

REPORT OF THE HIGH LEVEL EXPERT FORUM ON MOBILITY  
***Making learning mobility an opportunity for all***

**The High Level Expert Forum on Mobility**

Commissioner Jan Figel' in December 2007 decided to establish a High Level Expert Forum on Mobility, responding to the reflection on mobility policies which had taken place during 2007 and to the wish of the French Administration to prepare to give a political focus to promoting mobility during its Presidency,. He gave the Forum a mandate as follows:

*to undertake a reflection and to make recommendations with a view to promoting an expansion of mobility between Member States for students and young people. The aim will be to explore how the EU can, building on the success to date of the Erasmus programme, further expand mobility not only within the university sector but also among young people more generally, for example among young entrepreneurs and artists and in sectors such as vocational training, adult learning and voluntary activity. The Forum should in this regard examine barriers to mobility, the potential for future EU actions and for action at Member State level to support the general EU objectives.*

Commissioner Figel' invited the Forum to undertake its work rapidly, in the period January to June 2008, with a view to having the Forum's Report available for the start of the French Presidency.

The members of the High Level Expert Forum are

### Members of the Forum

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

*The High Level Expert Forum on Mobility: its Mandate and composition*

### **Executive Summary**

**1. Why focus on Mobility now?**

**2. Two reasons for a new mobility policy: competitiveness and citizenship.**

**3. A vision of the future – two contrasting scenarios.**

**4. What kinds of mobility are we concerned with?**

**5. What are the trends, barriers and drivers in mobility?**

**6. What works and what does not work in current policies and programmes?**

**7. A European partnership for a new ambition: learning mobility as a rule, not an exception.**

**8. Realising the new vision: Priority actions required.**

**8A. Priorities across all programme areas.**

**8B. Priorities for the different programme areas.**

### **Annexes**

*A. Description and stock taking of the different areas and programmes for youth mobility*

*B. Life Stories: people talk about how mobility has influenced their lives.*

*C. Lifestyles of Young People and how Mobility can be a part.*

*D. Virtual mobility and E-tools for mobility.*

*E. FP7 Initiatives and the EIT: giving strategic direction to mobility.*

*F. The Leonardo Quality Commitment.*

*G. Regional Support for Mobility: example from the French Ile-de-France Region.*

*H. Structural fund support for Regional Mobility Initiatives: example from Wales.*

*I. Making Learning Mobility the Rule not the Exception: statistical illustrations of the new ambition.*

## Executive Summary

In the years until 2020 the European youth generation - 16-29 years of age - will diminish from 90 to 81 million, a reduction of 9 million or 10 per cent. This will have a profound impact on education, the economy and society – now and in the future. In the same period technological changes will be even more pervasive and global competition will increase, not least the competition for talented people. Thus, there is an urgent need to strengthen policies to make Europe ready for this competition and to give young Europeans opportunities to learn and to develop their capacities.

The European Union should forge a new European generation fully equipped to cope with the new global challenges, with a deepened sense of European identity, openness and cooperation.

That is why learning mobility should become a natural feature of being European and an opportunity provided to all young people in Europe. We make this proposal as a contribution to two vital policy goals:

- to strengthen Europe's competitiveness, building its knowledge-intensive society;
- and to deepen the sense of European identity and citizenship within its youth generation.

This report presents recommendations on how cross border mobility for learning and skills can be made a basic element in the emerging knowledge society and of a more competitive and attractive Europe.

- We propose the EU to make - as a long term goal – mobility for learning the rule, rather than an exception that it is today. We propose that it should be so for all young Europeans, in all forms of education and in non-formal activities such as voluntary and community work as well.
- We propose the following medium term targets: in 2012 there should be opportunities for cross border mobility for at least 15 per cent of the youth generation, in 2015 for at least 30 per cent and in 2020 for at least 50 per cent.
- This will mean an expansion of the existing mobility programs which currently offer mobility opportunities to about 300,000 persons a year. They should be capable of reaching 900.000 young people in 2012, 1.800.000 in 2015 and 2.900.000 in 2020. Virtual forms of mobility – networking and twinning between schools, institutions, groups - should reinforce and complement cross border physical mobility in all areas.

This vision will not be realised unless there is a substantial and concerted action to make it happen. There is need for a new European partnership to promote learning mobility, involving the active engagement of the EU, Member States and regions, enterprises, educational institutions, civil society and young people themselves:

- We propose accordingly that, in order to start building this growth quickly, mobility is made a top priority in the mid-term review of the financial perspective.
- Furthermore, the EU Commission should mainstream mobility into all relevant policies, notably the Structural Funds and the R&D Framework programme;

- The Commission and Member States should work together, via the open method of coordination, to eliminate barriers to mobility, to set targets for cross border mobility, to ensure quality and to exchange best practices. The Commission and Member States should work with regions, European networks of companies, foundations and European professional associations supporting the development of learning mobility.
- The greatly increased funding needed to support the new ambition should come from increased allocations to the EU mobility programmes, from wider EU funding (notably the Structural Funds), from national and regional sources and from business.
- This vision should also involve the world of business. There should be increased mobility between enterprises, and between business and the worlds of education, training and research.

One central element of this strategy is to expand the opportunities to learn a second and third European language. This will require better language teaching within all parts of the education and training system, and a stronger focus on languages in the preparation of mobility moves. Language teaching within the VET sector should in particular be strengthened.

Along with learning, cultural exchanges are at the heart of this vision of a more mobile Europe. Greatly increased interaction among Europe's cultural actors, and with the rest of the world, combined with their capacity, through their activities, to reach millions of citizens, will fuel a Europe which uses its own diversity for creativity and equips its citizens for intercultural dialogue in a globalising world. This will involve removing the obstacles which artists and cultural professionals face to their mobility, collecting data on such mobility and setting targets for its expansion.

The challenge of meeting these targets is considerable. The Forum's ambitions will have been achieved by 2020 if, annually, mobility reaches just over 6% of university students, 3.5% of VET trainees, 0.45% of secondary students and if just over 1% of young people engage in a mobility-based voluntary action. In 2012, mobility should reach about 2.5% of all university students, just over 1% of VET trainees, 0.15% of secondary students while 0.34% of young people should engage in a mobility-based voluntary action. The Forum feels that these ambitions are attainable.

