



## Policy brief on mobility in VET (Vocational Education and Training)

August 2018

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### Introduction - On enhancing VET mobility in Europe

This policy brief is based on findings from the MOVE research (May 2015 – April 2018). The overall aim of MOVE is to provide a research-informed contribution towards improving the mobility of young people (aged 18-29) in Europe and to reduce negative impacts of mobility by identifying good practices, thus fostering sustainable development and wellbeing.

This policy brief provides an overview of the main results within qualitative and quantitative approaches regarding **Vocational Education and Training (VET)** mobility field. Qualitative research was conducted in Germany (n=16) and Spain (n=17) and analysed by the German Youth Institute (DJI) and the Ilustre Colegio Nacional de Doctores y Licenciados en Ciencias Políticas y Sociología ICN in a research tandem process.


VET policies are crucial for the future of the European economy. Germany Dual VET is probably the world's VET reference system, and in Spain Dual VET has been recently adopted. The key findings and suggestions are based on the MOVE results in recent and ongoing publications listed at the end of this document (section "Further readings").

### Key Findings

*VET mobility is still a rare phenomenon in Europe* and relatively uncommon among apprentices and companies. The share of mobile apprentices is low in comparison to other mobility fields and their mobility experiences vary significantly due to national educational systems, youth labour markets and socio-cultural schemes.

*There are very different starting points and frames of VET mobility:* German apprentices tend to go abroad rather incidentally, upon external encouragement (e.g. through mobility advisors, mobility-experienced peers and relatives) and are driven by cultural curiosity. German apprentices become mobile predominantly as part of group mobilities, usually over a period of three weeks (corresponding with the tight syllabus of the German VET system). In contrast, Spanish apprentices are motivated by the desire to improve career possibilities (which is likely linked with the comparably high youth unemployment rate in Spain). They mostly use their three-month practical period at the end of their apprenticeship scheme. As grants are insufficient to cover the costs of this extended stay, and is paid mostly upon return, in most cases financial support of the family is a precondition to going abroad.

*Individualised support is vital:* Mobility experiences are unique, and so are the support needs. Additional to these individual variances, German apprentices tend to be intensively supported by public mobility advisors that organise tailor-fit, cost-effective group mobilities. Among German



apprentices individual mobility (e.g. privately, company-based) are less common. In contrast, the Spanish youth organise their mobility individually, often supported by “encouraging” teachers but with low administrative support through public centres or private consultants (mainly in private centres), and have to deal with the application process and the handling of the funds on their own. Mobility structures are reported by Spanish young apprentices as complicated, inflexible and burdensome.

In general, comprehensive help with bureaucratic issues, as well as ongoing support during the mobility, is vital for positive mobility experiences - and often even a precondition for venturing to take the step abroad.

*Outcomes differ* according to the length of mobility, to individual learning opportunities and individual scopes of action and choices. Longer, individually organised VET mobility has a bigger impact on individual development and increases openness and intercultural encounters. Shorter stays can be seen as a starting point for further mobility.

## Recommendations

### *Promote VET as a mobility field...*

- by improving the visibility and the beneficiaries’ identification with Erasmus for VET (e.g. new logo and name “VETASMUS”)
- by encouraging the implementation of mobility in VET curricula
- by introducing information events and material on mobility in all VET schools
- by using youth-friendly media channels as well as broad awareness-raising campaigns to spread the word about programmes (e.g. Facebook groups or Instagram, or other social media channels)
- by making VET mobility benefits visible to enterprises, VET schools and apprentices
- by supporting enterprises who give their apprentices the opportunity to go abroad
- by linking VETASMUS with the so-called European values
- by ensuring a high-quality training period and future networking flows and encountering points for all participants (students, teachers, receiving companies, training centres, and institutions)

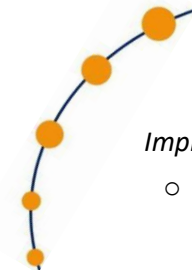
### *Make mobility an inclusion instrument...*

