



UNION EUROPEENNE DE L'ARTISANAT ET DES PETITES ET MOYENNES ENTREPRISES  
EUROPÄISCHE UNION DES HANDWERKS UND DER KLEIN- UND MITTELBETRIEBE  
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF CRAFT, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES  
UNIONE EUROPEA DELL' ARTIGIANATO E DELLE PICCOLE E MEDIE IMPRESE

**UEAPME concept paper**  
**on**  
**Measures for improving mobility of apprentices**  
**in the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci programme 2007-2013**  
**and of the studies undertaken by the European Commission with the budget line**  
**“Guy-Quint” on an “Erasmus style” programme for Apprentices**

### **Introduction**

**Mobility is a training objective of the Leonardo da Vinci programme, especially important to European crafts, small and medium-sized enterprises. Learning and working abroad for a certain time does not only enrich competences and know how of an individual, but also increases the understanding of the European Union and European citizenship. Additionally, it helps the individual to be pro-active and more open to take on responsibility for his or her own employability including entrepreneurship in his or her working life.**

Therefore UEAPME strongly supports the European mobility programmes, in particular the Leonardo da Vinci (LdV) programme, and its training objective.

Building on the positive experience of the ERASMUS programme, the Leonardo da Vinci (LdV) programme was set up in 1995 in order to enable people in their initial vocational training period, or shortly afterwards, to also spend some time working and learning in another EU country. This is especially important as it is often the people working in crafts profession who have less access to information and so less interest in the EU, and which professions always had a long tradition of mobility. However, compared to the ERASMUS programme, which sends around 260,000 students a year, the Leonardo da Vinci programme, although while having experienced a huge increase from 36,615 to around 70,000 participants between 2000-2005, has still to reach its full potential if it wants to achieve its aim of reaching “150,000 Leonardo placements (a year) by 2013”<sup>1</sup>.

The limited participation of apprentices from the craft sector in the community programmes is caused in particular by the current inflexible structure of the LEONARDO programme, which strongly limits the direct participation of skilled crafts and small enterprises in this programme.

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<sup>1</sup> Commission Proposal for a DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing an integrated action programme in the field of lifelong learning COM (2004) 474 final

This is why UEAPME proposed an initiative of a pilot project for a “ERASMUS-style programme for Apprentices”.

### **The idea of an ERASMUS style programme for apprentices**

The concept meant is about specific mobility measures for apprentices, as long as they are in an alternating training system (work-based and school or training centre based system).

The main aim of the pilot project is to:

- Increase mobility of apprentices
- Enhance visibility of mobility for young people in VET just like the one in higher education, by setting specific measures in order to provide a very visible scheme, dedicated to the mobility of apprentices. This will strongly contribute to increase participation in the Leonardo Programme, but also, create a parity of esteem between VET and higher education
- Experiment with different approaches and instruments, and especially the proposed ECVET (if operational by then) in order to recognise and validate the competences and learning outcomes from the mobility period
- Promote and communicate the advantages of mobility to craft and SMEs

The outcomes of this initiative should be fully integrated into the Leonardo program.

The need for specific measures for apprentices was recognised and addressed by the European Parliament when voting for a pilot project for an ERASMUS style programme for apprentices. In this framework, the Commission is carrying out three studies on:

- implementing and developing an ECVET system for apprentices
- feasibility study on an ECVET system for apprentices
- the obstacles to trans-national mobility of apprentices and other young persons in initial vocational training and of how these obstacles can be surmounted

### **The target group benefiting from the specific measures:**

The two target groups identified in the terms of reference of the study, “apprentices and young persons in initial vocational training” has been very correctly defined in the initial report of the study on the obstacles to trans-national mobility.

It states that:

*The first group, “apprentices” being based on “systematic, long-term **training alternating periods** in a school or training centre and at the workplace; the **apprentice is contractually linked to the employer** and receives remuneration (wages or allowance). The employer assumes responsibility for providing the trainee with training leading to a specific occupation”.*

*The other group is “General or vocational training carried out in the initial vocational training system, usually before working life....IVET may be carried out at*

*any level in general or vocational education (full-time school-based or alternance training pathways or apprenticeship”<sup>2</sup>.*

However, when the initial report is breaking down the first group (apprentices) into three different types: *Pre-dominantly work-based, mixed-system and pre-dominantly school-based*,<sup>3</sup> UEAPME considers that the third group belongs more to the category of young people in initial vocational training than to the one of apprentices.

