

FOR AN “ERASMUS TEENS”



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Summary

For more than thirty years now, the European Union has been developing education and youth initiatives with a view to giving citizens from all backgrounds the opportunity to be mobile in Europe. Mobility provides knowledge, skills, expertise, soft skills, and open-mindedness to those who can experience it. Too few citizens are able to take advantage of these opportunities today, despite the national, bilateral or European efforts to offer mobility to an increased number of them.

The Jacques Delors Institute is convinced of the need for each young European to have had the opportunity to experience a type of mobility within the European Union before turning 18 in a bid to launch a genuine mobility and European citizenship cycle. To achieve this, the Institute has taken on the idea of an Erasmus programme for young people aged under 18 proposed by several European leaders and has drawn up a recommended blueprint.

This Policy Paper develops the idea of an Erasmus Teens programme which draws inspiration from the mobility formats currently offered to minors in the European Union: a class exchange, as part of a long-term project conducted in partnership with a class in another EU Member State, which would allow the teaching team and pupils to take ownership of all the components of a project and of European mobility. Available to all young Europeans between the age of 15 and 18, this initiative would be the cornerstone of a European mobility pathway. Having been given the opportunity to experiment the benefits of a mobility experience, all Europeans would then have the ability to decide how to build upon it during their studies and their professional and personal lives.

Such an initiative naturally requires teacher training and human, logistical and budgetary resources commensurate with its ambition. Even though the initiative is ambitious, it can count on the resources and tools already developed as part of policies which are still only accessible to a limited number of teachers and pupils. This Policy Paper discusses the means with which the European Union and Member States can leverage best practices, resources and tools which already exist to go further and develop a mobility programme open to all young people aged between 15 and 18 in the European Union.

In 1987, the European Union (EU) launched one of its best-known and most-praised programmes to date: Erasmus. This initiative strives to make “education and lifelong learning” the pillar of a Europe in which qualified and mobile citizens can be fulfilled. It gives them the opportunity to conduct a mobility experience which also helps them to grow through the personal, professional and cultural exchanges it provokes, thereby promoting a real feeling of belonging to the European community.

Thirty years on, while Erasmus—which has become Erasmus +, now covering mobility programmes within and outside the academic framework—enables thousands of young people from all backgrounds to travel in Europe each year for their studies, training, volunteering and also project management and structured dialogue, it still comes under criticism. The programme is deemed elitist, accessible to an insufficient number of young people and not sufficiently outside specific university courses. The recognition and equivalence process between countries has not always been successful and the rate of participation in European elections and citizen commitment are representative of the standstill in the construction of a real European public space.

While this assessment is based on real observations, the tremendous success of the programme cannot be denied. It has provided the chance for thousands of young people, students, apprentices, teachers and volunteers to learn from all the opportunities created by mobility: skills acquisition, language learning, development of knowledge and soft skills, project management, citizen commitment, etc. The successes of the Erasmus programme are indisputable and should be extended to a greater number of young people as part of a broader strategy implemented by the EU and its Member States in favour of education and lifelong learning.

On 26 September 2017, President Macron called for the implementation of an Erasmus programme for upper secondary school pupils and for a “Sorbonne Process” in secondary education which would be comparable to the Bologna Process¹ for higher education. This idea had already been expressed by Enrico Letta, President of the Jacques Delors Institute, who is in favour of all young people being able to experience mobility from the age of 15, as well as by many civil society structures. While there are already solutions to conduct a mobility experience before turning 18, the idea is to develop a system which enables each young European to be part of a supervised, supported and recognised mobility opportunity while still a minor, which would be a step in a comprehensive European mobility pathway.

The Jacques Delors Institute has developed this idea and proposes in this Policy Paper to make the Erasmus Teens initiative an introductory step to European mobility, as part of a genuine mobility and European citizenship cycle.

1 . EUROPE AND MOBILITY AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE AGED BETWEEN 15 AND 18 IN EUROPE

In the 1990s, the four freedoms of movement, including that of persons, were achieved. This freedom was developed alongside the furthering of European citizenship and each day diminishes the dissuasive effect of borders a little more. Generations of Europeans born after these landmark years take for granted the ease with which they cross borders which often are no longer marked. In March 2018, 70% of the EU-28’s population felt they were European citizens

1. Emmanuel Macron, “Initiative for Europe—A sovereign, united, democratic Europe”, The Sorbonne, 26 September 2017

and this figure reached 78% for the 15-24 age bracket². As an additional proof of the influence of the EU's facilitation of mobility, a majority of Europeans deems the EU's most positive achievement to be the free movement of people, goods and services within the EU, slightly ahead of peace between its Member States³.