To reach these ambitious goals and targets, we present a package of urgent reform of the present mobility programmes – Erasmus, Leonardo, Comenius, Grundtvig, Marie Curie - to simplify procedures and to engage actors in education institutions, in business and among local and regional authorities. We propose ways and means to further develop a European area of education and mobility by opening tracks to promote learning mobility, by organising European pathways for mobility and by strengthening support conditions.

## *1. Why focus on mobility now?*

In the years until 2020 the European youth generation, 15-29 years of age, will diminish from 90 to 81 million, a reduction of 9 million or 10 per cent. This will have a profound impact on education, the economy and the society – now and in the future. In the same period technological changes will be even more pervasive and global competition will increase, not least the competition for talented people. Thus, there is an urgent need to strengthen existing and policies and to create new ones which will make Europe ready for this competition and which will give young people opportunities to learn and to develop the capacities they need to face the future with confidence.

The European Union should forge a new European generation fully equipped to cope with the new global challenges, with a deepened sense of European identity, openness and cooperation. That is why learning mobility should become a natural feature of being European and an opportunity provided to all young people in Europe. We make this proposal as a contribution to two vital policy goals: to strengthen Europe's competitiveness, building its knowledge-intensive economy; and to deepen the sense of European identity and citizenship within its youth generation.

Erasmus has shown the way: it has grown rapidly in 20 years and has achieved widespread "brand" recognition. It serves to illustrate how mobility can bring about the set of linked benefits outlined above – benefits to the human capital of participants; the creation of personal links across borders; language learning; and breaking down institutional barriers. This final point is particularly important – Erasmus was one of the factors that drove the Bologna process which has brought about a major convergence and modernisation of third-level education structures. As such, it provides a model of what might also be possible in, for example, the VET sector, where a re-invigorated Leonardo programme could help to drive the Copenhagen process.

But Erasmus also points to the need for urgent action now. Despite its visibility, it still touches only a small percentage of the student population – less than 4% of university students undertake an Erasmus move during their studies. And its effect in certain countries and in certain subject areas is well below this. There is no guarantee that the steady growth seen to date will continue - the target set for the current programme period, to have achieved over 3 million mobility moves by end-2012, is seriously in question. A major change will be needed if the longer term vision evoked by the Commission in its Strategic Report on the Lisbon Strategy of December 2007 – "that, in time, it becomes a standard part of university education" – can be met.

The challenges of generalising learning mobility are even greater in other areas.

There is an urgent need to break firmly with past patterns and to give a new impetus to mobility among European citizens – mobility essentially focused on learning, but ultimately for jobs, competitiveness, cultural exchange and citizenship.

There are also political developments leading to a strong political focus on the issue and recognition of its potential:

- it was highlighted at the Education Council last November on the occasion of 20 years of Erasmus;
- there was a focus on mobility in the Commission's Strategic Report on the Lisbon Strategy of December 2007.
- the forthcoming French Presidency has indicated a willingness to seek a new political focus on promoting mobility, for students and among young people generally.

There are also other current initiatives at the European level which help set the context:

- In May 2007 the Commission adopted a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world, the objectives of which include the mobility of artists and professionals in the cultural field and the circulation of artistic expressions beyond national borders. The agenda has been endorsed by the Council and the mobility of cultural workers in Europe has been included as a key priority in the Council's work plan for 2008-2010.
- The Commission in July 2008 adopted a new social agenda for Opportunities, Access and Solidarity which places a strong emphasis on skills as the main driver of the security and social wellbeing of European citizens.
- The Commission will in December 2008 launch a new initiative on New Skills for New Jobs which will map out possible mechanisms to identify and anticipate Europe's future skills needs for a rapidly changing world. A skilled and mobile European labour force, working in a Europe where mobility barriers have been broken down, will be an important part of that strategy
- We are approaching the mid-term review of the current EU Financial Perspective 2007-2013. It will offer an opportunity to re-directing resources to strengthen EU support for mobility.

Now is the time to break with the past and develop a new strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **2. Two reasons for a new mobility policy:**

### **Competitiveness and citizenship**

As we see it, there are two overarching objectives for a new policy for learning mobility:

- to strengthen Europe's competitiveness, building the knowledge-intensive society;
- and to deepen the sense of European identity and citizenship, more specifically within its youth generation.

The right to be mobile across national borders is one of the fundamental freedoms which the EU bestows on its citizens. The EU does not only seek to guarantee this right; it actively promotes a high level of mobility. Mobility is an important part of the flexibility which Europe seeks from its labour force, vital to the challenge of addressing its future skills needs in an economy of knowledge, rapid change. And mobility of Europe's workforce, coupled with skills-focused immigration from third countries, will play an even greater role in the context of demographic ageing, the effects of which will increasingly become apparent in years to come.

Mobility also contributes to other important policy objectives:

- It is important for personal development, boosting people's skills and employability. It allows people to pick up new knowledge, learn from different educators and test themselves, their assumptions and competences in new situations. Mobility has often formed part of the education of great innovators and of those with the highest skills. The Forum's vision is that it can be an important part of every learning experience, for all groups of learners, right throughout life. (see Annex B).
- Mobility breaks down barriers between people and groups, building a sense of EU citizenship. Successive surveys show that those who have undertaken mobility moves via the EU programmes are more enthusiastic about European integration. If Europe can deliver on the vision of greatly expanded opportunities for learning mobility mapped out here, it will make European integration more meaningful and tangible to the broad mass of young people. Their understanding of and support for Europe should strengthen.
- In the increasingly multicultural society of the future, the experience of mobility is critical to help form young people as future leaders and citizens, so that they can contribute to greater respect for diversity, a deepening of cooperation and a more stable and peaceful world.
- Mobility is fundamental for artists and cultural workers. They need to travel beyond borders to broaden their vision, extend the scope of their activities and meet new audiences; to find new sources of inspiration to make their creations evolve; and to exchange experiences and learn from each other. While certain forms of mobility are "stand alone", in that they are based on an individual initiative (such as residence schemes), others are intrinsically connected to the combined mobility of works and performances, thereby involving a different set of economic actors.