The most important criteria to define an apprentice in the skilled crafts is the existence of a contract<sup>4</sup> between a company and an apprentice in an alternating training scheme. Due to this specificity the two target groups are facing different obstacles towards mobility.

### **Obstacles for mobility of apprentices**

The current Leonardo program is better designed for IVET pupils, who are in a purely vocational school based situation than for apprentices, because it underestimates the practical difficulties of skilled craft and small companies (sending and hosting companies) for organising mobility of young people contractually linked to an employer.

In order to facilitate mobility of apprentices, it is necessary to tackle the specific situation of skilled craft, trade and small companies and of apprentices in these companies.

There is a need for:

- Better supporting the involvement of skilled craft and small companies in the training process (training plan, coordination with the other company), and take the apprenticeship, as an alternating training mode into greater consideration.
- Providing a better coverage of various costs, in particular the ones for the company: the sending company is still paying the wage during the absence of the young person and the hosting company has more costs than benefits (coordination, tutoring, outcomes evaluation etc.)
- Financing accompanying measures for the mobility experience for both the individual and the company, before, during and after the mobility period (in the form of preparation, accompanying and debriefing).
- Communicating the added value of mobility for craft and small businesses and apprentices
- Enhancing the visibility of mobility programs for apprentices

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<sup>2</sup> P.14

<sup>3</sup> P.18

<sup>4</sup> Any contractual framework, that creates a link between that apprentice and the enterprise

## **UEAPME's Concept for new measures to improve the mobility of apprentices**

The role of intermediate bodies is crucial to optimise the efficiency of the Leonardo programme for apprentices.

The prior objective should not be about setting up new structures but about identifying already existing structures that could play the role of intermediate bodies and interfaces between the companies and the apprentices.

### **Intermediate bodies:**

1 - Possible structures: Chamber of Skilled Crafts and chambers of commerce, Business organisations, Training centres, structures responsible for managing Training Funds, etc. ,

It has to be defined on a case by case basis, according to the Member State specificities.

### **2 - Possible tasks:**

1 – Administration of apprentices' placements and organising support (this will help to reduce the administrative burden for the participating individual and company, and to ensure individual mobility for an apprentice through individual application procedures;

2 - Assistance in EUROPASS application and quality assurance;

3 – Communication role: awareness raising of the advantages of mobility and promoting the LdV programme and its mobility opportunities;

4 – Acting as recognition, validation and certification bodies for competences and learning outcomes;

5 – Key actors for the establishment of zones of mutual trust between different national intermediate bodies and establishing memoranda of understanding between different countries.

### **Multi-annual Contracts:**

The two main obstacles for optimising the organisation of mobility projects for apprentices are the rule that financing contracts are only given for limited periods (max. two years) and they have only one application deadline a year.

The intermediate bodies, as mentioned above, should receive multi annual grants. This will facilitate the planning of activities like communication and promotion. It will simplify the search for companies, as well as apprentices, by fixing short, medium and long term objectives, and will provide with more continuity for the various activities.

### **Global grants for more flexibility:**

The grants should be of a more global nature, in order to facilitate a better distribution of the subsidies. In practical terms, the Leonardo allocation should not only cover travel, subsistence costs and grants of the individual, but also be used to finance the preparation costs for the sending company, part of the wage of the apprentices during the mobility period, a compensation for administrative expenses of the company without being the promoter, taking into account the costs for the hosting company like tutoring, costs for the training coordination, for the validation of learning outcomes, etc...

A more global grant for single placements will give more flexibility in the costs coverage. This increase of the flexibility of the grants would not mean an increase of their level.

Flexibility of grants should also include the possibility for co-financing.

### **Co-financing as another possible resource:**

The possibility of benefiting from a co-financing from other sources like local authorities, regional bodies and other institutions should be seriously envisaged.

Its feasibility should be further explored on a national basis.

### **Examples of possible practical actions for mobility projects**

*Example 1. Individual mobility (training) program* with easy access to lump-sum support, i.e. direct, non-bureaucratic application procedures, not limited by annual deadlines, organisation of stay at the individual's/participant's own initiative according to personal training situation and training needs, certification of the learning achievements and acquired skills through the Europass.

