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(Acts whose publication is not obligatory)

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL

RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

of 18 December 2006

on transnational mobility within the Community for education and training purposes: European Quality Charter for Mobility

(2006/961/EC)

(Text with EEA relevance)

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 149(4) and Article 150(4) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,

Having regard to the Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee ⁽¹⁾,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions ⁽²⁾,

Acting in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 251 of the Treaty ⁽³⁾,

Whereas:

- (1) Mobility in education and training is an integral part of the freedom of movement of persons — a fundamental freedom protected by the Treaty — and one of the main objectives of the European Union's action in the field of education and training, based both on common values and on respect for diversity. It is an essential tool for creating a genuine European area of lifelong learning, for promoting employment and reducing poverty, and for helping to promote active European citizenship.
- (2) Mobility brings citizens closer to one another and improves mutual understanding. It promotes solidarity, the exchange of ideas and a better knowledge of the different cultures which make up Europe; thus, mobility furthers economic, social and regional cohesion.

- (3) Intensifying European mobility and exchanges for education and training purposes, and events such as the 2006 European Year of Workers' Mobility, have a key role to play in achieving the Lisbon goal of making Europe the most innovative and competitive knowledge-based economy by 2010.
- (4) Providing a better framework for mobility for education and training purposes within the EU will help to contribute towards the achievement of a knowledge-based economy central to the creation of employment, sustainable development, research and innovation in the Member States.
- (5) Increased support from all stakeholders, including public authorities, for mobility within the EU is needed to improve the quality and effectiveness of education and training systems in Europe.
- (6) Recommendation 2001/613/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 July 2001 on mobility within the Community for students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers ⁽⁴⁾ was the first recommendation adopted with the aim of facilitating Community action to encourage mobility.
- (7) The work of the group of experts set up by the Commission in accordance with point III(a) of that Recommendation, and the first follow-up report, while showing the progress made both at national and at European level as regards mobility for education and training purposes, demonstrate

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 88, 11.4.2006, p. 20.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 206, 29.8.2006, p. 40.

⁽³⁾ Opinion of the European Parliament of 26 September 2006 (not yet published in the Official Journal) and Council Decision of 18 December 2006.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 215, 9.8.2001, p. 30.

the need to focus not only on increasing mobility in quantitative terms but, above all, on improving its quality.

- (8) This objective may be pursued, inter alia, by adopting, in the form of a Recommendation, a Quality Charter for Mobility, laying down a set of principles in this field, to be implemented on a voluntary basis.
- (9) The European Quality Charter for Mobility (hereinafter referred to as 'the Charter') should also allow for the specific needs of people with disabilities and for disadvantaged groups.
- (10) The Charter should help increase exchanges, facilitate the recognition of periods dedicated to education or training, and the recognition of titles and qualifications, and establish mutual trust so as to improve and strengthen cooperation between the relevant authorities, organisations and all the stakeholders in mobility. Attention should be paid to the issue of the portability of loans, grants and social security benefits.
- (11) The Charter is intended to complement, but not replace, the specific provisions outlined in the Erasmus Student Charter.
- (12) The Charter, in the respective languages of the recipients, should be made readily available by the authorities to all students and persons undergoing training, organisations and other stakeholders in mobility in countries of origin and host countries, and should be treated as a basic reference framework.
- (13) The advantages of mobility strongly depend on the quality of the practical provisions: information, preparation, support and recognition of the experience and qualifications acquired by participants during the study and training periods. The people and organisations involved can considerably improve its value by careful planning and suitable evaluation.
- (14) Europass⁽¹⁾ is a particularly useful instrument for developing transparency and recognition in order to aid mobility.
- (15) It is desirable that the principles laid down in the Charter apply not only to the period of mobility itself but also to the periods preceding and following it.
- (16) A learning plan should be drawn up in advance. General preparation of the participants is also necessary, taking account of linguistic preparation. In this regard, the competent authorities and organisations should provide assistance.
- (17) All administrative and financial questions, such as what financial support is available, who bears the costs, and

insurance cover in the host country, should be solved before departure.

