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COM(2023) 719 final

2023/0405 (NLE)

Proposal for a

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

‘Europe on the Move’ – learning mobility opportunities for everyone

(Text with EEA relevance)

{SWD(2023) 719 final} - {SWD(2023) 720 final}

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSAL

• Reasons for and objectives of the proposal

'I am fully committed to making the European Education Area a reality by 2025. We need to bring down barriers to learning and improve access to quality education. We need to enable learners to move more easily between education systems in different countries. And we need to change the culture of education towards lifelong learning that enriches us all.'

President von der Leyen, Political Guidelines¹

Learning mobility has proven to be a highly valuable experience for people in gaining knowledge and skills needed for personal, educational, and professional development, and for civic engagement and social inclusion². Organising learning mobility is also a strong driver for education and training institutions and non-formal and informal learning providers to enhance the quality of learning they offer. In the context of the green and digital transitions, requiring a 'skills revolution', learning mobility contributes to tackling skills gaps, accelerates skills development and builds a strong sense of citizenship and understanding of common values across Europe and beyond.

Under this proposal, learning mobility means moving physically to a country other than the country of residence, in order to undertake study, training or non-formal or informal learning. It has a broad scope covering all types of learning mobility and learners and staff in all sectors of lifelong learning, including school, higher education, vocational education and training, adult learning as well as the learning mobility of young people, youth workers and staff in the area of early childhood education and care, and in the area of sport. It also covers both intra-EU and international learning mobility to and from the EU.

The proposed recommendation is a key building block of the European Education Area where learning is not hampered by borders, and everyone has an opportunity to learn or to study abroad. It will reinforce the necessary framework conditions to enable learning mobility for everyone and to allow more people to benefit from the Erasmus+ programme³ and other cross-border learning mobility schemes.

The proposed EU learning mobility framework updates the 2011 Council Recommendation 'Youth on the move' – promoting the learning mobility of young people⁴ by expanding its scope from young people to learners at any age and to educators and staff. This new learning mobility framework also addresses new learning patterns, including the proliferation of digital tools for learning and blended learning, as well as more sustainable mobility.

¹ Political guidelines for the next Commission (2019-2024) - "A Union that strives for more: My agenda for Europe" [Political guidelines for the next Commission \(2019-2024\) - "A Union that strives for more: My agenda for Europe" | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

² Commission Staff Working document: Impact assessment, accompanying the document Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing 'Erasmus': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport and repealing Regulation (EU) 1288/2013, {COM(2018) 367 final} - {SEC(2018) 265 final} - {SWD(2018) 276 final}. Link: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018SC0277>

³ Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing the Erasmus+ Programme, OJ L 189, 28.05.2021.

⁴ OJ C 199/1, 7.7.2011.

This update was announced in the Commission Communication on Achieving the European Education Area by 2025⁵, in order to enable more learners and teachers to overcome obstacles and benefit from a mobility opportunity. The Communication identified the following key objectives of the updated framework – enabling mobility opportunities for a much wider variety of participants, fostering green and digital mobility and encouraging balanced mobility. The Communication also highlighted that international cooperation in education and training, including learning mobility, is essential for achieving the EU’s geopolitical priorities and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

This policy proposal on learning mobility is part of the package on maximising the potential of talent mobility together with the Commission Recommendation on recognition of qualifications of third-country nationals and a legislative proposal on the EU Talent Pool, promoting the EU as an attractive destination for talents to learn, study and work.

Talent Partnerships aim to strengthen cooperation between the EU, Member States and partner countries to boost international labour mobility and development of talent in a mutually beneficial way. They provide a stable, policy-driven and flexible structure which can effectively promote cooperation also in the area of education and training including on learning mobility for both learners and staff. They will increase public awareness and enhance learning mobility from third countries. They will also support efforts to build effective skills systems in third countries and at the same time contribute to the labour force of the EU in priority sectors for the green and digital transition.

Learning mobility of students from third countries may also contribute to faster recognition of their qualifications when entering the EU labour market. It could help to bridge the gap between qualifications obtained in third countries and the European requirements by providing participants with micro-credential certificates, transcripts and other supporting documentations that can help credential evaluators to assess their qualifications quickly and accurately. It will also signal the relevant language competencies, cultural adaptability, and exposure to the European education standards which may facilitate further validation of their learning outcomes.

Furthermore, learning mobility, in particular exchanges including work-based learning components which equip participants with labour market experience can serve as a steppingstone for individuals to consider returning to the EU and seek work opportunities. In follow-up to the 2017 Council Recommendation on Tracking Graduates⁶, developing tools and methods for exchanging comparable learning and job-related information on mobile graduates (who move to another EU country for study- or work-related purposes) is a priority under the activities carried out by the European Network on Graduate Tracking, such as the Eurograduate 2022 survey.

- **Challenges to be addressed by the proposed recommendation**

Although much has been achieved in the area of learning mobility since the 2011 Council Recommendation ‘Youth on the move’, evidence reveals that more needs to be done to offer learning mobility opportunities for everyone, and in particular for people with fewer opportunities⁷.

⁵ COM(2020) 625 final.

⁶ OJC 423/1 of 09.12.2017.

⁷ In line with Erasmus+ Regulation (EU) 2021/817 and for the purpose of this policy proposal, ‘people with fewer opportunities’ mean people who, for economic, social, cultural, geographical or health reasons, due to their migrant background, or for reasons such as disability or educational difficulties, or for any other reason, including a reason that could give rise to discrimination under Article 21 of the

The 2022 Eurobarometer survey on Youth and Democracy in the European Year of Youth⁸, revealed that only 15% of respondents have participated in studying, training or apprenticeship in another EU country. The same survey also highlighted that young people saw improving education and training, including the free movement of students, apprentices, and pupils, in the top three focus areas for the 2022 European Year of Youth. According to the 2023 Eurobarometer survey on Integration of young people into the labour market with particular focus on traineeships, 21% of young respondents had at least one of their traineeships in another EU country; the main barriers mentioned to accessing cross-border traineeships were lack of financial resources and of information about these opportunities.

In 2023, the Mobility Scoreboard⁹ identified good performance in most of the areas of the 2011 Recommendation. However, the situation was mixed for individual Member States. Systemic support for the participation of disadvantaged learners¹⁰ in learning mobility was revealed as the area with the greatest need for further progress.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted education, training and work-based learning in an unprecedented way. It had a negative impact both on physical mobility and on the mental and physical health of learners and staff¹¹. The pandemic also revealed deep inequalities in accessing online opportunities, including educational activities, for children¹². At the same time, it has led to the rapid development of new learning mobility patterns such as blended mobility and virtual exchanges. The youth work sector has also been heavily affected, as shown in the 2021 EU Youth Report, and the pandemic has heightened the need for resources, including for digital youth work, to support young people's learning mobility, development, engagement and health.

Evidence including the study contracted by the Commission 'Supporting learning mobility: progress, obstacles and way forward'¹³, the outcome of the call for evidence and public consultation underlined the key barriers to learning mobility, including financial and social constraints, lack of information and guidance, language and accessibility barriers, and administrative obstacles. Another important barrier hampering mobility is the limited extent of automatic recognition of qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad, as recognition procedures are often slow, information is not readily available, and are left to the discretion of individual institutions.