- **Length of stay: short-term.** 2 weeks minimum.
- **Target groups:** "Free-mover"-apprentices in initial vocational training (over 18 years of age for liability reasons), SMEs that send their apprentices abroad (no age restrictions upwards), and skilled workers directly after passing the skilled worker's examination; no branch or sectoral restrictions.
- **Target countries:** All Leonardo da Vinci participating countries (EU Member States, accession countries and EFTA).
- **Grant:** lump-sum: e.g. of € 350 for the stay of 2 weeks minimum (independent of longer duration).
- **Organisation:** Participants/applicants organise their stay - from finding a practical training scheme to obtaining the letter of agreement from the employer, as well as the modalities of their stay, arrival and departure. Application must be simple and non-bureaucratic ("light&easy" application form), a short report after return (e.g. on learning achievements) should be requested. Decentralized program administration by the Member States (through Chambers and Sectoral Associations in cooperation with National Agencies).
  
- **Mobility effects (with purpose of learning and training):**
  - Encouragement of active endeavours/initiative by the applicant to go abroad;
  - Promotion of own initiative and career commitment;

- Acquisition of new occupational and cultural skills and experiences, language skills;
- Dissipation/reduction of fears and reservations towards the stay in a foreign country through a brief “exploratory stay;”
- Promotion/encouragement of (personal) independence (especially for well performing applicants);
- responsibility for own career and skill development and for life-long learning;
- Development of a “culture of mobility.”

**Example 2 - In the long run enable a stay abroad as optional standardized element of the regular vocational training program / plan; trade-/branch-specific "certified extra qualification or additional skill".** Exchange of smaller units from existing training programmes maybe also including the allocation of ECVET-Credit points for the stay abroad and for formal recognition of competences and learning outcomes and documentation through the Europass.

- **Length of stay:** 3 weeks to 3 months, trade-specific, according to training curricula
- **Target group:** apprentices in initial vocational training.
- **Target countries:** All Leonardo da Vinci participating countries (EU Member States, accession countries and EFTA).
- **Grant:** according to LdV-rules, length of stay and hosting country; apprentices are released from their training company and receive a program grant. Insurance coverage for the participant to be clarified.
- **Organisation:** Through intermediary organizations (Chambers and Sector Associations) that offer support. Organization according to specific quality indicators.
- **Mobility effects (with purpose of learning and training):**
  - Acquisition of occupational skills as part of the regular training program including formal recognition,
  - acquisition of language and cultural skills and (personal) experience;
  - enhancing the attractiveness of the own vocational training program
  - Promotion of personal development and of (personal) independence;
  - Development of a “culture of mobility.”
- **Accompanying study:** should be carried out to identify exchangeable "units" within existing initial vocational training programs (e.g. baker, confectioner/pastry cook and butcher) that can be used for an international exchange (content and allocation of ECVET- credit points).

This concept could be tested in the experimentation phase following the results of the three EC studies currently drafted. This then could lay the ground work and create the basis for the 2007 Leonardo da Vinci call for projects.

### **The European Union's New Integrated Action Programme for life long learning**

In order to set-up these new measures, the European Union's New Integrated Programme for life long learning should be amended in an appropriate way. The European Parliament had voted in its first reading in October 2005, **amendments which would aim to:**

- **ensure individual participation of apprentices in mobility programmes**
- **provide accompanying measures for apprentices**
- **provide supporting measures for SMEs, in particular, very small enterprises**
- **enhancing the attractiveness of vocational education and training and mobility for employers and individuals**

Unfortunately these proposals for change were not retained by Council and Commission. These amendments should be reintroduced in the EP's second reading and reconsidered by the Council and Commission.

Together with the technical proposals of the Leonardo da Vinci stakeholder group on how to improve the LdV programme this would give a very sound basis to improve the mobility of apprentices in Europe.

### **Conclusion**

UEAPME calls strongly on the European Commission to take its concept paper for the new Integrated Action Programme on Lifelong learning, and in particular for the Leonardo da Vinci programme into consideration. This should help to reach the objective of 150 000 placements by 2013, with a higher proportion of apprentices placements.