- Mobility promotes language learning. The importance of language learning, as a means both for building European integration and citizenship and also for the functioning of the single market, cannot be overestimated. Mobility to the country of the language being learned is and should be a vital part in the learning of a language.
- Mobility increases the flow and sharing of knowledge between institutions, helping them to break out of national or local patterns ("brain circulation"), opening them up to European and potentially global influences. It causes people to question established ways of seeing and doing; it is an important trigger of change, modernisation and higher quality in all walks of life. Promoting networking and exchange between institutions is an important part of Europe's policy effort to promote the "fifth freedom" of knowledge (see the Conclusions of the European Council of 14 March 2008). Mobility of knowledge workers, academics and students, between educational and research establishments, is a key part of brain circulation.
- Mobility which involves enterprises – between enterprises and between enterprises and educational and research institutions - can help bring about economies of agglomeration and clustering effects which will strengthen Europe's competitiveness and capacity for innovation. And it can help to bring such effects even into otherwise remote regions and into small institutions.

It has long been recognised that Europe suffers a deficit in relation to mobility, its workforce more reluctant to move in pursuit of opportunities than that of other leading economies. The evidence is clear that willingness to be mobile is highest among young people and among those with the highest education. Barriers to mobility exist within national tax, pension and social security schemes; equally important are the psychological barriers which limit people's willingness to be mobile<sup>1</sup>

It is possible to respond to this situation and to seek policy mechanisms to develop people's willingness/openness to be mobile. Just as we look to education to prepare people for their participation in the modern world, we can look to learning mobility linked to educational activities to open them up to future job mobility. Promoting such a willingness to be mobile is the particular focus of the EU mobility actions, notably but not exclusively the mobility actions under the Life Long Learning Programme and other Programmes run by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture. These programmes are at the centre of this Report but they are not its exclusive concern. Actions under the responsibility of other DGs, notably DGs RTD, ENTR and EMPL also contribute. The Structural Funds and the research Framework Programme have important roles to play. This Report will propose that promoting mobility can be "mainstreamed" within a wide range of community actions and, furthermore, that it should in the future be addressed not just by EU actions but also by actions by Member States, regions and other actors such as business.

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<sup>1</sup> See successive studies by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working, most recently " Foundation findings - Mobility in Europe: The way forward", October 2007

### **3. A vision of the future – two contrasting scenarios.**

The Forum has the following vision of a future Europe which has made learning mobility an opportunity for all:

The European Union provides a common house for European citizens, consumers, workers, artists, trainees and students. More mobile and networked workers, trainees and students are developing European expert communities where better products and services are created. Joint cultural and scientific creativity is also flourishing as well as joint initiatives by European citizens in other areas – civic activity, town twinning, and intercultural dialogue.

Mobility is a key component of these processes of shared learning, creativity, work and social participation. Mobility is both physical and virtual. Due to the ongoing revolution in ICTs, most citizens are connected, networked, equipped with several wireless and intelligent devices to get and process information. Virtual mobility is widely available, quick and cheap. Nevertheless, physical mobility provides a more intensive and deeper experience and is, therefore, irreplaceable. Developing the synergies between virtual and physical mobility is a central art of a new way of life.

The general conditions for both kinds of mobility are stronger. Geographical mobility is easier, social benefits and loans are more portable, broadband is generally available, the newly literate European young can master ICTs and other languages. The European Qualifications Framework allows people to build and transfer competences across Europe, using the full range of possibilities it offers for lifelong learning. The Bologna and Copenhagen processes are breaking down barriers and are creating a truly European educational space. Schools are networked across borders (allowing, for example, migrant students to keep in touch with their home culture); voluntary groups share ideas and projects and exchange people. All forms and phases of the mobility cycle are being transformed by these instruments.

European, national and regional authorities support partnerships of education institutions, civil society bodies, companies and local authorities engaged in mobility via a combination of funding methods. This co-funding can be complemented by education loans which are portable across Europe.

Learning mobility does not stop at Europe's borders. Europe's best students are supported to access the world's best tuition. Europe's volunteers are to be found worldwide. And the world's students, trainees and volunteers have the opportunity to experience Europe, to work and study with their European peers. Europe's researchers can access the best world institutions and bring their experiences and expertise into Europe's research area.

Mobility does not simply involve "like-to-like" movement from university to university, from school to school. It also places people into different sectors, from the world of education into the world of business and vice versa; from education into voluntary action; from vocational training to academia; from public research bodies to business.

### *On the other hand ...*

There is an alternative, contrasting scenario. The positive vision just outlined will not be realised unless there is substantial and concerted action to make it happen. On the contrary, there are risks which could in future call into question the levels of mobility achieved to date.

For example, the greatly increased volume of mobility which is at the heart of this vision will not be achieved unless funding is considerably increased. In the long-term, this cannot happen if EU programmes are the only funding source; a new partnership for more, diversified sources of funding is vital. In the very short term, the Life Long Learning and other programmes will, on the basis of their current budgetary allocation, only have enough funding to maintain mobility numbers at broadly their present levels for the rest of the financial perspective to 2013.

There are signs that some of Europe's young people may be starting to lose their interest in learning mobility. Increased pressure within study cycles makes some feel that mobility is a luxury which they cannot afford.

Without targeted help, mobility risks to be the preserve of elites, with young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds locked out because it is costly and because the benefits it brings are not evident to them.

Without greater focus, language learning becomes increasingly focused on the learning of English. Thus non-English speaking countries risk being seen as irrelevant as mobility destinations, while the interest in language learning among young English speakers declines, as they increasingly expect the rest of the world to address them in English.

The technologies which can facilitate virtual mobility and greatly enhanced networking, which forms an integral part of the positive vision outlined here, also have the potential to fuel an increasing isolation and atomisation among young people.

Barriers which have long been identified to mobility in all categories remain unaddressed.

Addressing these barriers and adverse trends, moving to realise the positive vision outlined above will require that mobility be given a new focus in the policy efforts of the EU, Member States and Regions. It will require new forms of partnership and funding, a new mobilisation of actors and a new political momentum.

### *4. What kinds of mobility are we concerned with?*

The Report will address the following forms and types of mobility.

**Learning mobility.** Learning and personal development is the essential factor which is to be found in all the forms of mobility which this Report addresses. Learning may be formal – within the educational system – or informal –in the Youth and volunteering context. The report does not address how to promote **employment mobility**, mobility within the labour market – nevertheless, a central objective is to bring about a greater willingness among

Europe's workforce to be mobile. The line between learning mobility and labour market mobility is not rigid. In particular, where this report addresses issues related to the mobility of researchers and mobility in the culture sector, it is addressing the mobility of people already in the workforce.

