



CEDEFOP

National policies for quality in initial VET mobility

Little progress made:
a new impulse needed

POLICY BRIEF





POLICY BACKGROUND



The recommendations of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 established the [European Quality Charter for Mobility](#). According to the charter, mobility quality implies providing potential candidates for mobility with clear and reliable information and guidance on mobility opportunities, as well as linguistic, cultural, and administrative preparation, and logistical support for practical aspects, prior to the mobility. Quality also requires setting up a learning plan prior to each mobility exercise, helping with learners' integration in the host environment abroad. On return to the home country, it also ensures recognition of the learning outcomes acquired, evaluation of the mobility experience, and learner reintegration in the social, educational, and professional environment. Mutual understanding of parties' commitments and responsibilities should also be ensured. These quality principles were subsequently reaffirmed by the Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 [Youth on the move: promoting the learning mobility of young people](#).

Promoting the free movement of workers is a foundational objective of the European Union. Preparing future workers for mobility, from the time of their education and training, is therefore essential.

Ensuring the quality of learning mobility is essential, as this may encourage learner motivation to undertake mobility.

This policy brief analyses country policies and practices for quality in transnational learning mobility in initial vocational education and training (IVET). The analysis covers the EU Member States, Iceland, and Norway. It is based on data collected in 2021 from Cedefop's ReferNet network for the [Mobility Scoreboard](#) ⁽¹⁾.

⁽¹⁾ The [IVET Mobility Scoreboard](#) is an online tool that monitors the policies for the international mobility of IVET learners in the EU Member States, Iceland, and Norway. It was presented in Cedefop's Briefing Note series in October 2016 and March 2020 ([Cedefop, 2016; 2020](#)).

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...**mobility quality** implies providing potential candidates for mobility with **clear and reliable information** and **guidance on mobility opportunities**...



...**on return** to the home country, it also ensures **recognition of the learning outcomes**...



...quality principles were reaffirmed by the **Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 Youth on the move: promoting the learning mobility of young people**...



EVIDENCE

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Country policies and practices for quality in mobility

The 29 countries monitored are not in the same situation when it comes to the alignment of their IVET mobility policies to the quality requirements set by the EU recommendation. According to data available to Cedefop, in 10 countries ⁽²⁾ *Erasmus+* is the only existing mobility scheme in which IVET learners can participate. Participating in *Erasmus+* entails meeting the EU requirements for quality in mobility, since mobility organisers and participants must sign a 'quality commitment' form, which outlines the quality requirements ⁽³⁾. The EU requirements can be considered met in these 10 countries. This is not the case in the other 19 countries, where schemes other than *Erasmus+* are also open to IVET learners. The study or placement periods abroad offered by these other schemes may or may not be part of a formal study or training programme, and therefore may (or may not) include related services for preparation, follow-up, and assessment. Schemes outside *Erasmus+* may or may not be aligned to the EU quality requirements.

⁽²⁾ Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Norway, and Romania.

⁽³⁾ Requirements to commit to quality were recently reinforced through the introduction, for the 2021-27 period, of *Erasmus Quality Standards*.

More than 50 mobility schemes, other than *Erasmus+*, are accessible to IVET learners across the 19 countries (Table 3).

This analysis focuses on whether the policies and practices for quality in mobility in these other schemes operate under a national framework, established by regulations or practice that ensures:

- language and intercultural preparation prior to mobility;
- setting up of learning agreements prior to mobility;
- monitoring of the stay process including ongoing assessment of learning progress and providing learners with assistance/mentoring/guidance for integration in the host institution/organisation/country;
- collection of feedback on return from mobility;
- support for social, educational or professional reintegration as necessary on return from mobility;
- support for access to convenient and affordable facilities for housing, catering and transportation throughout the stay process.

Only seven Member States have such frameworks in place. The other 12 countries have no overall

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...**more than 50 mobility schemes**, other than *Erasmus+*, **are accessible to IVET learners across the 19 countries...**



policy for the quality of mobility; this is left to the discretion of the mobility organisers.

