eu).

The launch of EYID was also the occasion for the first presentation of the study "Sharing Diversity: National Approaches to Intercultural Dialogue in Europe". This study is one of the keystones of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. Conducted by ERICarts research institute on behalf of the European Commission, it analyses the many different ways

that Member States promote intercultural dialogue, and highlights the most effective approaches. The study also lists 50 recommendations to regional, national and European policymakers and to grassroots activists (http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-documents/doc1351_en.htm).

In each member state, the EU also supported one emblematic national project. Austria, for instance, has organised a "Dialogue Tour" in partnership with ORF, the Austrian broadcasting corporation. The theatre event "Teddy goes round the world" is entertaining Malta, introducing children and their parents to the cultures and musical traditions of different countries. Ireland has published a manual for teachers to help equip them with the tools needed in classrooms that are increasingly intercultural. Updates on all these projects appear on the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue website in the section "What's happening in my country?".

In addition to its work with member states, the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue selected seven trans-European flagship cultural projects to promote intercultural dialogue across our borders. These include:

* "Diversidad! Promoting Dialogue and Exchange through European Urban Culture": Coordinated by the European Music Office, this project has brought artists together on a digital platform to produce a hip-hop single (www.diversidad2008.eu). It also organised urban culture events during the Euro2008 football competition, including graffiti workshops and DJ contests.



* “Stranger”: Coordinated by the European Cultural Foundation with partners in 18 Member States, this project encourages young people to share their view of “the other” by making their own short movies. 250 young moviemakers from across Europe will gather in July at the Stranger Festival in Amsterdam. Their work can be downloaded on <http://www.strangerfestival.com/>.

* “iyouwe –SHARE THE WORLD”: Coordinated by the International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation, this project supports interactive work between story tellers, visual artists and musicians sharing an imaginary world with primary school children, many from disadvantaged backgrounds (<http://www.iyouwesharetheworld.eu/>).

...across the EU...

Alongside national activities, “Together in Diversity” has focused attention on intercultural dialogue across Europe. A series of Commission-organised “Brussels Debates” is providing a popular forum to share ideas on planning and organising intercultural dialogue. These monthly debates bring in expert associations such as the European Network Against Racism or the European Policy Centre. Snappy presentations from keynote speakers provoke discussion and debate – including on migration and integration, the role of the artist in intercultural dialogue, interreligious dialogue and active citizenship, and the real meaning of intercultural dialogue in the workplace. This autumn will see debates on multilingualism and intercultural dialogue, education, and the role of the media. Video highlights and reports from each debate are available on the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue website.

The Commission has also launched a Europe-wide photo competition entitled “Cultures on My Street” (<http://www.street-cultures.eu/>). Everyone in Europe is invited to pick up a camera and capture their vision of intercultural dialogue in their neighbourhood. The winners will be selected by a jury of photographers and film-makers this autumn and will see their work exhibited throughout Europe.

Paolo Coelho, Jordi Savall and Abd Al Malik are among the “European Ambassadors” supporting the goals of the Year of Intercultural Dialogue. They will come together in Brussels this September to celebrate intercultural dialogue through joint creation (www.dialogue2008.eu).

...contributions from civil society...

“Rainbow Platform”, launched in 2006 as a joint initiative of Culture Action Europe and the European Cultural Foundation, is developing recommendations for policy makers. More than 1,000 organisations and individuals have signed up as “Partners of the Year” on the event’s website, where they can look for new cooperation partnerships and publish news of their initiatives and events. At the end of this year, Rainbow Platform will present its results as part of the closing conference for the Year of Intercultural Dialogue. But it then hopes to go on to grow into a sustainable networking tool for all those committed to intercultural dialogue.

The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue is going from strength to strength. Its events have caught the attention of both the media and the public, with over 3,000 press reports and 300,000 website visits so far. Now it looks forward to the programme lined up for the next half of 2008.





MOBILITY

for Active European Citizenship

Success in the "Europe for Citizens" programme, which aims to foster active European citizenship, depends strongly on mobility. It is mobility that is at the intersection of two crucial dynamics - the Lisbon agenda for employability and competitiveness, and citizenship. In fact these are the dynamics that underlie the activities of the Directorate General for Education and Culture as a whole.

The aims of "Europe for Citizens" – fostering citizens' participation, European identity, a sense of belonging and ownership of the European project, as well as mutual understanding – are all advanced by mobility. It is an instrument which is inexpensive, but far reaching by directly touching large numbers of people, and is strong in communication and in boosting awareness-raising because of its high multiplier effect. Even short periods of mobility can have a huge impact, when they involve longer periods of preparation and of follow-up. The effects can be realised through numerous different types of initiative, ranging from meetings among people from different towns, the continued evolution of traditional practices such as town-twinning, to innovative concepts for developing a European perspective in trade union affairs - as the examples below demonstrate.

...touching people...