In 2022, European citizens at Conference on the Future of Europe in their proposals on future policies highlighted the need for the EU and its Member States to promote opportunities for mobility: '*Promote European exchanges in different fields, both physically and digitally, including educational exchanges, twinning, travel and professional mobility (including for teachers and local elected politicians)*' and to '*establish by 2025 an inclusive European*

Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, face obstacles that prevent them from having effective access to learning mobility opportunities.

⁸ Eurobarometer surveys: Youth and Democracy in the European Year of Youth - May 2022; Integration of young people into the labour market with particular focus on traineeships - April 2023

⁹ The Mobility Scoreboard became operational in 2016 with an objective to monitor the implementation of the 2011 Council Recommendation in the areas of higher education and of initial vocational education and training. Link: <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/mobility-scoreboard>.

¹⁰ The 2011 Council Recommendation described disadvantaged learners as people who may be deprived of opportunities for learning mobility.

¹¹ Education and Training Monitor 2021. Link: <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2021/en/>

¹² How families handled emergency remote schooling during the COVID-19 lockdown in spring 2020, 2020, JRC and Eurostat. Survey on ICT usage in households and by individuals [isoc_i, ci_in_h], 2019

¹³ EU publications platform, link : <https://op.europa.eu>

*Education Area within which all citizens have equal access to quality education and life-long learning, including those in rural and remote areas*¹⁴. According to the recommendations, such exchanges should be made accessible across Member States for all, regardless of their age, level of education, background and financial means. The proposals also asked to strengthen the existing EU mobility programmes and to ensure diverse access to them. One of the recommendations specifically encouraged the EU to include sport activities in EU-level exchange and mobility programmes.

In 2023, the European Citizens' Panel on learning mobility provided 21 recommendations¹⁵ on enabling more widespread and diverse participation in the Erasmus+ programme and other learning mobility schemes. The recommendations focused on targeted provision of information, inclusion of individuals of all ages and backgrounds, the importance of multilingualism, learning mobility of employees, and other aspects of learning mobility, including the recognition of the role of educators in organising learning mobility and greener mobility.

Learning mobility has the potential to decrease skills shortages by improving the employability of participants, developing their transversal competences and contributing to better skills match. Similarly, being an attractive learning mobility destination can in turn increase the local employers' access to workforce. Currently three quarters (74%) of SMEs in Europe say they concretely face skills shortages for at least one job role in their company at the moment. Also, nearly 4 in 5 companies point out in the survey that it is generally difficult for them to find workers with the right skills, and more than half of them (53%) find it difficult to retain skilled workers¹⁶.

- **Objectives of the proposal**

This policy proposal aims to increase opportunities for learning mobility for everyone through action of Member States and the Commission. Its ambition is to gradually move towards making learning mobility in the European Education Area the norm rather than an exception.

To boost learning mobility and to make it more inclusive, the Commission proposes to establish and work towards achieving by 2030 new EU-level targets:

- In higher education, the share of graduates with a learning mobility experience should be at least 25%.
- In vocational education and training, the share of vocational learners benefiting from a learning mobility abroad should be at least 15%.
- In all education and training, and youth and sport systems, people with fewer opportunities should account for at least 20% of all learners benefiting from learning mobility abroad.

¹⁴ At the Conference on the Future of Europe 800 randomly selected citizens gathered in 2021-2022 to give recommendations on future policies https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/conference-future-europe_en#final-reports-and-proposals

¹⁵ The European Citizens' Panel on learning mobility engaged 150 randomly selected citizens of all age groups and diverse backgrounds in deliberations in March and April 2023. Link to final recommendations: https://citizens.ec.europa.eu/learning-mobility-panel_en.

¹⁶ Flash Eurobarometer FL529: European Year of Skills - Skills shortages, recruitment and retention strategies in small and medium-sized enterprises; link: https://data.europa.eu/data/datasets/s2994_fl529_eng?locale=en

The proposal also aims to give a specific boost to learning mobility for teachers and apprentices through dedicated policy frameworks, as set out in the annexes. Teachers with learning mobility experience are important role models for learners and key promoters of learning mobility in schools. For the teachers themselves, learning mobility can bring about significant benefits related to cultural, cognitive, and personal learning experiences, in addition to knowledge and skills to fostering exchange of good practices. Opportunities for learning mobility also increase the attractiveness of teaching profession and can help to attract to and to retain teachers in schools. The increased mobility of apprentices will help to address skills gaps, to support the green and digital transitions, and to increase the employability of young people. Apprentices face a specific set of barriers such as the complexity of legal obligations related to the status of the apprentice, the young age of apprentices themselves, the diversity of national apprenticeship schemes and curricula to comply with during the mobility exchange and the reluctance of employers to engage in learning mobility due to the risk of productivity loss. The recommendation aims to provide a coherent policy framework including proposals for short-term incremental changes and elements of a comprehensive long-term strategy.

- **Consistency with existing policy provisions in the policy area**

The proposal builds on and complements existing policy provisions that enable and support learning mobility. The most relevant are as follows:

The Council Resolution of 18 February 2021 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030)¹⁷ set as one of its strategic priorities making lifelong learning and mobility a reality for all. The Council Resolution of 16 May 2023 on the European Education Area: looking to 2025 and beyond¹⁸ emphasised that identifying and removing the remaining obstacles to learning and teaching mobility is key to the full achievement of the European Education Area.

The first principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights¹⁹ states that everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable people to participate fully in society and successfully manage transitions in the labour market, everywhere in the European Union.

The European Year of Skills²⁰ was launched on 9 May 2023 to run until 8 May 2024, with a view to promote skills policies and investments to match people's aspirations, needs and skills-set, including the skills acquired during mobility, with labour market needs and opportunities.

The European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027²¹ stressed the importance of learning mobility for young people to experience exchanges, cooperation, cultural and civic action in the European context. The Council Resolution on the Framework for establishing a European Youth Work Agenda²² called for the promotion of the European dimension of youth work

¹⁷ OJ C 66, 26.02.2021, p. 1-21.

¹⁸ OJ C 185, 26. 05.2023, p. 5.

¹⁹ <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/empl/european-pillar-of-social-rights/en/>

²⁰ https://year-of-skills.europa.eu/index_en

²¹ Resolution of the Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on a framework for European cooperation in the youth field: The European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027, OJ C 456, 18.12.2018, p. 1–22

²² OJ C 415, 1.12.2020, p. 1–8.

through cross-border and transnational exchange, cooperation, intercultural learning and peer-learning.

The Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on validation of non-formal and informal learning²³ and the 2023 European guidelines on validation of non-formal and informal learning²⁴ underlined that the validation of learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning can play an important role in enhancing employability and learning mobility, particularly in the case of the socio-economically disadvantaged or the low-qualified.

The Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships of 10 March 2014²⁵ covers traineeships outside formal education and training, including cross-border traineeships. The Commission is currently working to update this framework.

