

Newsletter n°3

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European quality charter for mobility (EQCM)

EQCM belongs to a series of European initiatives and tools which promote and facilitate 'mobility' among European countries, due to the support given to the recognition of learning and working experiences abroad, involving different kinds of institutions.

The European Quality Charter for Mobility (EQCM), accessible from the following web site <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11085.htm>, is focused on the quality aspects of mobility and constitutes a reference document for stays abroad in order to ensure that participants, both young people and adults, have a positive experience.

EQCM offers guidance designed to respond to participants' expectations and the legitimate requirements of education bodies and institutions.

The Charter is addressed to the Member States, in particular to their organisations responsible for stays abroad, and provides guidance on mobility arrangements for learning or other professional purposes, along with the improvement of quality and efficiency of education and training systems.

EQCM should help to ensure that mobility participants always have a positive experience both in the host country and in their country of origin on their return. It offers guidance designed to respond to:

- ✓ participants' expectations - concerning the pre-departure information (from suitable infrastructure in the host country to the exploitation of acquired knowledge when returned in their own country);
- ✓ host country's expectations - legitimate requirements of education bodies and institutions which expect that mobility participants will not arrive without being properly prepared and that their mobility period will be positive both for themselves and for the host body, institution or company.

This guidance consists on the following *ten principles*, which can be flexible and adaptable to the nature and peculiarities of each stay:

- ✓ **information and guidance:** each participant should have access to clear and reliable sources of information and guidance on mobility



- ✓ **learning plan:** a plan is drawn up and signed by the sending and hosting organisations and participants. It must describe the objectives and expected outcomes, the means of achieving them, and evaluation, along with reintegration issues;
- ✓ **personalisation:** mobility should develop personal learning pathways, taking into account skills and motivation of participants;
- ✓ **general preparation:** before departure, participants should receive a basic preparation tailored to their specific needs and covering linguistic, pedagogical, legal, cultural or financial aspects;
- ✓ **linguistic aspects:** language skills make for more effective learning, intercultural communication and a better understanding of the host country's culture. Arrangements should therefore include a pre-departure assessment and training on language skills, along with ensuring language learning in the host country;
- ✓ **logistical support:** providing participants with information and assistance concerning travel arrangements, insurance, the portability of government grants and loans, residence or work permits, health system information, social security and any other practical aspects;
- ✓ **mentoring:** the hosting organisation should provide mentoring to advise and help participants throughout their stay, along with ensuring their integration;
- ✓ **recognition:** participants should be provided with assistance regarding recognition and certification, concerning both formal and non formal education and training.
- ✓ **reintegration and evaluation:** on returning to their own country, participants should receive guidance on how to make use of the competences acquired during their stay. Evaluation of the experience acquired should assess whether the aims of the learning plan have been achieved;
- ✓ **commitments and responsibilities:** the responsibilities arising from these quality criteria must be agreed and, in particular, confirmed in writing by all sides (sending and hosting organisations and participants).

Implementation of the Charter foresees the elimination by the Member States of mobility obstacles and the provision of support and infrastructures to help raise education and training levels in the European Union (EU). It also includes measures to promote mobility by providing easily accessible information.

Europemobility Video Contest 2009

The European Leonardo da Vinci project "*EuropeMobility - Raising Quantity and Quality of Work Placements in Europe*" promotes, on a yearly basis, an **European video contest** (http://www.europemobility.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=49&Itemid=80) for Leonardo and Erasmus mobility students doing a work placement abroad.



Mobility students are asked to tell to peers their experiences abroad, using their mobile phone. The video contest exploits existing technologies for web streaming video, blog and social networking, as in Youtube. It is organized and structured with the purpose of gathering "Ambassadors for mobility" from a wide variety of activities and areas of interest, including VET, academic, youngsters in general and those with disabilities and disadvantages. In this regard *the mobility's ambassadors* could contribute to raise awareness and demonstrate the real benefits of working abroad.

Original and creative videos that show mobility experiences can take part in the contest. In this regard the young *mobility's ambassadors* can tell, through their mobile phone, something like: what was the most challenging incident that they've been through while abroad; what important things they have learnt; what was the funniest situation that happened to them etc....

The video can be a documentary or a short story, about a general or a specific aspect such as an educational, social or cultural experience. Participants can use humour, music, animations and any other media source they want to use. The most important rule is "Be creative!".