Mobility is therefore a central component of the European project and, as a result, many European policies focus on youth. After having gained a good understanding of the background against which European mobility initiatives are developing today for 15-18 year-olds, the aim is to lay out their opportunities and limits, as well as those of initiatives aimed at other age groups, to arrive at a broader and more constructive mobility proposal that takes in to consideration the specific features of 15-18 year-olds, the education systems in which this proposal may be implemented and the objectives that may be attached to it.

1.1 The importance of mobility for young Europeans

Why should mobility be encouraged among young Europeans? Because it is a major asset that boosts skills development, employability, openness to the world and self-development, particularly as an active and engaged citizen.

Encouraging mobility predominantly means enabling mobile citizens to develop skills that are highly useful for their personal fulfilment and career development.

Being mobile generally requires the learning of a foreign language, a key asset on today's labour market, in which language skills are increasingly necessary. Many governments, such as the French education system⁴, are attempting to encourage language learning as it is directly related to employability issues, as well as to a European outlook aimed at building citizenship, personal enrichment and openness to the world.

In many regions around the world, mobility is considered as a key element in young people's educations. In New Zealand, overseas experience is an almost compulsory prerequisite to any job. Business leaders praise the advantages of mobility for young people who are able to develop a variety of skills to meet their needs abroad, learning foreign languages and acquiring life skills and knowledge that is valuable in their private and professional lives. This mobility is also often a driving factor for these young people when making major decisions with regard to their personal and professional pathways.

These assets have been analysed and confirmed in Europe, in particular by the ELAN⁵, PIMLICO⁶ and LEMP⁷ studies. All these reports underscore companies' desire for employees with a sound knowledge of foreign languages. They emphasise in particular the shortfall caused by employees' insufficient language skills and the advantages in terms of access to employment, promotions and remuneration, etc. available to employees with a command of foreign languages or who have been mobile.

Many studies also show that employers believe that a number of cross-cutting skills are key when recruiting⁸. While, in Europe, employers do not always link these skills with a mobility ex-

2. Eurobarometer Standard 89, *European citizenship*, Kantar Public Brussels on behalf of TSN opinion & social, March 2018

3. Eurobarometer Standard 89, *Public opinion in the European Union*, Kantar Public Brussels on behalf of TSN opinion & social, March 2018

4. French Education Ministry, *Les langues vivantes étrangères et régionales, De la maternelle au baccalauréat*, May 2018 (in French)

5. CILT, "Effects on the European economy of shortage of foreign language skills in enterprise (ELAN)", December 2006

6. Stephen Hagen, "Report on Language Management Strategies and Best Practice in European SMEs: the PIMLICO Project", April 2011

7. Carine Chancelade, Patricia Janissin, Jean-François Giret, Christine Guégnard, Pernelle Benoit, Amandine Vogt, "Analysis of the foreign language skills requirements of French employers", *Survey report of the Languages and Employability project*, Centre International d'Études Pédagogiques. Summary in English

8. Agence Erasmus + France-Education & Formation, "Erasmus +, un atout pour l'employabilité, une force pour les entreprises", *Les Guides Erasmus +*, October 2017 (in French)

perience as in New Zealand, the fact remains that encouraging youth mobility gives young people language skills, versatility and inquisitiveness, self-esteem, an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, tolerance, an ability to work with people from various backgrounds, determination, decision-making capacity and an aptitude in solution-finding, problem-solving and planning. Such qualities are valued on the labour market, as demonstrated in the Génération 2010 survey analysed by the Observatoire Erasmus +⁹: 70% of young people who went on a supervised stay abroad during their last course accessed long-term employment, as against 50% who did not; they access employment more quickly and are less often unemployed (10 points less than those who did not have a stay abroad).

Mobility also favours an increase in intercultural skills and tolerance between citizens. Research has shown that learning a foreign language is a means of finding out about other cultures and of being more comfortable with other methods and approaches and in unfamiliar situations. The work of linguists Jean-Marc Dewaele and Li Wei¹⁰, Guy Kellogg and Hanh Thi Nguyen¹¹ and Amy Thompson¹² has highlighted that students who learn a language analyse cultural stereotypes differently, develop an enhanced cultural understanding and are more tolerant of difference.

Results are positively correlated with a mobility experience that leads to breaking down prejudice by meeting other people, but also by being in unfamiliar situations which will no longer be a worry in the future, and contribute to mobile people's development and entrepreneurial ability. A study using data from the mobility of 53,532 learners in education or vocational training shows that 85% of those who have been mobile believe that their versatility, self-esteem, open-mindedness and serenity were all enhanced by this experience¹³.