The Council Recommendation on the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong learning of 22 May 2017²⁶ has among its wider objectives to increase the mobility and social integration of workers and learners.

The Council Recommendation of 15 March 2018 on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships²⁷ laid down 14 criteria to promote a common understanding of national apprenticeships systems, a key factor in increasing mutual trust and facilitating transnational mobility of apprentices. The recommendation encourages to progressively promote transnational mobility of apprentices, either at the workplace or education and training institutions, as a component of apprenticeship qualification. The mobility of apprentices is also fostered by the European Alliance for Apprenticeships.

The Europass Decision of 18 April 2018 established a European framework to support the transparency and understanding of skills and qualifications acquired in formal, non-formal and informal settings, including through mobility, through an online platform offering web-based tools and information on services offering guidance for transnational learning mobility and career management.

The Council Recommendation of 26 November 2018 on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education and training qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad²⁸ stressed the importance of recognition of European qualifications and learning periods abroad in higher education and upper secondary education without any separate recognition procedure. The Implementation Report²⁹ as well as the related Council conclusions, adopted on 26 May 2023³⁰, emphasise that substantial additional efforts are required to make automatic recognition a reality in the EU.

The Council Recommendation of 22 May 2019 on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages³¹ aimed for enhancing language learning from early age and building ‘language awareness’ in schools and vocational education and training institutions so

²³ [OJ C 398, 22.12.2012, p. 1–5.](#)

²⁴ Cedefop (2023). European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop reference series; No 124. <http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/389827>

²⁵ OJ C 88, 27.3.2014, p. 1-4.

²⁶ [OJ C 189, 15.6.2017, p. 15–28.](#)

²⁷ [OJ C 153, 2.5.2018, p. 1–6.](#)

²⁸ [OJ C 444, 10.12.2018, p. 1–8.](#)

²⁹ [COM/2023/91 final](#)

³⁰ [OJ C 185, 26.5.2023, p. 44–50](#)

³¹ [OJ C 189, 5.6.2019, p. 15–22.](#)

that more young people speak at least two European languages in addition to their mother tongue.

The Commission communication of 30 September 2020 on achieving the European Education Area by 2025³² stressed that the Union's exchange programmes and international education cooperation have contributed to making Europe an attractive destination, boosting innovation and job creation.

The Council Recommendation of 24 November 2020 on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience³³ introduced a new EU-level target of 8% of vocational learners benefiting from a learning mobility abroad by 2025. The recommendation highlighted the importance of mobility opportunities for learners and staff in the VET sector, and for organisations as an important way to put internationalisation strategies into practice. The Osnabrück Declaration³⁴ endorsed by ministers in charge of VET, European Social Partners and the Commission asked national authorities to support and facilitate the mobility of VET and adult learners, including apprentices.

The Western Balkans Agenda on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, a comprehensive, long-term cooperation strategy of the EU and the Western Balkans, launched at the EU-Western Balkans Brdo Summit on 6 October 2021, includes an objective for improving learning mobility.

The European strategy for universities³⁵ of 18 January 2022 includes objectives to develop a European Quality Assurance and Recognition System to encourage automatic recognition of qualifications across Europe, and to support transparent and fair recognition of third country qualifications, including those of refugees, through the network of academic recognition centres³⁶ and the EU transparency tools – the European Qualifications Framework and European Digital Credentials for Learning.

The Council Recommendation of 5 April 2022 on building bridges for effective European higher education cooperation envisages the enhancement of systemic and long-lasting transnational cooperation at institutional level, including through the development of a joint European degree label and institutionalised cooperation instruments such as a possible European legal status for alliances of higher education institutions.

The Council conclusions of 5 April 2022 on enhancing teachers' and trainers' mobility³⁷ calls for the promotion and expansion of mobility for teachers and trainers in order for it to become a common feature in their training and career. The Erasmus+ Teacher Academies, supported by the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme, also test new measures supporting mobility of teachers and enabling mutual learning among teachers and teacher educators through transnational networks, communities of practice and joint programmes between teacher education institutions.

³² [COM\(2020\) 625 final.](#)

³³ [OJ C 417, 2.12.2020, p. 1–16.](#)

³⁴ Osnabrück declaration on vocational education and training as an enabler of recovery and just transitions to digital and green economies, endorsed on 30 November 2020. Link : <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/content/osnabruck-declaration-2020-vocational-education-and-training-enabler-recovery-and-just-transitions>

³⁵ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions on a European strategy for universities, [COM\(2022\) 16 final.](#)

³⁶ Joint network of the European Network of Information Centres in the European Region and the National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union (ENIC-NARIC).

³⁷ [OJ C 167, 21.4.2022, p. 2–8.](#)

The Council Recommendation of 5 April 2022 on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union³⁸ aims to facilitate better transnational youth volunteering in the Union. It emphasises the importance of inclusiveness, quality, recognition and sustainability dimensions of transnational youth volunteering.

- **Consistency with other Union policies**

Learning mobility supported at EU level links with other relevant policy areas such as education and training, employment, citizenship and democratic participation, social inclusion, non-discrimination, legal migration and integration, learning of languages, creativity and culture, climate action, and digitalisation.

Besides contributing to realising the European Education Area, the proposal supports the implementation of the European Skills Agenda, which seeks to address skills mismatches and to promote upskilling and reskilling and the EU strategy on the rights of the child that recognises children's right to have the best possible start in life and to develop their full potential and calls for more efforts to guarantee inclusive, non-segregated and quality education³⁹. It also supports the Digital Education Action Plan, which aims to harness the potential of digital technologies for learning and teaching. In its first principle, the European Pillar of Social Rights⁴⁰ states that everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable people to participate fully in society and successfully manage transitions in the labour market, everywhere in the European Union. The proposal is also aligned with EU policies and initiatives aimed at promoting mobility such as the European Skills Agenda and those promoting multilingualism and intercultural dialogue, including the EU's Strategy on Multilingualism. By promoting learning mobility, the proposal encourages individuals to develop their language skills, cultural awareness, and intercultural competencies.

Many EU programmes and instruments support learning mobility, in particular:

- the Erasmus+ programme offers transnational and international learning mobility opportunities for learners at any age, education and training staff, youth workers, and various youth participation activities;
- the European Solidarity Corps offers young people opportunities to participate in volunteering and solidarity activities across the EU and beyond, and in humanitarian aid-related activities globally;
- the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) support Member States and regions in their endeavours to ensure equal access to inclusive non-segregated education, training and skills development opportunities from early childhood education to tertiary level. By promoting general and vocational education and training, as well as adult education and learning, these funds also help to facilitate accessibility and inclusion for persons with disabilities, enabling learning mobility for all. The ALMA (Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve) initiative is funded by the European Social Fund Plus and aims to help disadvantaged young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) to integrate into society by easing their way back into education, training or employment. The

³⁸ [OJ C 157, 11.4.2022, p. 1–9.](#)

³⁹ COM(2021) 142 final. The EU Strategy on the rights of the child underlines that more than 22% of children in the EU are at risk of poverty and social exclusion, that around 10 % of young people in the EU leave education early.