The thematic coverage of the existing frameworks varies from one country to another (Table 1). No country meets the full range of the criteria listed above. Germany, Estonia and Finland have the most complete coverage with five criteria met, while only the provision of housing, catering, and transportation facilities is usual practice in Poland. Language preparation is the most often covered topic, while supporting reintegration is the least frequently addressed.

Available data (Cedefop, 2021a) suggest that the frameworks are regulatory in Estonia and Spain. In Estonia, 'supported VET schools are obligated to ensure language and intercultural preparation of IVET learners' (Cedefop, 2021b). for mobility. The expected learning outcomes are emphasised. Learners are assigned supervisors and contact persons, and 'are obligated to fill in the practice diary or blog to describe their mobility period' (ibid). They also 'must fill out a questionnaire after the mobility period and provide feedback on their mobility period to the sending and hosting institutions' (ibid). Finally, 'the whole mobility period is organised for learners, including transportation and housing in the hosting country. VET institutions do not send students abroad without arranging housing or transportation for IVET learners in the hosting country' (ibid).

In Spain, 'every region makes sure that students on mobility have a good enough level in the foreign language to take advantage of the mobility. Regions may even provide extra training in the relevant foreign

language' (ibid). Setting up learning agreements is also regulatory as 'Mobility in VET, within the education system in Spain, focuses mainly on completing a training module in workplaces (FCT) (especially in mid-level VET) which is usually done at the end of the training cycle, when the students have the right skills and knowledge to successfully take advantage of their time abroad as trainees at companies. This training module (FCT) is regulated at national and regional level, requiring a signed agreement with a company. This agreement must specify the training programme and the activities students will perform' (ibid).

Frameworks seem to be mostly established by practice in Germany France, Poland, Finland and Sweden. In Germany, it is reported that most mobility schemes provide learners with language and intercultural preparation. The use of learning agreements also has been expanded beyond *Erasmus+*. Monitoring of stay is common practice across schemes. Feedback is collected on return, especially as enterprises are keen to improve future mobility experiences. Reintegration is also followed up and supported, since 'enterprises need their apprentices as employees, so instructors are encouraged to support the integration after return from mobility' (ibid).

Table 1. Thematic coverage of the quality in mobility frameworks in the seven Member States where IVET learners can access mobility schemes other than *Erasmus+* (2021)

	LANGUAGE PREPARATION	LEARNING AGREEMENTS	MONITORING OF STAY	FEEDBACK COLLECTING	SUPPORTING REINTEGRATION	PROVIDING FACILITIES
ESTONIA	X	X	X	X		X
FINLAND	X	X	X	X		X
GERMANY	X	X	X	X	X	
SWEDEN	X		X	X		X
SPAIN	X	X			X	
FRANCE	X					X
POLAND						X

Source: Cedefop. IVET mobility scoreboard database, Country fiches.



Country approaches to quality governance in mobility policy



Policy governance can be examined only where a quality in mobility policy is in place, in the seven Member States that have frameworks for quality in mobility. Three criteria were used for this part of the analysis. First, the country may have set up targets for its quality policy, or it may have planned to do so. Second, policy coordination may be in place. Third, the actions taken may be (at least to some extent) evaluated.

As shown in [Table 2](#), none of the seven Member States fully meets all three criteria. Estonia is the best placed with complete approaches to policy coordination and policy evaluation, but still lacks policy targets. Spain, France and Poland not only lack targets but also have incomplete coordination and evaluation. Coordination is most often complete, but evaluation is most often incomplete and target setting is lacking in almost all countries.

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...policy governance can be examined only where a quality in mobility policy is in place, in the **seven Member States** that have **frameworks for quality in mobility**...



...**Estonia** is the **best placed** with **complete approaches** to **policy coordination** and **policy evaluation**, but still lacks policy targets...



...coordination is most often complete, but **evaluation** is **most often incomplete** and **target setting is lacking** in almost all countries...