One of the new aspects of the Europe for Citizens programme is the facility for promoting town twinning citizens' meetings. These bring together a wide range of citizens and citizens' groups from twinned towns, boosting not only the sense of partnership between local authorities but also the development of strong personal relations between citizens. The triple aims are to reinforce the participants' commitment to European integration, to foster mutual understanding and friendship between people, and to promote active civic participation at local level - for instance by involving the local community in the planning and implementation of the project.

Some 71,000 citizens are expected to move across Europe thanks to the new town twinning programme on citizens' meetings. That is the number who will actually travel to diverse municipalities and regions. But in addition to mobile participants, many more will have been mobilized – in fact an estimated 675,000 citizens altogether, in support functions and related preparation and follow-up. This is the impact of the programme, and a demonstration of how it meets the specific objective of "bringing together people from local communities across Europe to share and exchange experience, opinions and values".





Measuring the outcomes

The results are more than a matter of quantity. Indications are already available as to the quality of the exercise. A Commission assessment of the first phase of town twinning citizens' meetings in 2007 reveals results in generating feelings of being more European, with a greater sense of solidarity and a greater appetite for further mobility. The Commission's survey showed that:

- 78% of respondents reported that they were more likely or a lot more likely to have another mobility experience across Europe (be it studies, work, holidays, or living in another European country).
- 90% of respondents felt that, as a result of this involvement, they had made friendships with people from another European country that they would actively maintain in the future.
- 85% of respondents were more likely to host a visitor from another European country in their home.
- 78% of respondents were more likely to provide support to people in their twinned town if it faced unexpected difficulties such as economic crisis or natural disaster.
- This greater sense of solidarity was accompanied by a development of participants' sense of being European.
- 93% of respondents had learnt more about the European Union.
- 98% of respondents had learnt more about people's lives in other European countries.
- 78% of respondents felt more European.
- And 69% of respondents reported that they were more likely to learn another European language.

...the evolving tradition of twinning...

Town-twinning in Europe is a long-established practice, founded by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and now extending to a network of some 20,000 towns. For 20 years CEMR has been working in close collaboration with the European Commission to strengthen European citizenship, mainly through the promotion of twinning.

CEMR was set up in 1951 to promote local authorities' participation in the European construction process. Its 50 national associations of towns, municipalities and regions from 37 countries represent some 100,000 local and regional authorities. It works to promote a united Europe that is based on local and regional self government and democracy.

As CEMR itself says, "Twinning is first and foremost about mobility between citizens" - whether elected representatives, members of local associations, or in schools. Since twinning is based on exchanges, it encourages people to travel to new places to meet their European counterparts. Some of the twinings specifically address current mobility issues and try and find solutions together through shared work among experts. Through its members, CEMR offers a twinning network which can help municipalities from across Europe to find their ideal partner through the support of national twinning coordinators.

With the support of DG Education and Culture, CEMR will soon also provide an improved service with its twinning website that is reaching near completion. This will allow any European municipality seeking a twinning partner to advertise its call in its mother tongue - and the advertisement will be translated into more than twenty languages for the benefit of other municipalities. It will also feature comprehensive multilingual information on the role of the EU in twinning, contacts and funding. It is scheduled to be up and running by the end of 2008.



Exchange of experience is an important tool to promote mobility, says CEMR. And it believes that the EU – and DG Education and Culture and the Europe for Citizens programme in particular – has a broader role to play in promoting people's mobility across Europe, through people-to-people schemes, innovative secondment and exchange schemes.

...a trade union Erasmus...

The fourteen trade union organisations that are members of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) decided they should develop their own European training courses for future leaders of the trade union movement. The idea was to link consciousness about Europe with the respect for Europe's traditions, social history and its political diversity at national level.

Inspired by the Erasmus programme of exchanges at university level, they organised a pilot exchange of ten full-time trade union officials among their member organisations. The project, which has obtained funding from the Europe for Citizens programme, aims at providing participants with an understanding of trade union culture in different organisations operating in different contexts. Promote the capacity for considering trade union action with a European dimension should create a network of European trade union citizens capable of developing European-level trade union initiatives in everyday life and at local level.

The ETUC hope is that these future trade union leaders appreciate the problems of industrial and social relations with an intercultural perspective. The experience acquired during the internships should help overcome prejudices, stimulate informed debate and build partnerships for the future of the European trade union movement. The resulting network would give new emphasis to the European dimension of all trade union actions at local, regional, sectoral, national or European level. European citizenship can be built on the basis of debate in society about the role of the social partners in building the European social model with the involvement of non-governmental organisations.

Critical success factors include the use of information technology, with a dedicated web site with access uniquely for the individual and organisations taking part in the project; and a newsletter for wider distribution across the trade union movement to share opinions and experiences. Challenges for the future include ensuring the long-term continuation of the project, and securing the deployment of the new skills acquired by participants to benefit the European trade union movement and national organisations.

The ETUC contributes to the construction of social Europe through the influence it exerts on EU legislation via its direct links with the other institutions of the EU. This new network can become a "task force" within the ETUC, giving a new impetus to the wider trade union movement to impact at the national level - both upstream of new legislation, and downstream, in its implementation.