- (18) For the period spent abroad, the quality of mobility can be enhanced by the provision of schemes such as mentoring for participants.
- (19) A detailed and clear description of any courses or training followed in the host country, including the duration of the course or training, should help to facilitate their recognition on returning to the home country.
- (20) Transparency and good administration call for a clear definition of the stakeholders responsible for each stage and action of the mobility programme.
- (21) In order to ensure the overall quality of mobility, it is desirable to ensure freedom of movement for all EU citizens and to apply as far as possible the principles laid down in the Charter and the relevant recommendations to all types of mobility for learning or professional development purposes: education or training; formal or non-formal learning, including voluntary work and projects; short or long mobility periods; school, higher education or job-related learning; measures in connection with lifelong learning.
- (22) In view of the diversity of the nature and duration of mobility activities, Member States may adjust the implementation of the Charter according to circumstances, namely to adapt it to specific situations and programmes. Member States may make some of the points compulsory and consider others as optional.
- (23) Since the objectives of this Recommendation cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States and can therefore, by reason of the scale and effects of this Recommendation, be better achieved at Community level, the Community may adopt measures, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity as set out in Article 5 of the Treaty. In accordance with the principle of proportionality, as set out in that Article, the present Recommendation does not go beyond what is necessary in order to achieve those objectives,

HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE MEMBER STATES:

1. adopt and promote the use of the attached Charter as a means to enhance personal and professional development;
2. report on their implementation of this Recommendation and any complementary measures they may choose to take in favour of mobility, particularly in relation to the quality aspects thereof, in their national contributions to the Education and Training 2010 work programme, as from the second year following the adoption of this Recommendation;

⁽¹⁾ Decision No 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004 on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass) (OJ L 390, 31.12.2004, p. 6).

3. continue to cooperate closely and coordinate their actions with a view to eliminating obstacles which directly or indirectly impede the mobility of EU citizens;
 4. provide appropriate support and suitable infrastructures for mobility for education and training purposes in order to enhance the education and training levels of their citizens;
 5. take any necessary steps to promote mobility, to ensure that all relevant information is easily understandable and accessible to all, for instance by means of an introductory guide to mobility or a list of supporting organisations, and to improve the conditions for mobility,
- concerning the implementation of the measures advocated in this Recommendation may be exchanged;
 3. improve or develop in close cooperation with the relevant authorities gender-specific statistical data on mobility for education and training purposes;
 4. consider the present Recommendation as forming a whole with Recommendation 2001/613/EC and therefore to include the biennial reports requested therein in the general reports of the Education and Training 2010 work programme.

HEREBY INVITE THE COMMISSION TO:

1. encourage the use of the Charter by national agencies and other organisations working in the field of education and training and mobility;
2. continue to cooperate with the Member States and the social partners, so that useful information and experience

Done at Brussels, 18 December 2006.

For the European Parliament
The President
J. BORRELL FONTELLES

For the Council
The President
J.-E. ENESTAM

ANNEX

EUROPEAN QUALITY CHARTER FOR MOBILITY

INTRODUCTION

Strengthened by the Mobility Action Plan of 2000 ⁽¹⁾ and by Recommendation 2001/613/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 10 July 2001 on mobility within the Community for students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers ⁽²⁾, mobility has always been of considerable interest to stakeholders. That Recommendation was broad in scope, addressed a range of important questions associated with mobility and was targeted at anyone who might benefit from a period of learning abroad (formal and non-formal), including students, teachers, trainers, volunteers and people undergoing training. Recommendation 2006/961/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 18 December 2006 on transnational mobility within the Community for education and training purposes: European Quality Charter for Mobility ⁽³⁾, of which this Charter constitutes an integral part, has the same scope but focuses on the quality aspects of mobility, as proposed by an expert group established following the first Recommendation. It should help to ensure that participants have a positive experience, both in the host country and in their country of origin once they return.