**Organised learning mobility** is linked to specific learning or developmental goals. It is the type of activity promoted by the EU or national mobility programmes. It should always lead to the earning of qualifications or credits in an appropriate form. It is the main focus of this report. **Independent learning mobility**, outside of these programmes is taking place and the evidence, while not very clear, suggests that it is of a significant order of magnitude. Eurostat estimated that about 550,000 university students undertake their studies abroad each year, i.e. considerably more than undertake Erasmus moves.

**Mobility within Europe;** and **exchanges with the wider world** (encompassing both Europeans going out, and citizens of partner countries coming to Europe).

**Physical mobility**, involving a move to another country; and **Virtual mobility**, both as a means to prepare, enrich and follow up on physical mobility moves and as a form of mobility in its own right, subject to the same link with earning qualifications/credits for individuals or EU strategic goals in the case of group mobility [See Annex D].

## 5. What are the trends, barriers and drivers in mobility?

The Forum has explored, in discussion between its members and with stakeholders, the barriers and drivers which shape Europeans' mobility behaviour. The evidence would suggest that the main features of mobility within and across borders in Europe are the following:

- current levels of geographic mobility are low. Only 18% of Europeans have moved outside their region, while only 4% have moved to another Member State and 3% outside the Union. However, almost a quarter have moved within their region. This contrasts with the USA, where almost a third (32%) of the citizens live outside the state in which they were born. Nevertheless, while almost 70% of the European citizens have no intention to move on the near future, most of them view geographical mobility very positively;
- different Member States and social groups show different mobility intentions; the propensity is currently higher in the new Member States and in the Member States with liberal or social-democratic welfare regimes; more vulnerable workers are exposed to more involuntary job changes than their higher-skilled or better protected counterparts; voluntary mobility goes hand in hand with economic success, both at country level and for individuals; young and educated workers are the most likely to move.

The Forum has identified the following main barriers, all of which must be addressed if learning mobility is to be extended. **Opportunities** for organised learning mobility are too few and, other than in the university area, too little known by the majority of young people. There is furthermore a **lack of awareness of the advantages** of having a mobility experience – the positive link between learning mobility and employment or career development which is shown in all studies is not widely understood. Teachers, trainers, youth workers or managers who could act as **promoters of mobility lack both the knowledge and incentives** to do so (relatively few of them will have undertaken learning mobility themselves). Complex and off-putting administrative procedures deter administrators and institutions.

There are also significant disincentives related to the mobility move itself. The lack of knowledge about the **language and culture** of other countries remains a significant barrier in all areas, but particularly in the non-university areas. The **financial costs** of mobility are important. These include the direct costs of travel, accommodation and subsistence, but also the fact that income and various direct and indirect subsidies in the home country may be lost while abroad (as will be shown, this is a significant factor in the culture sector). The importance of the cost barrier is directly linked to the social-economic background of the students or the trainees. The Forum feels strongly that in future access to mobility opportunities should not be dependent on personal financial means.

The issue of **recognition and certification** for the learning mobility move is vital – a significant number of mobile learners still do not receive appropriate recognition; lingering ambiguity over this issue undoubtedly acts as a deterrent to others.

Finally the **lack of portability of insurance, pensions, access to health services and other social benefits** are significant barriers for people in the labour market. Of the groups addressed in this report, these barriers will be most significant for researchers, young

entrepreneurs and arts professionals. For this latter group, there can also be additional barriers linked to **liabilities for VAT and income tax** on performance income.

By contrast, there are important **drivers for learning mobility** which European policies can build on:

- the existence of a common European space, through the combined effect of TV channels, websites, performance in other languages, the euro and ease of travel, all of which are increasing the knowledge of each Member State citizens about the other's citizens. The quest for new personal experiences in other countries is now easier and is increasing particularly among young people (see Annex C);
- the single market and global markets which are leading companies and increasingly universities, research and training institutions to internationalise their frameworks of reference. This will be intensified in the areas where Europe is facing skills gaps such as in research, in creative and cultural industries, in energy and environmental technologies, health and business services, or in the external action of the Union;
- the progress achieved by the Bologna process concerning higher education and, to a lesser extent, by the Copenhagen process; combined with the recent adoption of the European Qualifications Framework and to be followed by the ECVET in vocational education and training, provide stronger European pathways for learning mobility;
- Furthermore, ongoing improvements in the legal frameworks for general and professional mobility in the European Union via:
  - Better definition of the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States (Directive 2004/38/EC);
  - recognition of professional qualifications (Directive 2005/36/EC)
  - a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences, Europass (Decision 2241/2004/EC);
  - coordination of social security systems (Regulation 883/2004);
  - the support to job search across Europe, by EURES, the European Job Mobility Portal

The Expert Forum proposes a new approach to learning mobility policies which aims at overcoming those barriers and building on these drivers.

**6. What works and what does not work in  
current policies and programmes?**

**Box X. Areas of mobility and the policies and programmes which support them.**

The various EU mobility programmes support organised learning mobility in a broad range of areas. These are

- Higher education (Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus) for both students and staff  
Higher Education/Research (Marie Curie, mobility within Networks of Excellence and Technology Platforms)  
Higher Education to Business (Erasmus Placements)
- Vocational Education and apprentices (Leonardo)
- Entrepreneurs (Erasmus for Entrepreneurs action to be launched this year)
- Second level education (Comenius)
- Adult learning (Grundtvig)
- The Cultural Sphere (Culture Programme)
- Volunteering (Youth) and Civil Society (Citizenship)

Annex A contains a description of these Programmes and an assessment of how they promote learning mobility in their respective target areas. On the basis of this assessment, the Forum has concluded that:

- Action in each of the programme areas is justified and positive. Taken together, the mobility programmes have the capacity to reach out to all parts of Europe's youth generation. The Forum has identified one particular group – people in the workforce who have left continuing education or training – which are not sufficiently addressed within the current programmes and for whom a new focus must be created. For the rest, what is needed now, if the programmes are to play their part in meeting the Forum's vision of mobility as a normal part of the education and training of all young Europeans, is to create a major increase in the scale of mobility opportunities and to improve both the context and the way in which the programmes operate.
- The coverage of all programmes, without exception, is low relative to their target populations – see Table 1 in Annex I, which indicates that less than 0.4% of the youth population 16-29 engages in a learning mobility activity each year). The point applies even in the University area, where mobility is most developed (approximately 0.8% of the student population engages in learning mobility annually). If the vision of the Expert Forum is to be addressed - of making mobility a normal part of all phases of education and training and in all of the activities covered in these programmes – then there is a huge gap to be bridged in all areas.
- Across all programme areas, there is widespread evidence that the complexity of procedures acts as a disincentive to participation. The disincentive effect is certainly greatest in those programmes where the actors addressed are small and decentralised, for example, in the Culture programme, in the voluntary sector or among SMEs in Leonardo. There is a strong call for simplification of procedures. As the Forum has a vision of

involving a range of actors from different backgrounds, both big organisations and small, the need for simplification is strong.