⁴⁰ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32017C1213%2801%29> .

initiative offers participants a work-related experience of 2-6 months in another Member State, as part of a comprehensive project cycle that includes training, coaching and counselling.

- Interreg addresses border obstacles including to learning mobility and provide national and regional authorities as well as institutions for education and training with the opportunity to cooperate for the development of skills, notably of young people.
- The Technical Support Instrument offers Member States, upon request, tailor made expertise to reform and enhance learning mobility, notably through Flagship initiatives focusing on talent attraction, youth education and skills. Additionally, the flagship initiative “Public Administration Cooperation Exchange” (PACE) promotes cooperation and cross-border exchanges of civil servants among Member States to strengthen their skills and administrative capacity, including in the area of education.
- The Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe identifies learning mobility between the EU and partner countries as one of the main ways to eradicate poverty, fight against inequalities and discrimination, and promote human development.
- The Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance (IPA III) identifies that, under the regulation, opportunities shall be ensured to contribute to the socioeconomic development of the countries in an accession process to the EU membership, with special emphasis on youth.

2. LEGAL BASIS, SUBSIDIARITY AND PROPORTIONALITY

• Legal basis

The proposed Council Recommendation is based on Article 165 and 166 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

According to Article 165(1) of the TFEU, the EU shall ‘contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of their education systems’.

The aim of Union action under the second, third, fifth and sixth indents of Article 165(2) of the TFEU shall be to:

- encouraging mobility of students and teachers, by encouraging among others the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study,
- promoting cooperation between educational establishments,
- encouraging the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors, and encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe,
- encouraging the development of distance education.

The second indent of Article 165(4) of the TFEU provides that in order to contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this article the Council, on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt recommendations.

According to Article 166(1) of the TFEU, the EU shall implement a vocational training policy to support and supplement the action of Member States, while fully respecting the responsibility of Member States for the content and organisation of vocational training.

The aim of Union action under the third indent of Article 166(2) of the TFEU shall be to:

- ‘facilitate access to vocational training and encourage mobility of instructors and trainees and particularly young people’.

The last part of the paragraph 4 of Article 166 of the TFEU provides that, in order to contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this article, the Council, on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt recommendations.

The initiative does not propose any extension of EU regulatory power or binding commitments on Member States. Member States will decide, according to their national circumstances, how they implement this Council recommendation.

- **Subsidiarity (for non-exclusive competence)**

This proposal is in conformity with the principle of subsidiarity as set out for in Article 5(3) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU).

Pursuant to Articles 165(1) and 166(1) TFEU, respectively, Member States are responsible for the content of teaching and the organisation of their education and vocational training systems. At the same time, evidence shows that they face a number of common issues relating to educational outcomes and well-being at school.

This Council recommendation will fully respect the responsibility of Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education and vocational training systems, as well as their cultural and linguistic diversity. At the same time, the recommendation will reflect the supplementing and supporting role of the EU and the voluntary nature of European cooperation in the area of education and training. In the context of the European Education Area, the initiative will support efforts by Member States to develop and implement policies and mechanisms, as appropriate to their national systems and structures.

The initiative does not propose any extension of EU regulatory power or binding commitments on Member States, in line with Articles 165(4) and 166(4), which exclude harmonisation of the laws and regulations of Member States in the field of education and vocational training, respectively. Its European added value lies mainly in the ability of the EU to mobilise political engagement at national level and to support education and training systems through policy guidelines, common tools and instruments (Erasmus+, the Recovery and Resilience Facility, European Social Fund+, European Regional Development Fund, Digital Europe Programme, Horizon Europe, the Technical Support Instrument, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund), while fully respecting subsidiarity.

- **Proportionality**

This proposal complies with the principle of proportionality as set out in Article 5(4) TEU.

Neither the content nor the form of this proposed Council recommendation exceeds what is necessary to achieve its objectives. The commitments Member States will make are of a voluntary nature and each Member State remains free to decide which approach to take.

- **Choice of the instrument**

To contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in Articles 165 and 166 of the TFEU, that Treaty provides for the adoption by the Council of recommendations, on a proposal from the Commission.

A Council recommendation is an appropriate instrument within the field of education and training, where the EU has a supporting competence, and is an instrument that has been used frequently for EU action in these areas. As a legal instrument, it signals the commitment of Member States to the measures presented therein and provides a strong political basis for cooperation in this area, while fully respecting Member States' authority in the field of education and training.

3. RESULTS OF *EX-POST* EVALUATIONS, STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS AND IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- **Ex-post evaluations/fitness checks of existing legislation**

The Mobility Scoreboard was set up to follow up on the 2011 'Youth on the Move' Council Recommendation, providing a framework for monitoring progress made by European countries in supporting learning mobility. It contains scoreboard indicators in the area of higher education and initial vocational education and training. The proposal builds on qualitative data on learning mobility provided by the Mobility Scoreboard.

- **Stakeholder consultations and collection of expertise**

The proposal is based on input gathered during an extensive consultation process. This included:

- a 12-week open public consultation on the new initiative, running from 8 February to 3 May 2023;
- a European Citizens' Panel on Learning Mobility with 150 randomly selected citizens from all 27 Member States carried out over three weekends in March and April 2023; a citizens' report containing recommendations, discussions and deliberations from the citizens' panel on learning mobility is annexed to this proposal.
- a series of focus groups with learners, staff, relevant stakeholders, and experts in the field;
- a series of targeted stakeholder consultations, including at large-scale events; and
- various steering group meetings, expert group meetings, and hearings with social partners.

The proposal is also based on a study carried out by the PPMI Group in 2023 'Supporting learning mobility: progress, obstacles and way forward'⁴¹ which includes an overview of key development since the 2011 Council recommendation, and trends in learning mobility.

⁴¹ EU publications platform, link : <https://op.europa.eu>

- **Impact assessment**

Given the activities' complementary approach to Member State initiatives, the voluntary nature of the proposed activities and the scope of the impacts expected, an impact assessment was not carried out. The preparation of the proposal was informed by previous studies⁴², consultation of Member States, targeted consultations and the public consultation.

- **Regulatory fitness and simplification**

Not applicable.

- **Fundamental rights**

This proposal for a Council recommendation is in keeping with the fundamental rights and principles recognised by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which acknowledges that solidarity is one of the universal values on which the EU is founded. In particular, this proposal takes full account of:

- Article 8 (right to the protection of personal data);
- Article 13 (academic freedom);
- Article 14 (right to education);
- Article 21 (right to non-discrimination);
- Article 24 (rights of the child);
- Article 26 (integration of persons with disabilities).

The measures will be carried out in accordance with EU law on the protection of personal data, in particular Regulation (EU) 2016/679⁴³ of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data (General Data Protection Regulation).

4. BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS

This initiative will not require additional resources from the EU budget.

5. OTHER ELEMENTS

- **Implementation plans and monitoring, evaluation and reporting arrangements**

To support implementation, the Commission will review the national action plans to be developed by Member States for 2025-2030 and will draft an overview report in 2026.