TAKEN BY THE HAND

by European Documentation Centres

With the advent of the Internet, the way people study has changed. Students of the 'Google generation' rely less on books and other printed sources, and more on information obtained online. Online information is remarkable, but it has to be selected, evaluated and interpreted with care. The European Documentation Centres (EDCs) may help with these tasks.

EDCs aim to provide guided access to EU information for students and academics. There are some 380 centres in the 27 Member States, located in the libraries of universities and research institutes. EDC staff are experts trained in sourcing EU information. They help with enquiries ranging from straightforward document searches to in-depth research on European topics. The majority of them also organise courses for students on how to trace EU information online.

The network was launched in 1963 to promote education and research on European integration at higher education level and to encourage the academic community to engage in the debate on Europe. The EDCs receive support from the Commission, including selected free publications, intranet

access, training, and networking. They are also part of the EUROPE DIRECT network which aims to bring the EU closer to people through local actions.

Recent evaluation of the EDC network has suggested that users are very satisfied with the quality of assistance provided. This educational resource deserves to be better known and more widely used by students today.

For a list of EDCs see:

● http://ec.europa.eu/europedirect/visit_us/directory/index_en.htm



Researchers at the European Documentation Centre in Debrecen, Hungary, demonstrate that printed sources still have a shelf life...

LATEST NEWS



September 2008

Košice and Marseille to be the European Capitals of Culture in 2013.

Košice in Slovakia and Marseille in France will be the European Capitals of Culture in 2013. This is the recommendation made by the international juries in charge of assessing the bids for this title. The European capital of culture is a golden opportunity to promote two distinct cities and towns every year as well as to show off Europe's cultural richness and diversity.. Following a previous decision France and Slovakia are the two EU Member States eligible to showcase a European Capital of Culture in 2013. This title is the first one to follow new arrangements established in 2006, under which there are two selection phases. In a pre-selection phase a shortlist of applicant cities is drawn up, and the final selection is made nine months later. The two cities selected are then officially appointed by the Council of the European Union. The Slovak and French bids were examined international juries of thirteen members, six of whom are appointed by the Member State concerned, whilst the other seven are appointed by the European Institutions

4 - 6 September 2008

"European Civic Days" have strengthened civil dialogue in Europe

The European Commission has launched a new series of events concentrating on European citizenship. The first event, under the name of "European Civic Days", took place in La Rochelle, France, from 4 to 6 September 2008. More than 1,500 people participated in this event to discuss the issues of European citizenship and civil dialogue in Europe. The meeting brought together a wide range of interested parties from associations and non-governmental organisations, officials from local, regional, national and European institutions as well as specialists on European citizenship. Focussing on mobility, the programme included exchanges, discussions, workshops and examples of concrete initiatives and best practices.



22 July 2008

Golden Stars awards to 12 citizenship projects

In July 2008 the European Commission selected 12 civic participation projects that encourage action and debate on EU issues at the grass-roots level. In November these projects will be awarded the "Golden Stars of active European citizenship" in a prize ceremony in Brussels, hosted by Commissioner Ján Figel'. The 2008 Golden Stars are awarded as part of the Europe for Citizens programme, and give official recognition to initiatives that showcase cooperation, effective working methods and tangible results in the area of civic participation. The winning projects involve participants from 22 EU Member States.

10 July 2008

Making Learning Mobility an Opportunity for All

The High Level Expert Forum on Mobility, a group of experts called together by the European Commission from various sectors, presented in July a set of recommendations on how to build on the success of the Erasmus programme and make learning mobility an opportunity not only for students but for all young people. In their final report the experts shed new light on how to break down administrative barriers and offer – as well as fund – more and better opportunities for mobility. The Forum's vision does not stop at EU borders, but envisages a mobile Europe increasingly open to the world.



4 July 2008

More than 3 million Europass CVs created online

More than 3 million people generated their CVs with the help of the Europass website till June 2008. Europass provides a coordinated portfolio of documents helping people to describe what they know and can do in a way that is clearly and easily understood throughout Europe. A recent evaluation of the initiative has found that Europass is a cost-efficient tool that is relevant to citizens. Since the launch in 2005 the Europass web portal has had more than 12 million visitors, a clear proof of its success.

May/June 2008

Erasmus programme receives two awards

The Erasmus programme has received two awards in 2008. In May, the Prince of Asturias handed over the "Prize for Excellence in integrating young people into the workforce" on behalf of the NoviaSalcedo Foundation of Spain. The Erasmus programme received this prize in the category of public bodies for its exemplary action in promoting the professional integration of young people. In June, the University of Valladolid, Spain's oldest, awarded its "Chemical Engineering Medal" to the Community programme as a recognition of its contribution to academic and professional performance. The chemical engineering section sends almost 80 % of its students abroad on an Erasmus exchange.


Directorate-General for Education and Culture:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/index_en.html


Education & Training:

<http://ec.europa.eu/education>

EIT:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eit/index_en.html

Erasmus:

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Erasmus Mundus:

<http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus>


Culture:

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/index_en.html


Culture portal:

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/portal/index_en.htm


European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008:

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