- Synergies between the different programmes are weak; the division of labour between them often unclear. As will be seen, programmes created for one target area many offer opportunities for other groups, e.g. Comenius Regio will be of interest to the voluntary sector. There needs to be greater awareness of who are the target groups for every action and a greater capacity to reach out and inform potential partners.
- Statistical information on the programmes is insufficient. Knowledge of the extent and composition of mobility is scarce and makes it difficult, in certain areas, to formulate very precise recommendations.

A more detailed discussion of the specific achievements and shortcomings in the various programmes is contained in Annex A.

### **7. A European partnership for a new ambition: learning mobility as a rule, not an exception**

Based on our finding as presented in this report, we urge Heads of State and Government, Members of the European Parliament and the European Commission to make one single strong commitment to:

***Make learning mobility a rule, not the exception, reserved for the few, which it is today. Learning mobility should be a natural feature of being European, promoting competitiveness and openness to the world and a deeper and more tangible European citizenship.***

The Forum proposes to:

***Turn this commitment into a strategy to offer, over time, mobility opportunities to all young people aged 16-29, irrespective of their social background, whether in school, university or vocational training, or whether in formal or informal learning.***

To reach such a goal, the strategy should be guided by the following general targets:

- in 2012 opportunities for cross border mobility should be provided for at least 15 per cent of the youth generation (16-29 years),
- in 2015 for at least 30 per cent
- and in 2020 for at least 50 per cent.

Table 1 in Annex I shows what such a commitment would require in numerical terms for mobility in the different areas.

These opportunities might take place at secondary, bachelor, master, PhD levels, internships, apprenticeships, volunteer work or professional training, in or outside the European Union.

- This will mean a significant expansion of the existing programme driven mobility, which currently offers mobility opportunities to about 300,000 persons a year. It should be capable of reaching 900.000 young people in 2012, 1.800.000 in 2015 and 2.900.000 in 2020. The Forum feels that these ambitions are attainable.
- These targets will in turn require the setting of similarly ambitious targets for each of the current mobility areas and these should be worked out in detail over the short term by the Commission and Member States.
- In addition, there is an existing mobility stream, estimated at around 500.000 a year, which is fully independent of the EU-programmes. In the absence of clear knowledge about this flow, the Forum makes no recommendations and no assumptions about its future development. However, taking it into account, there will be, in ten years time, a good chance to make cross border mobility for learning a rule, rather than an exception.
- Virtual mobility should reinforce and complement cross border physical mobility in all areas.

The challenge of meeting these targets is considerable. The Forum recognises that the exercise of target setting must be realistic and should take account of the state of development, knowledge and the existence of barriers in each of the different areas. Nevertheless, Table 1 shows that the Forum's ambitions will have been achieved by 2020 if, annually, mobility reaches just over 6% of university students, 3.5% of VET trainees, 0.45% of secondary students and if just over 1% of young people engage in a mobility-based voluntary action. By 2012, mobility should reach about 2.5% of all university students, just over 1% of VET trainees, 0.15% of secondary students while 0.34% of young people should engage in a mobility-based voluntary action. The Forum feels that these ambitions are attainable. The Forum feels that these ambitions are attainable.

The Forum would also envisage that the overall EU level targets set out here should be broken down at the level of Member States and regions. Member States and Regions will inevitably wish to prioritise the promotion of mobility within certain sectors and areas over others, in line with their own education and skills strategies.

This vision will not be realised unless there is a new European partnership to promote learning mobility, involving the active engagement of the EU, Member States and regions, enterprises, educational institutions and civil society:

- The EU Commission should mainstream mobility into all relevant policies, notably the Structural Funds and the R&D Framework programme;
- The Commission and Member States should work together, via the open method of coordination, to eliminate barriers to mobility, to set targets for cross border mobility, to ensure quality and to exchange best practices;

The Commission and Member States should work with regions, European networks of companies, foundations and European professional and educational associations to create the new shared responsibility for mobility, with different actors contributing in different ways.

- **The greatly increased funding needed to support the new ambition should come, not only from increased allocations to the mobility programmes, but from wider EU funding (notably from the Structural Funds), from national and regional sources and from business.**
- The EU institutions should define priorities, frameworks for quality, recognition and certification and facilitate the creation of mobility partnerships of all actors.
- Member States should provide a complement to European grants, notably to ensure equal opportunities or access to key-competences. They should set targets for the use of the structural funds for this purpose.
- Regions should be providers of hosting and accommodation infrastructures as well as contributors to grants; they too should set targets for the use of the structural funds with this purpose (see Annexes G and H).
- Companies should contribute to or directly provide learning mobility grants which can be integrated with and benefit from the labels of the EU mobility programmes, provided they comply with the European common frameworks; where they exist, their learning accounts should be used for this purpose.
- Individuals can contribute to their own mobility via personal or family resources supported by loans. The European Investment Bank is invited to prepare a European-wide loan scheme for this purpose.

A "Club Mobility 2012", with key partners from the worlds of civil society and business (interested NGOs, foundations, businesses such as banks) should be created to mobilise participants in this new partnership. The possibility to create a European Mobility Foundation with a European statute as part of the partnership should be explored.

The financial implications of delivering this new ambition, both for the Community budget and for national and regional authorities, will need to be worked out by all involved. Following its forthcoming mid-term review, available margins within the Community budget should be used to fund increased learning mobility in the period to 2012.

## ***8. Realising the new ambition: Priority actions required.***

### ***8A. Priorities across all programme areas.***

- The Forum proposes that there should be action across all the areas currently covered by the mobility programmes – and, indeed, beyond these areas - in order to:
- multiply the opportunities for mobility;
- improve the pathways to mobility; and
- strengthen the support conditions for mobility.