The Commission intends to report on the implementation of the recommendation in the context of the strategic framework for European cooperation in the area of education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond.

- **Explanatory documents (for directives)**

Not applicable

⁴² Full references are available in the Staff Working Document.

⁴³ *OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 1–88.*

- **Detailed explanation of the specific provisions of the proposal**

The policy proposal provides a comprehensive framework on strengthening the enabling conditions for learning mobility, addressing challenges and providing incentives. It aims to make learning mobility an integral part of all education and training pathways, to strengthen language learning and to move towards automatic intra-EU recognition of the outcomes of the learning period abroad. It also aims to make learning mobility more inclusive and accessible by inviting Member States to take further action in providing guidance, appropriate funding and other support to people with fewer opportunities. The proposal also aims to make learning mobility more environmentally sustainable, to make use of digital technologies in facilitating it and to promote EU values. The proposal also aims to facilitate enhanced cooperation with key third countries as foreseen in the Talent Partnerships initiative, promoting the EU as an attractive destination for talents from third countries to learn, train and study and improving fair and transparent recognition of third country qualifications, as well as partial and prior learning.

The accompanying staff working document describes recent research evidence together with outcomes of various consultations that support the proposed recommendation.

Proposal for a

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

‘Europe on the Move’ – learning mobility opportunities for everyone

(Text with EEA relevance)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Articles 165 and 166 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

- (1) In the Rome Declaration of 25 March 2017, EU leaders pledged to work towards a Union where young people receive the best education and training and can study and find jobs across the continent.
- (2) Learning mobility has proven to be highly valuable for learners to gain the competences⁴⁴ needed for personal, educational and professional development. Cross-border learning experiences increase intercultural understanding and help develop a common European identity. Organising learning mobility, both incoming and outgoing, is also a strong driver for education and training institutions and non-formal and informal learning providers to improve the quality of learning on offer.
- (3) Learning mobility is important to help address skills shortages in the EU, in particular those necessary to achieve green and digital transitions and for the transition of learners to the labour market. Work-based learning, including periods spent in another country, brings benefits to skills acquisition and employability. Learning mobility can also facilitate the integration of third-country nationals into the EU labour market.
- (4) Providing learning mobility opportunities for everyone is essential for achieving the European Education Area. The Commission Communication of 30 September 2020 on achieving the European Education Area by 2025⁴⁵ announced an update of the learning mobility framework, the 2011 Council Recommendation ‘Youth on the move’ – promoting the learning mobility of young people⁴⁶, and the development of the policy framework for the learning mobility of teachers to enable more learners and teachers to benefit from mobility. This Recommendation updates the 2011 Council Recommendation to strengthen its provisions, expand learning mobility opportunities

⁴⁴ In line with the Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning (OJ C 189, 4.6.2018, pp. 1-13), competences are defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

⁴⁵ [COM\(2020\) 625 final](#)

⁴⁶ OJ C 199, 7.7.2011, p. 1.

- from young people to learners of any age and staff – and address new learning patterns, including blended learning.
- (5) One of the strategic priorities of the Council Resolution of 18 February 2021 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030)⁴⁷ was to make lifelong learning and mobility a reality for all. The Council Resolution of 16 May 2023 on the European Education Area: looking to 2025 and beyond⁴⁸ emphasised that identifying and removing the remaining obstacles to learning and teaching mobility while encouraging inclusive, sustainable and balanced mobility is key to the full achievement of the European Education Area.
 - (6) Data collected by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) reveal that countries need to step up efforts to improve their average performance in providing comprehensive support for the mobility of vocational education and training (VET) learners, in particular for apprentices. Analysis of the national implementation plans⁴⁹ of the 2020 Council Recommendation of 24 November 2020 on VET for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience⁵⁰ shows that only about half of Member States prioritised measures to enhance mobility in VET.
 - (7) Analysis⁵¹ of the implementation of the Council Recommendation of 15 March 2018 on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships⁵² and Cedefop evidence⁵³ suggests that apprentice mobility is still underdeveloped and more needs to be done to enable them to participate in mobility exchanges.
 - (8) The Council conclusions of 5 April 2022 on enhancing teachers' and trainers' mobility⁵⁴ called for the promotion and expansion of mobility so that it becomes a common feature in their training and career.
 - (9) Analysis of the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy⁵⁵ shows a need for increased efforts to enable effective access for all young people and youth workers to mobility opportunities. This includes volunteering in the civil society sector and further work on effective systems for validation of competences gained through non-formal and informal learning mobility, in synergy with the Council Recommendation of 5 April 2022 on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union⁵⁶.
 - (10) The lack of foreign language competences remains one of the major obstacles to embarking upon learning mobility experiences, studying and working abroad, and fully discovering Europe's cultural diversity. At the same time, some course offer in a

⁴⁷ OJ C 66, 26.2.2021, pp. 1-21.

⁴⁸ OJ C 185, 26.5.2023, p. 5.

⁴⁹ Briefing note – Working together towards attractive, inclusive, innovative, agile and flexible VET; Cedefop. Link: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/9180>

⁵⁰ OJ C 417, 2.12.2020, p. 1.

⁵¹ Link: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&furtherNews=yes&langId=en&newsId=10070>

⁵² OJ C 153, 2.5.2018, p. 1.

⁵³ Enablers and disablers of cross-border long-term apprentice mobility: evidence from country- and project-level investigations. Link: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/2021-10/3089_en.pdf

⁵⁴ OJ C 167, 21.4.2022, p. 2.

⁵⁵ Commission staff working document accompanying the Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2021).

⁵⁶ OJ C 157, 11.4.2022, pp.1-9.

foreign language may encourage learners from another country to engage in learning mobility

- (11) The report on the implementation of the Council Recommendation on automatic recognition of qualifications and learning periods abroad⁵⁷ as well as the related Council conclusions⁵⁸ emphasised that substantial additional efforts are required to make automatic recognition a reality in the EU. In the field of higher education, considerable improvements have been made in the understanding of the concept of automatic recognition among national authorities. However, remaining inconsistencies and a lack of transparency are a significant factor that deters students from participating in mobility activities.
- (12) Promoting learning mobility with third countries can make European education systems more attractive to the rest of the world and attract talent to their education institutions. International cooperation in education and training, including learning mobility, is essential for achieving the EU's geopolitical priorities, in particular the Global Gateway, and for delivering the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.
- (13) The benefits of promoting access for people with fewer opportunities to learning mobility are particularly important, and this objective of inclusion is at the core of the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme. It is crucial to extend this objective to other learning mobility schemes throughout the EU.
- (14) The European Universities initiative targets 50% mobility among participating institutions, while the possible development of a joint European degree also requires mobility to be embedded in the curricula. The increased Erasmus+ budget for 2021-2027 underpins the EU's objective to get more students to participate in learning mobility at least once during their studies. It is therefore important to increase the 20% learning mobility target, which was first set in the context of the Bologna Process in 2009. The tools that have been developed since then, together with the measures proposed by this Recommendation, create the necessary framework conditions for getting at least 25% of higher education graduates participating in learning mobility.
- (15) Learning patterns have evolved in the last decade, including due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which boosted virtual and blended learning. The expansion of learning mobility opportunities to learners, educators and staff in all education and training, youth and sport sectors in formal, non-formal and informal settings also prompted the development of flexible learning mobility formats.
- (16) Balanced mobility for researchers, in particular early career researchers, should be further supported to increase their personal and professional development to the benefit of the competitiveness of the research and innovation system in Europe.
- (17) This Recommendation aims to contribute to the achievement of the European Education Area by 2025. The vision for quality in education includes promoting the dual freedom for learners and teachers to be mobile, in particular for people from disadvantaged social backgrounds and those with disabilities, and for institutions to freely associate with one another in Europe and beyond. Inclusive and equitable education and training systems should support cohesive societies and lay the foundations for active citizenship and improve employability. It invites the Member States to set enabling conditions for learning mobility, and remove obstacles and

⁵⁷

[COM/2023/91 final](#)

⁵⁸

[OJ C 185, 26.5.2023, pp. 44-50.](#)

provide incentives that are tailored to the specific needs of learners, educators and staff in different sectors.