Table 2. Features of the governance of the policies for mobility quality in the Member States that have quality frameworks (2021)

MEMBER STATES	CASE	POLICY TARGET SETTING			POLICY COORDINATION			POLICY EVALUATION		
		IN PLACE	PLANNED	NOT FORESEEN	COMPLETE	INCOMPLETE	NO COORDINATION	COMPLETE	INCOMPLETE	NO EVALUATION
Estonia	1		X		X			X		
Sweden	2			X	X			X		
Finland	3			X	X				X	
Germany				X	X				X	
France	4			X		X			X	
Poland				X		X			X	
Spain					X		X			X

Source: Based on data collected from ReferNet for Cedefop's Mobility Scoreboard.





CONCLUSIONS



Little progress has been made overall in mobility quality policy since 2016 in the group of seven Member States. According to the benchmark scores of the Mobility Scoreboard ⁽⁴⁾, only a slight increase in target setting took place.

Looking at individual country situations, available data show progress in target setting in Estonia along with an improvement in evaluation in Germany, while the benchmark score for evaluation in Poland fell.

The policy for the quality in mobility schemes other than *Erasmus+* seems problematic in countries that have such schemes. Only a third of the countries concerned have a quality framework for these schemes, and those who have such a framework do not meet the full range of the EU standards for quality in mobility. The few policy frameworks that exist also lack, in most cases, policy targets and a complete approach to policy coordination and evaluation.

⁽⁴⁾ The [Scoreboard methodology](#) is available online (Cedefop, 2016a).

Countries have room for improvement in their policies for quality in mobility. To meet better the requirements of the recommendations of 2006 and 2011, a new impulse is needed. Priority should be given to setting up quality frameworks aligned to the EU standards. Countries where quality frameworks already exist should consider complementing these through addressing the missing features.

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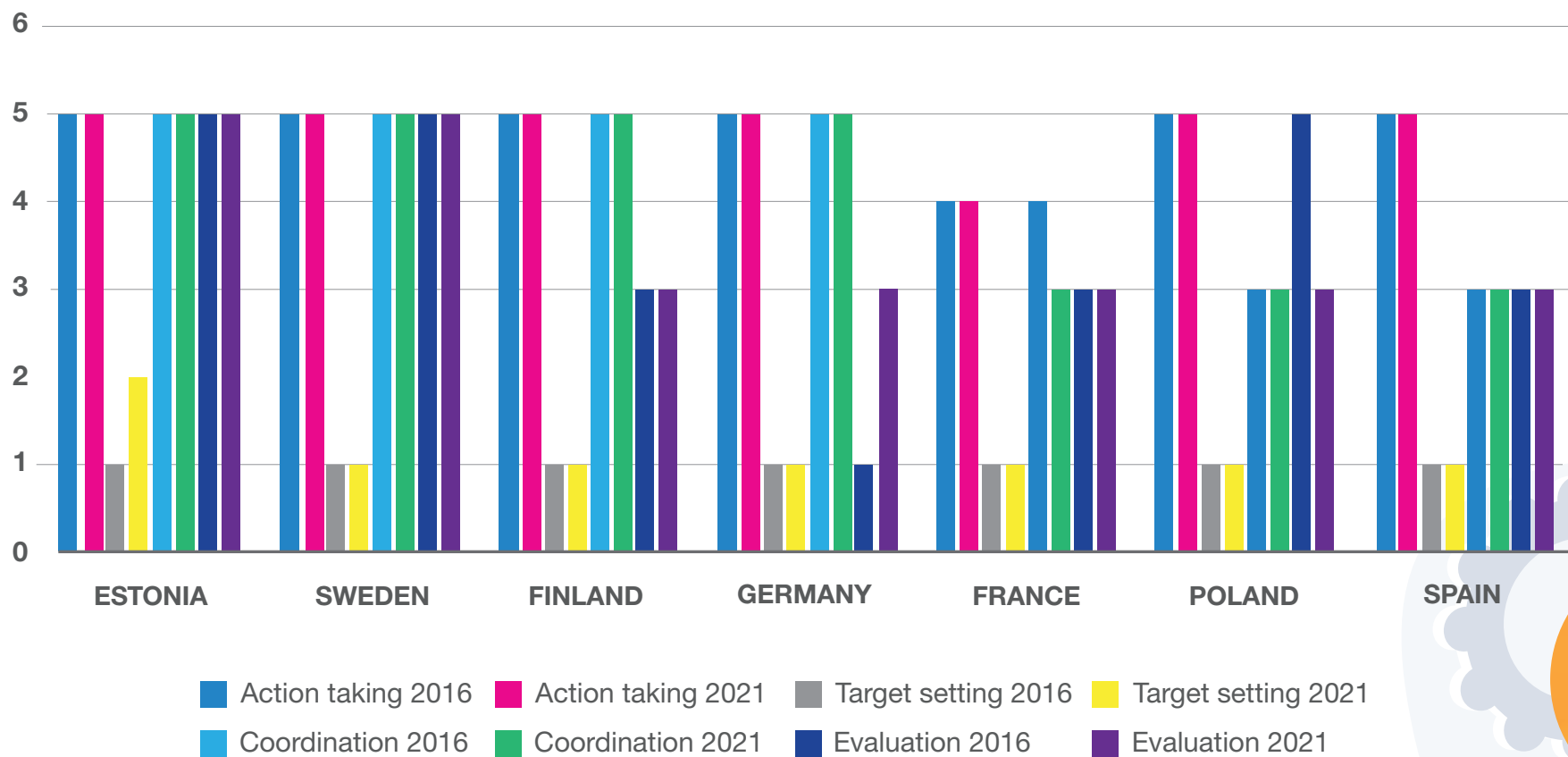
...**priority** should be given to **setting up quality frameworks** aligned to the **EU standards...**