Multiplying opportunities for mobility should involve:

- a) mainstreaming learning mobility in all European policies. From education and training, culture, research, to innovation, enterprise, employment, environment policies as well as

the EU external policies. This can create more opportunities and mobilize more resources from the European budget;

- b) agreeing targets for learning mobility in the respective open methods of coordination for education, youth and culture policies; this will foster implementation at national level and mobilize new public and private resources;
- c) benchmarking the mobility performance of relevant institutions - education, training, research and voluntary bodies as well as companies. This will help engage them to sponsor incoming and outgoing learning mobility;
- d) developing in each programme area three types of mobility initiative. Firstly, partnerships involving several institutions which will provide for the mobility of groups of students, researchers, trainees or volunteers addressing a wide range of themes or disciplines. Secondly, using the same partnership approach, mobility opportunities focused on key strategic issues – mobility of trainers, teachers, youth workers and managers; and mobility linked to specific skills shortages. Thirdly, as appropriate in each programme area, opportunities for individuals to create their own tailored and flexible mobility moves, identifying specific sponsors and hosting institutions;
- e) encouraging European networks of companies, European professional associations, European networks of regions and other relevant networks to become active in promoting learning mobility;
- f) ensuring a special support for the participation of disadvantaged groups.

Improving the pathways for mobility should involve:

- a) implementing the European frameworks for recognition and certification such as EQF, ECTS, ECVET and Youthpass, so that all mobility periods can attract appropriate recognition;
- b) deepening the European convergence processes, such as Bologna, Copenhagen and the ERA, so that national structures no longer act as a barrier to mobility;
- c) developing a European network of learning mobility promoters who will be responsible for launching a campaign to inform and promote mobility opportunities which addresses young people, those who act as gatekeepers of mobility - teachers, trainers and managers – and institutions;
- d) develop strong synergies between the various programmes, so that mobility in one area can lead on to mobility in another and so that infrastructures and links developed in one area can be used in another.

Strengthen the support conditions for learning mobility should involve:

- a) promoting mobility among the gatekeepers – teachers, trainers and managers – building a strong commitment to mobility among them and providing them career incentives;

- b) exploiting the potential of virtual mobility to support and complement physical mobility in all areas;
- c) introducing in all learning mobility actions a preparatory module which will prepare young people for the barriers they face and, in particular, will support language learning and basic information about European citizenship; and
- d) joint working by the European Commission and Member States to reduce the legal barriers to learning mobility.

### ***8B. Priorities for the different programme areas.***

#### **Higher education, mobility of students and staff**

##### **Multiply opportunities for university mobility by:**

- Making rapid, targeted progress in the years to come to build a new partnership – of Member States, regions, universities and businesses - to make learning mobility a normal part of university education for all. The Forum proposes **a rapid expansion in mobility opportunities for university students, to reach 450,000 in 2012; 900,000 in 2015; 1,400,000 in 2020.**<sup>2</sup>
- The primary mechanism for this expansion will be the Erasmus programme, which should be greatly enlarged, so that it can offer opportunities and be attractive to a vastly increased share of the student population.
- This should be coupled with a **"vertical" initiative aimed at allowing Europe's best students to access the world's best higher education and at allowing Europe's universities to attract the best global students.** This should build on the **Erasmus Mundus II** programme, albeit greatly expanded to offer a greatly increased number of opportunities to both European non-European students. It should invite proposals from consortia to put together new high level courses - joint or double degrees, where appropriate within input from business partners - for which the programme would then allocate scholarship funding, offered to the best EU and non-EU applicants. In this way, the structuring impact of the initiative - on the quality of education offered, on the formation of partnerships between institutions - would be maximised. **By 2020, the "vertical" and globally open Erasmus Mundus initiative should account for 10% of student mobility moves.**
- **Increasing the volume of mobility under the People Programme of FP7, notably the Marie Curie action.** There should be a much stronger linkage to ensure that Erasmus and its new vertical strand can integrate effectively with these actions. By 2020, Marie Curie and other actions for mobility of researchers should support targeted mobility by 50% of the young researcher population. Mobility should be a criterion for career advancement in

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<sup>2</sup> The Forum has not made operational recommendations in relation to the non programme-driven mobility of university students, referred to in section 2.1 and described in Annex A. It is clear that it has potentially a contribution to make to the overall goal. However, for now, there is insufficient understanding of what is going on. Improving the general framework for mobility, via better cross-border recognition of qualifications and better portability of national student supports, should, nevertheless, help to expand mobility of this type. The Forum recommends that the Commission examine the data on this type of mobility and work with Member States and universities to explore how its contribution to the general aim can be maximised.

the sector. Table 1 foresees an expansion of Marie Curie to provide opportunities for mobility to 66,000 young researchers in 2012, to 210,000 in 2015 and in 370,000 in 2020.

- Increasing the opportunities for university staff to via Erasmus and other exchange mechanisms. The Commission should lead a reflection on how to achieve this with Member States and representatives of university management and staff. This should involve addressing barriers to staff mobility and how to structure programme support. Targets should then be set.
- Expanding Erasmus placements, between university and business. It will be crucial to seek out and build networks of enterprises which are capable and willing to act as hosts to Erasmus students. This promotional exercise should be undertaken jointly with the effort to enlist businesses to host Leonardo trainees and young entrepreneurs under the planned pilot scheme. Universities should be incentivised to include businesses as Erasmus partners; the Erasmus alumni association should be used as a network to facilitate such placements.
- **Breaking down the benchmarks outlined here by Member state, region and ultimately by institution.** Benchmarks should cover outward and inward mobility, for students and staff. Payment formulae within the programmes should reward the "mobility-openness" of regions and institutions and be linked to meeting benchmarks. Institutions should devise incentive structures to encourage staff and faculties to promote mobility.

#### **Organize pathways for university mobility by:**

- **Exploiting to the full the potential created by the Bologna process to promote networking between universities, leading to the delivery of more joint and double degrees.**
- Working jointly with Member States and universities to end problems of recognition of the Erasmus move. Create strong monitoring of implementation of the Erasmus Charter. Implement ECTS in full and use the Diploma Supplement to ensure transparent academic recognition of the mobility experience.
- Developing and strengthening the network of European Research Councils (ERA-nets) to sponsor more collaborative trans-national programmes with a requirement for research staff mobility. Research mobility will also be advanced within other instruments included in the Framework Programme for RTD: networks of excellence, era-nets, technology platforms. The KICs of the EIT should also build research mobility.
- Facilitating **greater flexibility** in the mobility move. Promote and benchmark a widening of choice within each university's Erasmus partnership. At a second stage, it may be possible to expand the possibilities for students to move independently, always, however, subject to the requirement that recognition can be assured.
- Developing short-stay mobility moves, e.g. "Erasmus summer modules" which could focus on language learning and also summer placements in enterprises. Create a model placement contract and vademecum to support these.