- (18) This Recommendation also aims to facilitate greater cooperation with key third countries as envisaged in the Talent Partnerships initiative, promoting the EU as an attractive destination for talented people from third countries to learn, train and study.
- (19) This Recommendation aims to recall the existing synergies and complementarities between the EU programmes that address learning mobility, such as Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, and other funding instruments at EU, international, national and regional level, such as cohesion policy funds, in particular the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund Plus, withits Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve (ALMA) initiative.
- (20) This Recommendation also aims to boost learning mobility for teachers and apprentices through dedicated policy frameworks in the Annexes. Schools are facing teacher shortages, and learning mobility should increase the attractiveness of the profession. Teachers who have experienced mobility may become role models for learners and can help promote transnational and international cooperation. The Council conclusions on enhancing teachers' and trainers' mobility during initial and in-service education and training stress the positive impact of learning mobility abroad on the professional development of teachers as well as on education systems, while identifying obstacles to mobility. Apprentices also face a set of specific barriers related to the special features of work-based learning. Their mobility should help to address skills gaps, support the green and digital transitions and increase employability, in particular of young people,

RECOGNISES THAT:

- (21) For the purposes of this Recommendation, the same definition of 'learning mobility' is used as in Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing the Erasmus+ programme. It means moving physically to a country other than the country of residence to undertake studies, training or non-formal or informal learning. This Recommendation covers both intra-EU and international learning mobility to and from the EU.
- (22) Learning mobility under this Recommendation covers learners and staff in all sectors of lifelong learning, including school, higher education, vocational education and training, adult learning as well as the learning mobility of young people, youth workers and staff in both early childhood education and care and in sport. It covers all types of learning mobility, including short-term mobility, group mobility, blended mobility, credit mobility and degree mobility.
- (23) For the learning mobility target in higher education, the mobility actions covered include outgoing mobility of a minimum of 2 months, including both traineeships and study mobility, and shorter mobility consisting of at least 3 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits. These can be either fully physical or blended, consisting of both a virtual and physical component. The target is calculated at graduate level, for graduates participating in learning mobility at least once during their studies.

- (24) To respond to the calls⁵⁹ for a more ambitious target than the current 8% target for learning mobility abroad for VET students, this Recommendation proposes increasing the participation target for VET learners, including apprentices, to 15% by 2030. The target for VET builds on the indicator defined in the Council conclusions on a benchmark for learning mobility (2011/C372/08)⁶⁰ and the Council Recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience. It is measured as the share of learners and apprentices enrolled in vocational upper-secondary and post-secondary level programmes who participated in a mobility period abroad during their studies. It includes participants of flexible mobility opportunities such as under Erasmus+ (for example short-term mobility, group mobility, blended mobility, mobility linked to participation in skills competitions).
- (25) In line with Regulation (EU) 2021/817, ‘people with fewer opportunities’ means those who, for economic, social, cultural, geographical or health reasons due to their migrant background, or for reasons such as disability or educational difficulties or for any other reason, including a reason that could give rise to discrimination under Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, face obstacles that prevent them from having effective access to learning mobility opportunities.
- (26) For the purposes of this Recommendation and in line with the implementation guidelines for the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy⁶¹, barriers to learning mobility include disabilities, health problems, barriers linked to education and training systems, cultural differences, social barriers, economic barriers, barriers linked to discrimination and geographical barriers.

ACKNOWLEDGES THE COMMISSION’S INTENTION TO BUILD UPON EXISTING INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS RECOMMENDATION AND TO STRENGTHEN THE EVIDENCE BASE ON LEARNING MOBILITY BY:

- (27) Developing guidelines for the preparation of action plans referred to in point 12 of this Recommendation as well as drafting an overview report of these plans to support peer learning opportunities and the exchange of good practice.
- (28) Further supporting the implementation of this Recommendation by building on the cooperation and co-creation of the expert groups under European Education Area governance.
- (29) Encouraging and supporting youth participation in designing and implementing learning mobility strategies and programmes at national, local and European level.
- (30) Further developing, promoting and providing support through the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes for the use of EU tools that support the implementation of learning periods abroad like the European Student Card initiative, Online Language Support, the European School Education Platform, the European Youth Portal, General Online Training, Youthpass and Europass.

⁵⁹ Including the European Parliament resolution on the Council Recommendation for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience.

⁶⁰ http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2011.372.01.0031.01.ENG&toc=OJ:C:2011:372:TOC

⁶¹ Implementation guidelines for Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy, link: <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/document/implementation-guidelines-erasmus-and-european-solidarity-corps-inclusion-and-diversity-strategy>

- (31) Further developing, promoting and providing support through the Erasmus+ programme for the use of EU tools that support the transparency and validation of outcomes of learning periods abroad and credentials, in particular Youthpass and the Europass platform/Europass Mobility, including through semantic interoperability via the European Learning Model and European Digital Credentials for Learning.
- (32) Further developing and providing support to the European Universities alliances, including through the Erasmus+ programme and policy support, allowing them to realise their full potential and act as role models for the higher education sector by fostering seamless and embedded mobility in European inter-university campuses, promoting the use of micro-credentials, and paving the way towards a possible joint European degree.
- (33) Providing further support from the Erasmus+ programme by encouraging cooperation and mutual learning among Member States on ensuring the automatic recognition of qualifications and outcomes of the learning periods abroad carried out in education and training sectors at all levels, including for virtual and blended learning.
- (34) Continuing to support Member States towards a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages, in particular through peer learning activities, the promotion of initiatives and events like the European Day of Languages and cooperation with stakeholders and international organisations like the Council of Europe and the OECD on developing innovative tools for language learning.
- (35) Promoting the building of synergies and complementarities between the EU programmes that address learning mobility, such as Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, and other funding instruments at EU, international, national and regional level such as Cohesion Policy funds, in particular the European Social Fund Plus and the European Regional Development Fund programmes, to maximise the impact of the actions that promote learning mobility opportunities, including by supporting the implementation of tools and strategies to increase the participation of people with fewer opportunities.
- (36) Helping Member States to reform and enhance learning mobility systems at national and multi country level.
- (37) Mapping the areas of intervention of the existing funding instruments at EU, international, national or regional level to raise awareness of their potential actions and good practices in support of learning mobility and foster an effective synergetic approach across the relevant stakeholders.
- (38) Working with the Member States and relevant stakeholders on further improving the quality and availability of data and developing EU-level methodologies for data collection and analysis, including surveys, for example the European graduate tracking survey, on learning mobility in all education and training and youth sectors, that can also account for inclusiveness and territorial diversities, in full compliance with EU data protection legislation.
- (39) Revamping the Mobility Scoreboard, in close cooperation with experts from the Member States, to follow up the implementation of this Recommendation and expand it to cover all education and training, and youth sectors.