Figure 1. Overall progress in developing quality in mobility policies between 2016-21 (average of the seven Member States)



Figure 2. Country progress in developing a quality in mobility policy between 2016 and 2021



Source: Cedefop, based on country scores.

Table 3. List of mobility schemes other than *Erasmus+* accessible to IVET learners in the EU Member States and Iceland

Country	Mobility scheme	Target group	Source of funds
Austria	Xchange	Apprentices and training companies in the Alpine region	Not specified
Belgium	Schemes run by the training operators for apprenticeship and small businesses	Apprentices	Not specified
	Bilateral agreements for culture and language training	All learners, including those from IVET Professors, instructors, researchers	Ministries of education
	Schemes for language training run by the culture or youth departments/agencies of the ministries in each Community	All, including IVET learners	Region/Community funds
	Schemes run by regional departments for Employment	Jobseekers and students, including IVET	Departments for Employment
Bulgaria	My first job with EURES	IVET learners aged 18-35	European funds
	Company schemes	IVET learners - employees	Corporate funds
	Reactivate - targeted mobility scheme	IVET learners aged under 35	European
Denmark	DK-USA programme	IVET learners, IVET teachers, IVET managers	National budget
	PIU (Practical Placement abroad) AUB	IVET learners involved in the main programme of work-based learning	Employers' Reimbursement System
	Nordplus	IVET learners, IVET teachers	Nordic Council of Ministers
Estonia	Nordplus	All, including IVET learners	Nordic Council of Ministers
	Bilateral mobility projects between VET institutions	IVET learners	VET institutions
	Bilateral mobility projects between schools	IVET learners	Schools
Finland	Nordplus	IVET learners and staff/teachers/trainers	Nordic Council of Ministers
	The Finnish National Agency for Education – State Funding for Internationalisation	IVET students and staff/teachers/trainers	National budget, Ministry of Education and Culture
	Institutional fundings for mobility	IVET students and staff/teachers/trainers	Ministry of Education and Culture