- Strengthening partnerships and quality assurance with partner countries in order to develop Erasmus Mundus and to prepare for the future Erasmus "vertical" initiative.

#### **Strengthen the support conditions for university mobility by:**

- Developing the Erasmus alumni and different student networks. Alumni, as they build their careers in institutions, business and government could have roles as ambassadors and champions of mobility.
- Addressing, with Member States, regions and hosting institutions, the issue of how best to provide accommodation to mobile students so that it ceases to be a barrier.
- Working, in the context of the OMC for education and training, to extend the portability of national schemes for student financial support for students undertaking part or all of their studies abroad, whether in the context of the EU mobility programmes or not.
- Addressing barriers to the mobility of researchers, including portability of pensions and other social benefits. Research grants should be fully portable.

#### **Vocational Education and apprentices (Leonardo)**

#### **Multiply opportunities for VET mobility by:**

- Setting, jointly between the Commission and the Member States, targets to **substantially increase the opportunities within the Leonardo programme for mobility in initial vocational training**. This will require a major expansion and a new partnership between companies, the VET sector, intermediary bodies such as professional associations and higher education institutions. It will require a major expansion of funding, to come from all actors. **Mobility opportunities should be provided for 119,000 initial VET trainees in 2012; 232,000 in 2015; and to 367,000 by 2020**. In this way, learning mobility within the VET sector can be placed on a similar footing and similar relative increase to what is proposed for the university sector.
- Developing a **new, substantial and additional focus on promoting mobility for training of adults in the labour market**, drawing on the same partnership as above to deliver and fund this. Develop this in cooperation with Member States formulating national strategies to upskill the employed workforce and also with the New Skills for New Jobs Initiative. Establish national benchmarks. Member States have agreed, in the context of the OMC on Education and Training, a benchmark that, by 2010, 12.5% of the labour force (25-64) should be participating in adult learning annually. The Forum proposes that by 2020, mobility opportunities should be offered in respect of 10% of this overall target. Funding for these mobility actions should draw on an expanded Leonardo provision for adult trainees and on ESF support for national strategies to upskill the workforce. The Grundtvig programme should also contribute to the objective, focusing on providing support to adult learning not directly linked to labour market participation. Table 2 in Annex I illustrates this approach.
- In order to maximise the impact of available Leonardo funding, in the context of expanded and broader funding, **concentrate Leonardo funding to support participation of SMEs, on guidance and coaching, networking of companies and on supporting intermediary**

**bodies (professional associations, clusters, business support services) to organise mobility.**

- The financial contribution of Member States and regions to the new mobility partnership could be supplemented by structural funding, notably the ESF. It should be a requirement that all VET projects within the ESF should have a substantial and quality assured mobility programme.
- Exploring with Member States the potential to develop over time a programme which opens up access to European VET on behalf of external partner countries, building in particular on the work of ETF.

**Organize pathways for VET mobility by:**

- Cross-border mobility within the VET system will not grow unless a greater degree of convergence can be achieved between systems which are still very much locked into national patterns. **There needs urgently to be a strengthening of the Copenhagen process aimed at breaking down barriers between national systems and promoting mobility as one of its central objectives.** In the process, there needs also to be a stronger convergence with the Bologna process.
- Addressing language skills as a particularly acute barrier to VET mobility. Examine with Member States how to improve and **strengthen language teaching within the VET system.** Develop language preparation within the preparatory module of Leonardo.
- **Implementing an effective ECVET system for comparability and portability of VET qualifications,** in full compliance with the principles of EQF and ensuring openness to the ECTS system in the university sector. Over time, compliance with ECVET and use of Europass should become a pre-condition for eligibility of relevant VET projects within Leonardo and the ESF.
- Exploiting the possibilities for virtual mobility and e-learning in the sector.
- Providing forms of recognition which will act as an incentive for the participation in mobility moves of enterprises, via a charter for participating enterprises (Annex F contains the current Leonardo quality charter, which could form the basis for an instrument of this kind).

**Strengthen the support conditions for VET mobility by:**

- Generalising learning mobility among VET trainers as a key component of their career development. Give priority to mobility initiatives which will support the training of trainers in areas of strategic importance and skills shortages identified in the "New Skills for New Jobs Initiative".
- Simplifying programme administration. Developing the capacity for multi-annual conventions and for intermediary bodies to act in support of the participation of SMEs.

**Entrepreneurs (Erasmus for Entrepreneurs action to be launched this year)**

### **Multiply opportunities for young entrepreneurs' mobility by:**

- Opportunities for mobility in this sphere are being created by the deepening of the single market and by the opening of global markets. Priority within this action should be given to providing mobility opportunities in the **key innovation and strategic business areas**.
- The new pilot action should seek to build synergies with existing programmes, such as Erasmus Placements, Leonardo and relevant initiatives in FP7 areas. Links and networks developed in such areas should be exploited fully to promote and facilitate mobility of young entrepreneurs.
- Developing mobility opportunities for educators and trainers of young entrepreneurs. This could take place within Erasmus or within Leonardo.
- Explore the possibility to open this action for mobility moves by young entrepreneurs beyond EU borders.

### **Organize pathways for young entrepreneurs' mobility by:**

- Developing cross-border networking among SMEs for exchange of experience.
- Developing the networking among University business incubators.
- **Promote the inclusion of mobility periods within MBA curricula.**
- Organizing international missions for young European entrepreneurs.

### **Strengthen the support conditions for young entrepreneurs' mobility by:**

- Developing a European guide on national norms to set up a business.

### **The Cultural Sphere (Culture Programme)**

#### **Multiply Opportunities for mobility in the cultural sphere by:**

- Working with the Member States within the Open Method of Coordination for Culture, set targets, including dates, to **remove obstacles to mobility**, in particular those detailed in the Polacek Report ("Impediments to Mobility and Possible Solutions"<sup>3</sup>). Work also to **remove obstacles to extra-EU mobility** of artists and cultural workers and take concrete steps to support collaboration, exchange and mobility between Europe and other regions.
- Working with Member States within the Open Method of Coordination for Culture, **address how best to structure national policies**, so that they will not create obstacles but will support cultural collaboration and **mobility within Europe**.