HAS ADOPTED THIS RECOMMENDATION AND RECOMMENDS THAT MEMBER STATES

In accordance with the characteristics of national school education, vocational education and training, higher education and adult education systems, and youth and sport sectors:

- (a) promote the seamless movement of learners, educators and staff within the European Education Area with a view to supporting the development of their skill set across the board, in particular those competencies that are essential for green and digital transitions, building trust and understanding between education and training systems, youth and sport sectors, and promoting active citizenship;
 - (b) work towards learning mobility schemes that are inclusive, environmentally sustainable, benefit from the use of digital technologies and promote common EU values;
 - (c) establish and work towards achieving new EU-level targets by 2030:
 - in higher education, the share of graduates with a learning mobility experience should be at least 25%;
 - in vocational education and training, the share of vocational learners benefiting from a learning mobility abroad should be at least 15%;
 - in all education and training and youth and sport systems, people with fewer opportunities should account for at least 20% of all learners benefiting from learning mobility abroad.
 - (d) establish structural cooperation with stakeholders in the area of learning mobility in view of the implementation of this Recommendation.
- (1) Provide systemic learning mobility opportunities by:
- (a) making learning mobility abroad a standard and integral part of school education, vocational education and training and apprenticeships, higher education and adult education and training systems by embedding the opportunity for learning mobility periods abroad in all education and training curricula through flexible mobility windows, elective courses and other opportunities;
 - (b) supporting education and training providers in developing and delivering an increasing share of cross-border joint activities, including joint programmes leading to joint degrees, by making the best use of European initiatives, in particular European Universities alliances, Centres of Vocational Excellence, National VET Teams, Alliances for Innovation and Erasmus+ Teacher Academies; building on the experiences of European Universities alliances that target a 50% mobility rate of students with physical, virtual and blended mobility options;
 - (c) promoting and embedding inwards and outwards learning mobility in non-formal and informal learning, youth work and volunteering settings as valuable and viable mobility options for all learners and staff, including through awareness-raising, outreach measures and other support to providers of non-formal and informal learning, local and regional authorities, youth centres and civil society organisations;

- (d) supporting the application of quality criteria for the preparation, implementation and follow-up of learning mobility activities, including by building on quality standards developed within the Erasmus+ programme, the European Solidarity Corps programme and other learning mobility schemes, and by focusing on the accessibility and inclusiveness of such activities;
 - (e) cooperation among the bodies that manage and implement funding instruments at EU, international, national or regional level to ensure coordinated activities that support and promote learning mobility, while avoiding overlaps and maximising the impact of resources.
- (2) Enhance language learning by:
- (a) strengthening language learning at all stages of education and training and in youth and sport systems, including by delivering part of curricula in other EU languages than the national language(s) to boost learning mobility options and opportunities;
 - (b) facilitating access to language education and learning, including for the adult population, to improve multilingual competences and enable citizens to take full advantage of learning mobility, the European Education Area and employment opportunities.
- (3) Support engagement in learning mobility activities by:
- (a) building lifelong learning mobility culture at all learning stages from school education to adult education and across learning settings, including by developing a variety of mobility formats and activities, supporting sending and hosting organisations in pursuing their internationalisation strategy, increasing the attractiveness of education institutions in hosting mobile learners, and encouraging alumni networks to develop and promote learning experience at the local level;
 - (b) fostering cooperation between regional and local authorities, education and training providers, civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations and private bodies to promote and support outgoing learning mobility, including for people with fewer opportunities, and creating a welcoming environment for incoming learning mobility participants from abroad;
 - (c) encouraging authorities and organisations that manage mobility schemes, both in sending and hosting roles, to reduce the administrative burden for organisations and participants and provide clear guidance throughout the application process;
 - (d) supporting flexible learning mobility formats that can broaden the pool of participants and serve as a stepping stone to longer mobility periods, including group mobility activities, short-term mobility and blended intensive programmes and any other learning experiences that can lead to micro-credentials, in line with the European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability;
 - (e) valuing the work of staff who prepare and implement learning mobility projects and activities by making it an integral and formally recognised part of the profession of education and training staff and youth workers, in particular in terms of working hours' quotas and formal requirements for career

advancement, and recognising the role of staff mobility in preparing, encouraging and then supporting learners' mobility.

- (4) Provide information on learning mobility opportunities by:
- (a) putting in place learning mobility promoters – coordinators, contact points, ambassadors or dedicated learning mobility information centres – at regional or local level to share their expertise with regional and local education and training providers, civil society organisations and private bodies, support engagement in learning mobility activities, and encourage these coordinators to network at national and intra-EU level;
 - (b) offering learners targeted information on learning mobility opportunities throughout the lifelong learning cycle, including in schools and youth centres, among vocational education and training and adult education providers, youth work and volunteering providers, higher education institutions and employers, by building on learning mobility promoters and integrating information on learning mobility opportunities into study and career guidance;
 - (c) promoting the benefits of a mobility period abroad and providing advice, tips and mentoring, in particular to learners with fewer opportunities, including by making best use of the Erasmus+ App;
 - (d) encouraging hosting organisations to ensure a smooth reception of incoming learners, including by the availability of information and relevant material;
 - (e) establishing a link between learning mobility and labour mobility by connecting learning mobility promoters to European cooperation network of employment services (EURES) mobility advisers;
 - (f) providing information on the living and working conditions in host countries by making use of the information available on the EURES portal on living and working conditions in all Member States and EFTA countries and the dedicated section of the EU Learning Corner, including by linking that information to national learning mobility portals.
- (5) Support transparency and recognition of learning outcomes by:
- (a) boosting the automatic recognition of the outcomes of learning periods abroad in education and training sectors at all levels, including for virtual and blended learning, by providing guidance and training for education and training providers and ensuring consistency in decision-making on recognition;
 - (b) ensuring the full automatic recognition of qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad in higher education by making full use of the schemes and tools available, including ensuring through the external quality assurance system the full implementation of ECTS in line with its 2015 User Guide, focusing on learning outcomes;
 - (c) encouraging education and training institutions to keep a record of decisions on the recognition of learning outcomes to ensure consistency and transparency of decision-making over time and between the different organisational structures of institutions and understanding of the concept and definition of automatic recognition;
 - (d) supporting the full recognition of competences acquired through learning mobility in non-formal and informal learning, youth work and volunteering

settings by promoting cooperation on validation arrangements among the relevant bodies across education and training sectors, non-formal learning providers and civil society organisations so that non-formal and informal learning outcomes can be more easily used in formal education and in the labour market;

