



Spotlight on Parliaments in Europe

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Youth Mobility in the EU: the Youth Employment Initiative helps to tackle the youth unemployment in most affected countries

On 18 April 2016, the French National Assembly submitted a request to the ECPRD network concerning the mobility of youth, its promotion and funding (request 3111). Youth unemployment represents an ongoing issue in most European countries. Several measures have been progressively introduced to tackle this problem, the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) being one of them. At European level, promoting cross-border mobility has a big potential and is one of the most effective tools to help young people. The EU funded programme Erasmus+, with a budget of €14.7 billion for the period of 2014-2020, provides an opportunity for over 4 million of Europeans to study, train, work or volunteer abroad. In addition to the Erasmus+ Programme, there are several schemes aimed at promoting youth exchanges based on bilateral or multilateral agreements. This Spotlight is a summary of the replies given by 18 national Parliaments to the following questions: Do you have a system promoting the mobility of youth, in vocational training or in apprenticeship abroad? Does your country benefit from the 'Youth Employment Initiative' (YEI)? Do you have a system promoting the mobility of youths who are in higher education and/or on an internship?

Austria

The Austrian Federal Ministry for Education and Women's Affairs is the National Authority for the Erasmus+ programme. In 2014 and 2015, altogether 6,245 mobility opportunities in the field of vocational education and training, and 14,636 activities in the field of higher education were funded under Erasmus+ in Austria. Due to the large demand, the entire EU budget for the country is spent, and thanks to additional national funds, more opportunities can be funded. In 2014/2015 there was a 39% increase in demands for company placements abroad from students enrolled in higher education. The average funding amounts up to €333 per month for study exchange, and up to €435 for traineeship abroad. Besides the Erasmus+ programme, students profit from the Central European Exchange Program for University Students (CEEPUS) which includes 16 participating countries¹.

Croatia

The Erasmus+ Programme in Croatia is managed by the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes and supervised by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports together with the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth. Under the YEI, Croatia has at disposal €144.032.608 from the European Social Fund and the YEI funds for the period 2014-2020. The YEI is managed by the Ministry of Labour and Pension System as a Youth Guarantee Coordinating Organisation. To ensure the implementation of measures and reforms to resolve the youth employment problems, an Inter-ministerial Government Task Force for Monitoring the Implementation of Recommendations of the Council of the European Union on Establishing a Youth Guarantee, was formed.

Denmark

The Erasmus+ programme is administered by the Ministry of Higher Education and Science. In the field of vocational training, Danish students can profit from the PIU ("Work and Placement") Programme to complete a traineeship abroad as a part of their education. In 2013, more than 1500 students went abroad within this framework. The PIU-arrangement is financed by the Employers' Reimbursement System (AUB) to cover the extra costs incurred by the individual trainee during this transnational experience.

¹ Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Kosovo

The Nordplus is the Nordic Council of Ministers mobility and network program for higher education for Nordic and Baltic countries, aimed at collaboration between the countries' institutions.

Estonia

The Erasmus+ funding is managed by an independent body, Archimedes Foundation, affiliated to the Ministry of Education and Research, with the objective to coordinate and implement international and national programmes and projects on training, education and research. Estonia did not qualify for the funding within the YEI, as the respective unemployment rate indicator is below the threshold. In the field of vocational training, the Vocational Educational Institutions Act provides a framework for establishment and maintenance of educational institutions. Estonia is a partner country of the Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Nordic Council of Ministers².

Finland

The Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) is the responsible national agency for both Erasmus+ and Nordplus Higher Education Programmes. In the field of initial and continuous vocational education and training, the Finnish National Board of Education State Funding for Internationalisation, managed by the Ministry of Education and Culture, offers mobility placements in companies abroad, mostly focused on non-European countries. In addition to these schemes, CIMO promotes mobility and cooperation programmes with priority countries, namely Russia, China and India. Furthermore, the North2North- and the (former) North-South-South development programme are aimed at enhancing student exchanges.

France

In the field of youth mobility and vocational training, there are two frameworks facilitating youth mobility: Service Civique governed by the Ministry of Urban Affairs, Youth and Sports at national level, and the Erasmus+ programmes at European level. France benefits from the YEI, managed by the European Social Fund (ESF), which targets youth not in education, employment or training. International volunteering, managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is open to French and EU citizens to realise a mission lasting between 12 and 24 months. The volunteers receive a remuneration of €1,190 to €2,900 per month. Students enrolled in higher education benefit from following funding options: the International Mobility Fund, the Ministry of National Education, the Regional Council, and the Erasmus+ grant scheme.

Germany

There are four national agencies administrating the Erasmus+ Programme. The National Agency for EU Cooperation in Higher Education (DAAD), where more than 40000 students were provided a funding to study abroad in 2014. The monthly grant amounts to €228 for students and €334 for trainees, depending on number of eligible applications. In the youth sector (European Voluntary Service), managed by the National Agency-Youth in Action, a significant increase in applications led to relatively lower approval rate (63% in 2015). In principle, participation of disadvantaged and disabled participants increased (32% and 4.1 % respectively). In the field of vocational education and training, around 20000 activities were funded by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education, managed by the National Agency Education for Europe.

Greece

As the country suffers from one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the EU (50.6% in 2014), Greece is eligible for the YEI funding. The specific allocation amounts to €171,517,029 for the period 2014–2015. The YEI measures target young people directly in form of support for high-quality traineeships, apprenticeships and vocational trainings, provisions of first job experience and start-up support for young entrepreneurs. The Erasmus+ Programme is managed by the State Scholarship Foundation (IKY). Although there are several private and public institutions, the IKY remains the main source of funding. Due to budgetary restrictions in the last years, the offer for scholarships abroad has been reduced.