This Charter offers guidance for mobility undertaken by individual young people or adults, for the purposes of formal and non-formal learning and for their personal and professional development. It has been designed as a basic reference document, which takes account of national situations and respects Member States' competences. Its scope and content may be adapted to suit the duration of the mobility and the particularities of the various educational, training and youth activities as well as the needs of the participants. Although primarily addressing mobility for learning purposes, it is felt that this guidance could also be useful for other types of mobility, such as mobility for work.

1. Information and guidance

Potential candidates for mobility should have equal access, at all levels, to reliable sources of information and guidance for mobility and the conditions in which it can be taken up. Among other things, clear information should be provided on each of the points contained in this Charter, about the role and tasks of the sending and hosting organisations and about the various education and training systems.

2. Learning plan

Before undertaking mobility for education or training purposes, a learning plan, taking account of linguistic preparation, should be drawn up and agreed by the sending and hosting organisations and the participants. A learning plan is particularly important in the case of long-term mobility and may also be useful in the case of short-term mobility. The plan should outline the objectives and expected learning outcomes, as well as how these should be achieved and implemented. Any significant modification of the learning plan should be agreed by all parties. When drawing up the learning plan, the issues of reintegration into the home country and evaluation should be borne in mind.

3. Personalisation

Mobility undertaken for education or training purposes should fit in as much as possible with the personal learning pathways, skills and motivation of the participants, and should develop or supplement them.

4. General preparation

Prior preparation of the participants is advisable, and should be tailored to their specific needs. It should include linguistic, pedagogical, administrative, legal, personal and cultural aspects, and information on financial aspects, as necessary.

⁽¹⁾ Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 14 December 2000, concerning an action plan for mobility (OJ C 371, 23.12.2000, p. 4).

⁽²⁾ OJ L 215, 9.8.2001, p. 30.

⁽³⁾ See page 5 of this Official Journal

5. Linguistic aspects

Language skills are important for effective learning, intercultural communication and a better understanding of the host country's culture. Participants, and their sending and hosting organisations, should pay special attention to appropriate linguistic preparation. Wherever possible, mobility arrangements should include:

- language assessment before departure and an opportunity to follow courses in the language of the host country and/or the language of instruction, if different;
- in the host country, linguistic support and advice.

6. Logistical support

Where necessary, adequate logistical support should be provided to the participants. This could include information and assistance concerning travel arrangements, insurance, residence or work permits, social security, the portability of government grants and loans from the country of origin to the host country, accommodation, and any other practical aspects, including safety issues relevant to their stay, as appropriate.

7. Mentoring

The hosting organisation (educational establishment, youth organisation, company, etc.) should provide schemes such as mentoring to advise participants and help with their effective integration into the host environment, and should act as a contact point for obtaining ongoing assistance.

8. Recognition

If a study or placement period abroad is an integral part of a formal study or training programme, this fact should be stated in the learning plan, and participants should be provided with assistance to facilitate recognition and certification, where appropriate. In the learning plan, the sending organisation should undertake to recognise successful periods of mobility. For other types of mobility, and particularly those in the context of non-formal education and training, an appropriate document should be issued so that the participant is able to demonstrate his or her active participation and learning outcomes in a satisfactory and credible way. In this context, the use of the Europass ⁽¹⁾ should be encouraged.

9. Reintegration and evaluation

On return to the home country, particularly after long-term mobility, participants should be given guidance on how to make use of competences and skills acquired during the stay. Where necessary, help with reintegration into the social, educational or professional environment of the home country should be made available to people returning after long-term mobility. The experience gained should be properly evaluated by participants, together with the organisations responsible, to assess whether the aims of the learning plan have been met.

10. Commitments and responsibilities

The responsibilities arising from these quality criteria should be agreed by the sending and hosting organisations and the participants. They should preferably be confirmed in writing, so that responsibilities are clear to all concerned.

⁽¹⁾ Decision No 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004 on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass) (OJ L 390, 31.12.2004, p. 6).