- (e) supporting education and training providers and organisers of youth learning mobility activities, youth work and volunteering in the systemic use of EU frameworks and instruments, including Europass, the multilingual classification of European skills, competences and occupations, European Digital Credentials for Learning, the European Qualifications Framework, Europass Mobility and Youthpass and/or national frameworks to support the identification, documentation, assessment and where appropriate certification of competences developed through learning mobility;
 - (f) taking steps towards the ratification of the UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education to improve the fair and transparent recognition of third country qualifications as well as partial and prior learning; making information on the recognition processes of third country qualifications and comparability with national qualifications publicly available;
 - (g) using policy cooperation, in particular the Global Policy Dialogue of the Bologna Process and cooperation of recognition authorities and quality assurance agencies, to develop capacities in third countries' higher education institutions and align quality assurance processes in order to maximise the learning outcomes of the mobility experience of third country students and ensure full recognition of the mobility period towards the student's degree in the home country.
- (6) Support the transition to the labour market and work mobility by:
- (a) facilitating the transition from learning mobility to work mobility by helping mobile learners as well as teachers, trainers, other educators and youth workers access jobseeker support from public employment services and from EURES;
 - (b) helping learners, including recent graduates through Erasmus+, undertake traineeships abroad to develop their entrepreneurial, innovative, creative and intercultural skills;
 - (c) encouraging relevant organisations to host trainees from abroad, including through investments, awareness building and accessible information.
- (7) Make learning mobility more inclusive and accessible by:
- (a) setting inclusion targets at national or regional level for learning mobility that would contribute to the achievement of the EU-level inclusion target set in point (c), and developing dedicated measures to support the mobility of people with fewer opportunities;
 - (b) ensuring learning mobility is accessible for persons with disabilities by removing barriers and addressing their needs from the early stages of designing the learning activity;
 - (c) providing the level of support needed to make learning mobility accessible to people with fewer opportunities, as well as support to organisations hosting such people, including by providing appropriate funding at national or regional

level and by fostering synergies among different EU, international, national and regional funding instruments;

- (d) providing precise and timely information on available learning mobility funding, the timing of payments and other available support for learners;
 - (e) encouraging full or partial prepayments of grants and allowing the portability of grants and loans. In accordance with national law, encouraging to exempt those grants from any taxes and social levies and treating grants awarded by public or private legal entities in the same manner; and informing mobile participants about procedural requirements with regard to income taxation;
 - (f) facilitating learning mobility abroad by addressing student housing shortages for mobile learners together with relevant national and local authorities;
 - (g) ensuring, in accordance with EU and national legislation, appropriate protection of mobile participants, including apprentices, trainees, young researchers and youth workers, in particular minors, in terms of insurance, labour standards, health and safety requirements, tax, social security including access to healthcare, and where relevant the possibility to accumulate pension entitlements.
- (8) Make learning mobility more environmentally sustainable by:
- (a) where appropriate, making travelling with more sustainable means of transport from and to learning mobility destinations and during mobility periods an integral part of the learning mobility experience, and providing adequate funding for as well as guidance on sustainable travel;
 - (b) helping education and training providers and civil society organisations that organise learning mobility activities integrate sustainability practices into their daily activities through training, guidelines and the exchange of good practice;
 - (c) supporting education and training providers in setting targets and monitoring arrangements at organisational level to cut greenhouse gas emissions from learning mobility travel.
- (9) Make use of digital technologies to facilitate learning mobility by:
- (a) supporting the development and use of interoperable IT systems based on common European standards for learners, educators and staff, in full compliance with applicable data protection legislation, to manage and register learning mobility experiences, and for organisations to provide information on mobility opportunities, manage mobility, support automatic recognition and reduce the administrative burden, including by making full use of the features of the European Student Card initiative and the tools offered by the Europass platform, among others through the digitalisation of learning credentials with the European Digital Credentials for Learning infrastructure;
 - (b) contributing to initiatives that support the mobility of researchers and provide relevant information and support services, including EURAXESS⁶² and the upcoming ERA Talent Platform⁶³;

⁶² EURAXESS – Researchers in Motion is a one-stop shop for researchers and innovators seeking to advance their careers and personal development by moving to other countries.

- (c) providing financial and human resources support to education and training providers and civil society organisations, enabling them to set up and utilise digital tools at their level when necessary and/or use existing digital tools to complement physical mobility;
 - (d) supporting the development of quality blended and virtual mobility formats by adapting existing national frameworks to further enable complementary innovative mobility formats that make use of digital technologies.
- (10) Promote EU values through learning mobility by:
- (a) encouraging all learners, educators and staff to participate in the life of host communities, including volunteering activities, during their learning mobility period abroad;
 - (b) enriching learning mobility experiences with training in intercultural awareness, civic engagement, digital and media literacy, EU values and fundamental rights;
 - (c) providing incoming learners, educators and staff with information relevant to the local context and creating a welcoming culture through mentors and administrative support;
 - (d) ensuring that mobile students and staff enjoy the highest level of academic freedom; encouraging education institutions, including through quality assurance, to develop a quality culture where full adherence to academic integrity principles is ensured also during mobility periods.
- (11) Promote the EU as a learning destination by:
- (a) cooperating closely in the Team Europe approach to increase the attractiveness of the EU as a learning destination, utilising the existing range of national and regional initiatives such as the Study in Europe project in higher education;
 - (b) facilitating learning mobility with other parts of the world, in particular with countries with an enlargement perspective, through closer cooperation between their relevant authorities and education and training institutions and those in the EU; Talent Partnerships can provide a framework for stronger cooperation partnerships with key third countries in line with mutually agreed objectives; such cooperation can help ensure that learning mobility indirectly helps address skills gaps in third countries and the EU, for example by targeting skills gaps in sectors affected by the green and digital transitions and improving the employability of learners;
 - (c) supporting the timely issuance of long-stay visas and residence permits for third-country nationals who are selected for a learning opportunity in a Member State, in accordance with Directive (EU) 2016/801⁶⁴, or of short-stay

⁶³ This action supported by the Horizon Europe programme aims to boost the interoperability of careers and employability of research and innovation talents across sectors.

⁶⁴ Directive (EU) 2016/801 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing (OJ L 132 21.5.2016, p. 21).

visas, in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 810/2009⁶⁵, depending on the intended duration of stay in the EU.

- (12) Support the implementation of this Recommendation by:
- (a) developing action plans for 2025-2030 at national or regional level by May 2025 in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders and notifying the Commission on how to implement this Recommendation in higher education, vocational education and training, school education and adult education sectors and in youth and sport systems that address both outgoing and incoming learning mobility;
 - (b) fully cooperating with the Commission in respect of the actions it intends to take as explained in the recitals 27-39.

Done at Brussels,

*For the Council
The President*

⁶⁵ Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 establishing a Community Code on Visas (Visa Code) (OJ L 243 15.9.2009, p. 1).