² Nordplus for higher education mobility and Nordplus Languages Advancement Programme

Hungary

The Erasmus+ Programme is managed by the governmental Tempus Public Foundation, operating under supervision of the Ministry of Human Capacities. It aims to develop international cooperation programmes in the field of education, training and EU-related issues. In the framework of the YEI, four regions are eligible for funding. The Programme is managed by the National Employment Service and aims to support young people through wage subsidies, trainings, labour market services and mobility projects. In addition to the EU funding, the EEA grants are at disposal in order to enhance international mobility with Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein as participating countries.

Netherlands

In the field of secondary vocational education, the National Reference Point (NRP) of the Centre for Cooperation between Vocational Education and Training and the Labour Market is in charge of mobility opportunities. The Netherlands do not participate in the YEI as the country does not match the eligibility criteria (the youth unemployment rate is low). In the area of higher education, there are three mobility opportunities available: diploma mobility, credit mobility or programme-based mobility. In the field of higher professional education, the Organisation for Internationalisation in Education-Nuffic, helps students, employees, policymakers, administrators and researchers to achieve their international ambitions. Students may also fulfil a teaching placement in a developing country through Edukans, a professional Netherlands-based educational development organisation.

Poland

The support for mobility of young people in vocational training focuses mainly on mobility within the country, whereas in the field of higher education, the international mobility is promoted. Young people can profit from the government-funded programme "Work for youth", which provides reimbursement for employing a person under 30 years for a period up to 12 months. It is expected that 100 thousands of young people will profit from this programme during next three years. The YEI is managed by the Ministry of Economic Development. Since the beginning of its implementation, already 115 thousands of young people benefited from this scheme. In the field of higher education, international mobility is managed by the Foundation for Development of Educational System. In addition to this, students can get grants through one of 34 bilateral governmental agreements managed by the Bureau for Academic Recognition and Student Exchange.

Portugal

The Portuguese Institute of Youth and Sports is a governmental initiative to promote youth mobility in Portugal and abroad through exchanges. The programme INOV Contacto, administered by the Trade & Investment Agency-Aicep Portugal Global, provides quality training to young graduates abroad and serves as a network among past and current participants. Besides the Erasmus+ scheme, students can profit from various exchange programs inside and outside of Europe. For students with technical diplomas, paid traineeships abroad are offered by the International Association for the Exchange of Students for technical Experience. Rede Magalhães, which is a European, Latin America and Caribbean Universities Consortium, provides students with opportunity for study exchange in selected participating universities.

Romania

In order to promote youth mobility in the area of vocational training, the Ministry of Youth and Sport undertakes a number of international activities (exchanges, volunteering services and partnerships). Youth unemployment, being higher than a European average, represents an ongoing problem. To tackle this issue, the YEU funding was implemented in February 2015 in the framework of the National Operational Programme for Human Capital Development. The measures offered to young people envisage personalised integrated packages, depending on the profile of the young person (counselling, orientation, training.). Furthermore, it provides a support for setting up companies and mobility tools to find a job in another region of Romania.

Slovakia

The Youth mobility practice may develop thanks to the funding allocated under the YEI, whereas the specific allocation amounts to €72.175.259 for the period 2014–2015. Erasmus+ is managed by the IUVENTA (Slovak Youth Institute), a state organization directly managed by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. In the area of youth mobility, there is no special scheme on national level and the European Voluntary Service remains the exclusive opportunity for young volunteers. There are several possibilities in the area of the mobility of youth involved in higher education. The Slovak Academic Information Agency (SAIA) is a non-governmental non-profit organisation offering several grants schemes: the Action Austria-Slovakia, CEEPUS, National Scholarship Programme, the Swiss-Slovak Scholarship Fund and the EEA Scholarship Programme.

Slovenia

Mobility is entirely implemented in the framework and through funding of the Erasmus+ Programme. The coordinators for the implementation of the programme at the national level are the Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Mobility and European Educational and Training Programmes (CMEPIUS), and the Institute for the Development of Youth Mobility. Slovenia also participates in the YEI, in the form of an additional funding. The development of the action plan for the implementation of YEI is coordinated by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. In the area of higher education, the country takes part in the CEEPUS programme, the Slovenian Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund, and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism grant schemes.

Spain

The Strategy for Entrepreneurship and Young Employment is an initiative of the Ministry of Employment and Social Security, approved in February 2013. The Autonomous Communities play a determinant role in its implementation, and the success depends on good coordination among the different administrations. The Spanish Service for the Internalisation of Education (SEPIE) aims to promote mobility opportunities for students to develop their skills and increase their employability. It also enhances a cooperation with companies both inside and outside of Europe. In the framework of Erasmus+, Spain is the leading country when it comes to the absolute numbers of both incoming students and those who go studying abroad.

Sweden

The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society is responsible for following up and analysing young people's life situation in the most important areas of youth policy. It serves as a national agency for Erasmus+ implementation. In order to support international mobility, the country takes part in, among others, the ATHENA Exchange Programme, the Youth Trainee Programme with internship opportunities in middle- and low-income countries, and the Nordplus Programme. The Swedish Board for Study Support (CSN) approves the Swedish Financial Aid tool and provides both grants and loans for studying abroad.

UK

The Erasmus+ Programme is managed and delivered by the UK National Agency, being a partnership between the British Council and Ecorys UK, appointed by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). The UK National Authority oversees the programme across the country and ensures an effective implementation. The monthly grant for studying and training/working abroad is €100 more than the minimum figure allowed by the European Commission, namely: up to €300 € per months for high cost of living countries and up to 250 € for lower cost of living countries, whereas disadvantaged students receive an additional support of €100. The English Government may also provide a maintenance loan and travel grant.

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