- by tackling access barriers (e.g. not only performance-based selection)
- by promoting language acquisition programmes before mobility (e.g. as an integral part of VET Curricula or even at the primary school level) and during mobility (e.g. in the form of language courses exams<sup>1</sup> during long-term mobility programmes); *language skills should be a result instead of a barrier to VET mobilities*
- by reinforcing long-term mobility programmes (e.g. by providing opportunities – mobility windows, resources – to spend at least part of the VET abroad, fitting to the respective vocational field)
- by introducing mobility programmes that address disadvantaged groups, or by reinforcing and enlarging existing good practice programmes such as IdA (integration through exchange<sup>2</sup>, for disadvantaged groups), and by fostering their European-wide transfer
- by promoting job opportunities upon return; *mobile apprentices are a valuable labour force for the future Europe*

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. provided by the Online Linguistic Support; <https://erasmusplusols.eu/es/>

<sup>2</sup> IdA, an ESF-funded initiative, offers assisted transnational traineeships to young Germans with difficulties in entering the training market. The mobilities are designed for 2-6 months, including a preparational period as well as follow-up activities in Germany; <http://www.esf.de/portal/DE/Foerderperiode-2014-2020/ESF-Programme/bmas/2014-10-21-ESF-Integrationsrichtlinie-Bund.html>



### *Improve sources of information and individualised support...*

- by creating contact points for apprentices interested in mobility, equivalent to international offices for student mobility, this can be done in cooperation with youth information providers in the youth field
- by promoting work experience during apprenticeships (e.g. through setting up a database of European employers willing to take on mobile apprentices, following the model of other mobility types (EVS))
- by sustaining and widening the professional mobility advisors' network in Europe<sup>3</sup>; possible steps: the permanent installation of mobility advisors at schools, at chambers (e.g. Chamber of Trade, Chamber of Crafts) and VET schools independently from programme duration; increasing the number for a regionally equal distribution of mobility advisors in Europe
- by allowing more flexibility in funding of VET mobility (e.g. by giving more autonomy to National Agencies in managing their funds, or through flexible amounts according to the real costs instead of lump sums)
- by allowing the receiving companies to adopt grants/benefits complementary to Erasmus payments to their VET students
- by improving the recognition and enhancement of VET competences e.g. through European Certificates linked to the ECVET Standards and through enrolling in MOOC courses to improve VET skills
- by ensuring practice quality in mobility, e.g. through quality assurance procedures (EQAVET) to ensure that VET Mobility Traineeship on companies comply with labour/traineeship/VET norms; by involving apprentices in the choice of host companies and by ensuring that the traineeships abroad are closely linked to the field of specialization of the students

### **Further Readings**

- Schlimbach, Tabea & Hemming, Karen (2018). Was fördert, was hindert Jugendmobilität? Chancen und Risiken deutscher Mobilitätspraktiken. In Joachim Lange (Hrsg.), Jugendmobilität als europäische Strategie – Wer und was bewegt Jugendliche? (Loccumer Protokolle, 66/2017, S. 35–42). Hildesheim/Rehburg-Loccum.
- Cuenca, Cristina & Hemming, Karen (2016). Movilidad juvenil en Europa en el ámbito de la formación profesional: los retos de la estrategia de Lisboa de 2020. Un estudio comparativo de los casos de Alemania y España. Injuve. Revista de Estudios de Juventud, 83-100.
- Hemming, Karen; Schlimbach, Tabea; Tillmann, Frank; Nienaber, Birte; Roman, Monica & Skrobaneck, Jan (2019). Structural framework conditions and individual motivations for youth-mobility as micro-macro-level approach for different European country-types. Forthcoming in: Migration letters.
- Samuk, Sahizer; Nienaber, Birte; Bissinger, Jutta & Vysotskaya, Volha (2018). MOVE Deliverable N°6.7–Final Public Project Report.
- Schlimbach, Tabea; Skrobaneck, Jan; Kmiotek-Meier, Emilia & Vysotskaya, Volha (2019). Capturing agency. A comparative approach to youth perceptions on mobility framing structures. Forthcoming in: Migration letters.

### **Project website**

<http://move-project.eu>

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.berufsbildung-ohne-grenzen.de/en/>