Country	Mobility scheme	Target group	Source of funds
France	Échanges franco-allemands de jeunes et d'adultes en formation professionnelle	VET learners	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
	Schemes run by regional councils and professional networks	All, including IVET learners	Regional and sectoral
	Programme de mobilité franco-suédois	High school students	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
	Bourses de mobilité dans les lycées français à l'étranger	High school students	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
	Programme Jeunes ambassadeurs	High school students	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
	Bourse individuelle de mobilité pour le Royaume-Uni	Secondary school students	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
	Bourses de voyages Zellidja	High school students	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
	Programme Voltaire	Secondary education students	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
	Programme Brigitte Sauzay	Secondary education students	OFAJ
	Échanges franco-allemands de jeunes et d'adultes en formation professionnelle	IVET learners/CVET learners	French government/German government
	Réseau des projets scolaires franco-allemands	Secondary education students	French government/German government
	Assistant(e) de français à l'étranger	Higher education students	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
	Assistant de langue française aux États-Unis: bourses Fulbright	Higher education students	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
	Bourses d'études 'Entente Cordiale'	Higher education students	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
Germany	Ausbildung Weltweit	IVET learners	National funds
	ProTandem (former Deutsch Französisches Sekretariat; German-French)	IVET learners	National
	Bilateral youth programmes	All, including IVET learners	Binational
	Schemes run by chambers, enterprises, foundations	All, including IVET learners	Mostly private
Iceland	Nordplus	All, including IVET learners	Nordic Council of Ministers

Country	Mobility scheme	Target group	Source of funds
Italy	Pathways for transversal competences and guidance (part of PCTO (Percorsi per le competenze trasversali e per l'orientamento) carried out abroad	IVET learners (vocational schools) and upper secondary general education students	National (Ministry of Education)
	Transnational mobility and internships schemes	Learners from technical and professional institutes; upper secondary general education students; post-secondary non-academic pathways students	ESF, Ministry of Education
	Regional schemes	IVET learners; learners from technical and professional institutes; VET qualified and graduates	European Social Fund
	Youth Guarantee: traineeships in transnational mobility	Young people aged between 15 and 29, with particular attention to NEET	Youth Employment Initiative + ESF; ANPAL; National Operational Youth Guarantee programme 2014-20
Lithuania	Nordplus	IVET learners	Nordic Council of Ministers
Luxembourg	Mandatory mobility (including cross-border apprenticeship)	Learners in specific sectors or willing to learn specific trades	Not specified
Netherlands	Schemes run by the Ministry of Education	IVET coordinators, students, and teachers	Ministry of Education
Poland	Bilateral schemes, including the Polish-German Youth Exchange, the Polish-Ukrainian Council of Youth Exchange, and the Polish-Lithuanian Youth Exchange Fund	All, including IVET learners	Binational funds
Portugal	Bilateral schemes with such countries as Canada, India, Portuguese-speaking countries (e.g. the November 2018 agreement with the Angolan government)	All, including IVET learners	Binational funds
Slovakia	Schemes run by individual schools/municipalities/regions, usually based on traditional partnerships	All, including IVET learners	Schools/municipalities/regions
Slovenia	Schemes run by individual schools/municipalities/regions, usually based on traditional partnerships	All, including IVET learners	Schools/municipalities/regions

Country	Mobility scheme	Target group	Source of funds
Spain	Scholarship schemes run by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training	IVET learners (upper secondary and tertiary); Teachers	National funds
	Bilateral VETmobility programme with Germany	Dual VET learners	European; National
	Youth programmes run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Economy	Young people aged under 35, including IVET learners	National
	Mobility plan within the PICE programme	Young people (18-30) registered in the National Youth Guarantee System	European; National
	Schemes run by regional authorities, foundations, chambers, enterprises	VET students and graduates	European; Regional; Private
Sweden	Athena utbyten	IVET learners; Teachers	National budget
	Atlas praktik	IVET learners	National budget
	Atlas partnerskap	IVET learners	National budget
	Nordplus	All, including IVET learners	Nordic Council of Ministers

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POLICY BRIEF

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Little progress made: a new impulse needed

The European Union policy for education and training attaches great importance to enabling learners to become familiar with international mobility. Acquiring such experience while in studies is seen as crucial to improving labour mobility later. This allows EU economies to address spatial imbalances in labour availability and transnational enterprise needs for mobile staff. A range of EU-level vocational education and training (VET) policy initiatives to support learner mobility has been undertaken since the 1960s. Major moves to ensure the quality of mobilities were made in 2006 (European Quality Charter for Mobility) and 2011 (Youth on the move recommendation).

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[IVET Mobility scoreboard](#)

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