Brussels, 10 March 2006

## Annex

**Amendments to the EP's draft report on the "EU Action programme in the field of lifelong learning 2007-2013" concerning the mobility of apprentices**  
Amendments adopted by the European Parliament on the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2005

<b><i>Amendment 29</i></b> <b>Compromise amendment Doris Pack and Christa Prets</b>	
<b><i>TITLE I GENERAL PROVISIONS</i></b>	
<b><i>Chapter I The Integrated Programme</i></b>	
<b><i>Article 2, paragraph 4, point (c ii a) (new) Specific Programmes</i></b>	
<b>Proposal of the European Commission</b>	<b>Amendment proposal</b>
	<b>(iia) to enhance the attractiveness of vocational education and training and mobility for employers and individuals</b>

**Amendment 35**  
Proposed by Christa Prets

**TITLE I GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**Chapter I The Integrated Programme**

**Article 5, paragraph 1, point a) Community actions**

<b>Proposal of the European Commission</b>	<b>Amendment proposal</b>
<p>(1) The Integrated Programme shall comprise support for the following actions:</p> <p>(a) the mobility of people in lifelong learning in Europe;</p>	<p>(1) The Integrated Programme shall comprise support for the following actions:</p> <p>(a) the mobility of people in lifelong learning in Europe <i>including support through grants for mobility and grants for the organisation of mobility to higher education institutions, promoters of mobility and enterprises sending and/or receiving persons (for example the organisation and management of projects and provisions necessary for high-quality mobility);</i></p>

***Amendment 53***  
**Proposed by Christa Prets**

**TITLE II THE SPECIFIC PROGRAMMES**

**Chapter III The Leonardo da Vinci programme**

***Article 28, point a) Operational objectives***

<b>Proposal of the European Commission</b>	<b>Amendment proposal</b>
<p>(a) to increase the volume and to improve the quality of mobility throughout Europe of people involved in initial vocational education and training and in continuing training, so as to increase placements in enterprises to at least 150 000 per year by the end of the Integrated Programme;</p>	<p>(a) to increase the volume and to improve the quality of mobility throughout Europe of people involved in initial vocational education <i>(for example combined initial vocational training arrangements including training as defined in Article 3(8))</i> and in continuing training, so as to increase placements in enterprises to at least 150 000 per year by the end of the Integrated Programme. <i>Individual participation by trainees in mobility programmes must be guaranteed in each Member State ;</i></p>

<b><i>Amendment 54</i></b>	
<b>Proposed by Lissy Gröner and Guy Bono</b>	
<b>TITLE II THE SPECIFIC PROGRAMMES</b>	
<b>Chapter III The Leonardo da Vinci programme</b>	
<b><i>Article 28, point d bis) (new) Operational objectives</i></b>	
<b>Proposal of the European Commission</b>	<b>Amendment proposal</b>
	<i>da) to facilitate measures seeking to improve in qualitative and quantitative terms placement opportunities for young people involved in alternating initial vocational training under an employment contract.</i>

<p><b><i>Amendment 55</i></b></p> <p><b>Proposed by Lissy Gröner and Guy Bono</b>  <b>And orally modified by Christa Prets</b></p>	
<p><b>TITLE II THE SPECIFIC PROGRAMMES</b></p>	
<p><b>Chapter III The Leonardo da Vinci programme</b></p>	
<p><b><i>Article 29, paragraph 1, point a) ii bis) (new) Actions</i></b></p>	
	<p><i>(ii) measures seeking on the one hand to facilitate participation by undertakings, in particular SMEs, very small enterprises and craft enterprises, and on the other hand to improve mobility for those persons referred to under points (i) and (ii) and facilitate recruitment of placement programme participants.</i></p>

<b><i>Amendment 56</i></b>	
Proposed by Hannu Takkula	
<b>TITLE II THE SPECIFIC PROGRAMMES</b>	
<b>Chapter III The Leonardo da Vinci programme</b>	
<b><i>Article 30 Budget</i></b>	
Not less than 75% of the budget available for the Leonardo da Vinci programme shall be devoted to support for mobility as referred to in Article 29(1)(a).	Not less than 75% of the budget available for the Leonardo da Vinci programme shall be devoted to support for mobility <b><i>and partnerships</i></b> as referred to in Article 29(1)(a) <b><i>and (b)</i></b> .