

Free movement of persons: European Quality Charter for Mobility in education and training

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PURPOSE: to adopt a “European Quality Charter for Mobility”.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council (2006/961/EC) on transnational mobility within the Community for education and training purposes: European Quality Charter for Mobility.

CONTENT: mobility in education and training not only forms an integral part of the free movement of persons it is also one of the Community’s main objectives in the field of education and training. Increased mobility is seen as key to the success of achieving the Lisbon targets, namely making Europe the most innovative and competitive knowledge-based economies in the world by 2010.

The 2001 Recommendation on mobility within the Community for students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers, has been successful in terms of facilitating Community mobility. However, experts agree that, at a European level, it is no longer enough to offer just mobility. Mobility must be accompanied by increased quality. Hence the adoption of the “European Quality Charter for Mobility”, which is the purpose of this Recommendation. The Charter should help to ensure that participants have a positive experience, both in the host country and in their country of origin once they return. This Recommendation, therefore, invites the Member States to adopt and promote the use of the Charter as a means to enhance personal and professional development.

In summary, the Charter offers guidance for mobility undertaken by individual young people or adults for the purpose of formal and non-formal learning and for their personal and professional development. It has been designed as a basic reference document. Its scope and content may be adapted to suit the duration of the mobility and the particularities of the various educational, training and youth activities as well as the needs of the participants. It is primarily addressed to mobility for learning purposes but it does also consider other types of mobility – such as mobility for work. The structure of the Charter is as follows:

Information and guidance: Potential candidates for mobility will be offered equal access to reliable sources of information and guidance.

Learning plan: The learning plan, to be drawn up by both the sending and hosting organisation and participants, should outline the objectives and expected learning outcomes, as well as how these should be achieved and implemented.

Personalisation: Mobility undertaken for education or training purposes should fit in, as much as possible, with the personal learning pathways, skills and motivation of the participants and should develop or supplement them.

General preparation: Prior preparation of the participants is advisable. It should be tailored to their specific needs and should include linguistic, pedagogical, administrative, legal, personal and cultural aspects. Financial aspects should also be included, if necessary.

Linguistic aspects: Participants, and their sending and hosting organisations, will be required to pay special attention to appropriate linguistic preparation. Attention should be given, whenever possible, to language assessments and linguistic support.

Logistical support: Where necessary, adequate logistical support should be provided to the participants – such as travel arrangements, insurance, residence or work permits, social security etc.

Mentoring: The host organisation should provide schemes such as mentoring to advise participants with their effective integration.

Recognition: If a study or placement period abroad is an integral part of a formal study or training programme, this fact should be stated in the learning plan and participants should be provided with assistance to facilitate recognition and certification. For other types of mobility (e.g. non-formal education and training) appropriate documents should be issued demonstrating his/her participation in a credible way.

Reintegration and evaluation: On return to the home country, particularly after long-term mobility, participants should be given guidance on how to make use of competences and skills acquired during their stay.

Commitments and responsibilities: The responsibilities arising from these quality criteria should be agreed by the sending and hosting organisations and the participants. They should preferably be confirmed in writing, so that responsibilities are clear to all concerned.

The Recommendation highlights that the Member States are recommended to:

- report on their implementation of this Recommendation and any complementary measures they may choose to take in favour of mobility, particularly in relation to the quality aspects thereof, in their national contributions to the Education and Training 2010 work programme, as from the second year following the adoption of this Recommendation;
- continue to cooperate closely and coordinate their actions with a view to eliminating obstacles which directly or indirectly impede the mobility of EU citizens;
- provide appropriate support and suitable infrastructures for mobility for education and training purposes in order to enhance the education and training levels of their citizens;
- take any necessary steps to promote mobility, to ensure that all relevant information is easily understandable and accessible to all, for instance by means of an introductory guide to mobility or a list of supporting organisations, and to improve the conditions for mobility.

On the other hand, the Commission is invited to:

- encourage the use of the Charter by national agencies and other organisations working in the field of education and training and mobility;
- continue to cooperate with the Member States and the social partners, so that useful information and experience concerning the implementation of the measures advocated in this Recommendation may be exchanged;
- improve or develop in close cooperation with the relevant authorities gender-specific statistical data on mobility for education and training purposes;
- consider the present Recommendation as forming a whole with Recommendation 2001/613/EC and therefore to include the biennial reports requested therein in the general reports of the Education and Training 2010 work programme.