Of course there are also other technical rules which should be followed. For the first edition (May-September 2009) these rules concerned: video should be one to three minutes long; it should be in English or, in case people want to use another language, the video must be English subtitled; each candidate can take part in the video contest with only one video; respect copy-right rules.

People post all videos on the Europemobility web site within a certain deadline and the general public was invited to express their preference with an online voting system. Furthermore Europemobility Commission has expressed its judgement on the basis of the following evaluation criteria:

- ✓ Relevance of the video, fitting with the theme of mobility
- ✓ Originality and creativity of the underlying idea (basic concept)
- ✓ Quality of the script and realisation
- ✓ Online voting system

Europemobility Commission is publishing on www.europemobility.eu the names of the winners by September 15th 2009.

First edition winners EuropeMobility will award €500,00 for the best video and an iPod for the second best video. All the three best producers will win a trip to Bilbao and the opportunity to present their videos at the EfVET - EuropeMobility Conference, 21 - 24 October 2009.

For the next Yearly Video Contest (2010), partners suggest to gather all year long "*Mobility's videos*" and then select every 3 months the 5 videos which will take part in the final award session.

Therefore EuropeMobility invite all young people interested in taking part in the next Yearly Contest, to post their interesting and creative Videos and find out what they are going to win!!

Ambassadors: Milena has a work experience in the Italian tourism sector

Ciao! My name is Milena, I'm 24 years old, graduated in tourism in Poland. I think that an internship is an important moment for professional and career development, especially for young people. For this reason I decided to have a work experience abroad.

I have chosen Italy because I would like to improve my Italian language, and also acquiring knowledge and experience concerning how to manage a tourism company here.

At the moment I'm working in an hotel, knowing its work's organisation and management. I had already a bit of this professional experience, then I have asked to change my work placement.

The Italian mobility agency agreed with me for a change and then they found a new opportunity in the Information Tourism Office of Pistoia Municipality. I went there already and I found out that I like the new place very much!

I hope that I'll have the chance there to achieve easily my goals. My tasks will be:

- ✓ give support for the organisation of communication activities and events
- ✓ knowing new ways and methods for office administration
- ✓ general secretary activities.

I'm happy because Leonardo da Vinci Programme gives the possibility first of all, to go abroad, and second to change the placement in case is not 'perfect' for you!

Being here in Italy, I also hope to have the chance, during my spare time, to know better Tuscany and its culture!

Historic overview on mobility

Source: Soren Kristensen, Learning by Leaving (Placements abroad as a didactic tool in the context of vocational education and training in Europe)

Mobility since medieval times

It is possible to trace back the history of mobility in a VET-context to the tradition of the travelling journeymen (fahrende Gesellen) of the medieval guilds, a practice that endured up to the early 20th century, and rudiments of which still exist in a few countries.

Dedicated transnational placement programmes only appeared after the Second World War, however, where the organisations AIESEC and IAESTE were set up under the auspices of Unesco in 1948 to facilitate placements for students of commerce and technology in higher education.

Another placement programme was set up in 1964 by the Commission of the European Communities in the shape of the Young workers' exchange programme (YWEP), and in 1981 a



binational Franco- German programme for placements (exchanges) in VET was established within the framework of the Franco-German Treaty of 1963.

The Comett programme from 1987 – also set up by the European Commission – granted aid to placements of students in higher education in order to promote cooperation between universities and industry and to facilitate transfer of technology. Finally, Action 4 of the Lingua programme from 1990 contained funding provisions for young people in VET to undertake placement periods abroad in order to improve foreign language proficiency.

Up to the early 1990s, however, mobility in VET – and in particular in initial VET and for young workers – was very limited and certainly not a realistic proposition except for a very small minority of the total population engaged in VET.

Mobility took a quantum leap upwards on the agenda of European and national VET-policies more or less precisely a decade ago, notably with the introduction of the enlarged Petra programme (Petra II) in 1992. That year, 8 500 placements were grant-aided through the programme, and by the end of the programme period in 1995, the total number approached 35 000 for the then 12 EU Member States. A significant development at national level was the establishment by the Danish government in 1992 of the PIU programme, which gave people in initial vocational training not just the opportunity but the right to undertake all or part of their mandatory work placements in another EU or EFTA country. Funding was provided by Danish employers through the Employers' reimbursement scheme for apprentices and trainees (AER). This was the first of several national programmes for placements abroad that have since been set up in various countries.