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<sup>3</sup> "Study on Impediments to Mobility in the EU Live Performance Sector and on Possible Solutions", Finnish Theatre Information Centre, IETM, PEARLE\*, as part of the Mobile Home project funded by the EU Year of Workers' Mobility, 2006

- Increasing the support available for organisations and structures supporting the mobility of artists and cultural operators through mobility projects and networks within the framework of the next Culture Programme (post-2014).
- Including the possibility in the next Culture Programme (post-2014) to **support the financial risks involved in promoting the mobility of live-performing artists** staging performances in other European countries (e.g. through advance on income “avance sur recettes”).
- Promoting virtual mobility by creating or supporting existing virtual spaces for cultural exchanges.

#### **Organise pathways for mobility in the cultural sphere by:**

- In arts education, developing the concept of “the international institution” which places mobility, international exchange and collaboration as a central aspect of artists’ and cultural operators’ training and career development.
- Developing technology and innovation platforms linked to the arts, especially those which facilitate trans-sectoral innovation and creativity.
- Working with Member States to support artists and cultural operators in their transition from formal education to initial career.
- In the context of the OMC for Culture and the focus on the creative industries, examining how mobility can be an integral part of the strategies to strengthen the economic potential of such sectors.

#### **Strengthen the support conditions for mobility in the cultural sphere by:**

- Providing transparent and accessible information concerning the diverse national procedures affecting arts mobility.
- Improving the EU legislative framework for management of intellectual property rights in order to create a coherent European space for mobile arts and artists and lessen the heavy administrative burdens of arts diffusion.
- Fully implementing the European Court of Justice’s jurisprudence and other EU approved legislation regarding taxation and social security, absolving artists from paying double taxes and/or losing social benefits.

#### **Second level education (Comenius)**

##### **Multiply Opportunities for mobility in secondary schools by:**

- **Promoting Comenius to teacher training institutions and schools authorities. Build awareness** and ensure that the appropriate support structures for the participation of schools are in place.
- Expanding the opportunities for education staff to participate in in-service training and exchange activities abroad and introducing an EU reciprocal teacher exchange scheme.

- Promoting a **major expansion in e-Twinning and other virtual platforms** between schools, so that such partnerships become a normal part of school life. Set a target whereby all schools have the possibility of linking virtually.
- **Expanding the opportunities for school students to spend up to one school year in another country.** Develop the new action Comenius Individual Pupil Mobility and create a secure framework for such mobility for legal minors.
- Building on the Comenius-Regio initiative, increase interaction with **other actors from the non formal education sector**, e.g. build links with youth groups and NGOs and promote their participation in this action.
- Table 1 foresees that Comenius should support physical mobility of 61,000 students in 2012, 118,000 in 2015 and in 188,000 in 2020.

#### **Organise pathways for mobility in secondary schools by:**

- Extending the possibilities to organise class exchanges within Europe.
- Developing actions which help prepare school students to prepare their future mobility as university students, e.g. summer universities for upper secondary school students in specific subject fields. Build links between schools participating in Comenius and Erasmus partnerships to develop these initiatives.

#### **Strengthen the support conditions for mobility in secondary schools by:**

- Giving career incentives to teachers organising learning mobility and better professional recognition for their work.
- Ensuring full recognition of student learning experiences abroad.
- Improving the support structure for European mobility (National Agencies).
- Reinforcing the role of local and regional school authorities in promoting and supporting mobility.
- Expanding the mobility possibilities for potential teachers and trainee teachers.

#### **Adult learning (Grundtvig)**

##### **Multiply opportunities by:**

- Concentrating Grundtvig support on providing mobility opportunities in support of adult education not directly linked to the labour market, notably in support of groups at risk of social exclusion. Benchmarks for its future expansion should be set as part of the overall focus on supporting mobility of adult trainees discussed above under Leonardo. **Grundtvig should play a part alongside Leonardo in offering mobility opportunities to 10% of adult learners** in the context of the overall EU benchmark of 12.5%

participation in adult learning. The share to be addressed by each programme should be determined in national skills strategies. ESF should also support mobility in this area.

- Expanding the opportunities for adult training staff to participate in in-service training and exchange activities abroad.
- Developing the mobility support for language learning among the adult population.

#### **Organise pathways for mobility by:**

- Developing **stronger links between Grundtvig and mobility actions for civil society in the Youth and Volunteering**. Develop the role of seniors (people in retirement or close to it) as participants in voluntary activity: Grundtvig should support mobility to promote their involvement.
- Including a language learning element in Grundtvig actions, where necessary.
- Developing virtual tools to support twinning and networking among civil society and other bodies involved in the provision of relevant forms of training to the adult population.

#### **Strengthen the support conditions by:**

- Ensuring appropriate forms of recognition for Grundtvig supported mobility moves.
- Reinforcing the role of local and regional school authorities in promoting and supporting mobility and ensuring its sustainability through the concept of the "learning region".

### **Volunteering (Youth) and Civil Society (Citizenship)**

#### **Multiply Opportunities by:**

- **Expanding rapidly the possibilities for young people to experience a short term group exchange.**
- Encouraging the **inter-operability of national volunteering schemes**. Young people who would have volunteered in their own country need to be encouraged and feel assured to experience volunteering in a new country.
- Increasing the mobility **opportunities for youth workers** as potential multipliers for the quality of youth work.
- Table 1 foresees a rapid expansion of opportunities for youth mobility for physical mobility moves, either long or short-term, via EU programmes or national schemes, to more than 300,000 in 2012, 587,000 in 2015 and 929,000 in 2020.

#### **Organise pathways for mobility by:**

- Including **provisions for language learning in all volunteer work actions**, and also for learning about European integration.

- Ensuring that periods of volunteer mobility movement are **fully recognised** in qualifications frameworks.
- Building links with relevant Comenius actions.
- Strengthening quality assurance in mobility schemes, notably to do with the protection of minors.

**Strengthen the support conditions for mobility by:**

- Enhancing the recognition of youth workers as a profession and as deliverers of non-formal education.
- Encouraging member states to recognise and promote volunteering in other countries as an essential part in the development of a young person.
- Developing new capacities to promote opportunities for and the value of youth and volunteer mobility. This should include better use of the network of national agencies of the Youth in Action Programme to promote the value of transnational mobility.
- Building awareness among youth and volunteer organisations of the Comenius programme and the opportunities it offers.