Citizen and democratic feeling and aptitudes are also more developed in young people who have had a mobility experience, which is a major argument in favour of promoting mobility for both national and European institutions. 60% of young people who have been mobile feel more European, which encourages their commitment and participation in European construction¹⁴. This increase in personal commitment is much more than a participation objective that is only pursued by institutions to legitimise their existence; it also implies a European project that is more in line with its citizens' aspirations.

1.2 EU action to promote young Europeans' mobility

As education and youth are not among the competences vested in the EU, they do not feature at the top of the Commission's priorities¹⁵. Each country's education system is rooted specifically in its own history and culture. This means that the EU only provides support in the field of education. It must comply with the principle of subsidiarity which leaves Member States responsible for the content of teaching and the organisation of their education system. Young people aged 15-18 across the EU therefore have extremely different experiences and they are made aware of the opportunities provided by mobility to varying degrees.

9. Observatoire Erasmus +, "Career outcomes for young people following an international mobility experience", Notes, 2016

10. Jean-Marc Dewaele and Li Wei, "Is multilingualism linked to a higher tolerance of ambiguity?", *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 16(1), 231-240, 9 October 2012

11. Hanh Thi Nguyen and Guy Kellogg, "'I Had a Stereotype That American Were Fat': Becoming a Speaker of Culture in a Second Language", *The Modern Language Journal*, 3 February 2010

12. Amy Thompson, "How learning a new language improves tolerance", *The Conversation*, 12 December 2016

13. Agence Erasmus + France-Education & Formation, "Erasmus +, un atout pour l'employabilité, une force pour les entreprises", *Les Guides Erasmus +*, October 2017 (in French)

14. Observatoire Erasmus +, "Développement de l'employabilité et des aptitudes citoyennes au cours d'une mobilité Erasmus +", Notes, Note n°4 (in French)

15. Patricia Loncle (dir.), "L'Europe de la jeunesse : Enjeux et pratiques des politiques publiques", Presses de l'EHESP, October 2017 (in French)

BOX 1 ■ The EU's competences in the field of education

While the EU may only provide support in the field of education, it has managed to pursue a broad interpretation of this mandate. It was under the aegis of Jacques Delors that the European Commission focused on setting up initiatives for education and lifelong learning. The objective was to train citizens and workers in the market without internal frontiers which was being consolidated across the Union¹⁶. Thirty years on, article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) provides that: "The Union 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 education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity".

The Erasmus programme in particular is part of this framework and has become one of the EU's flagship "brands" in the last thirty years. It has provided a mobility scholarship to more than four million young European university students¹⁷. Yet these students are not the only ones to receive mobility or exchange support. As part of formal education, no fewer than six programmes were created between 1987 and 2014, with a view to promoting mobility for apprentices (Leonardo), adult learners (Grundtvig), exchanges between schools (Comenius), and to promote more cross-cutting actions or initiatives connected to European integration (Transversal and Jean Monnet programmes).

With a view to reaching all young Europeans, the EU also encourages youth mobility outside of the education system. The EU has also decided to conduct an ambitious policy for apprentice mobility, an avenue supported by the Jacques Delors Institute which proposed in 2015 the creation of a new professional mobility programme—Erasmus Pro—which would enable one million young Europeans to obtain a professional qualification in another EU Member State over five years¹⁸.

While intra-European mobility is the priority, exchanges with the rest of the world are also encouraged. In 2014, the decision was made to move from a sector-based approach to an action approach by grouping all these programmes together within Erasmus +, for which the budget increased to more than €16 billion (over the 2014-2020 period).

BOX 2 ■ Mobility for all young Europeans outside formal education structures

Many EU programmes support the mobility of young Europeans outside schools and universities.

The "Youth and Sport" chapter of Erasmus + supports:

- **Youth exchanges:** to promote meetings between groups of young Europeans on a variety of themes
- **Volunteering / EVS activities:** to promote the sending and hosting of young volunteers to work on community projects
- **Youth worker mobility:** to develop cooperation initiatives between youth professionals
- **Strategic partnerships:** to share experiences and innovative practices between structures in different countries which are active in the fields of education, training and youth
- **Participation and structured dialogue:** to support debate between young people and decision-makers on the major issues which concern them
- **Erasmus+ Sport:** to promote integrity in sport; best governance practices in sport and dual career training for sportspeople; volunteering and social integration, equal opportunities, the relationship between sport and health

Erasmus+ also supports cross-border exchanges between young entrepreneurs and experienced entrepreneurs managing small businesses in another country.

¹⁶ Claire Versini, "Erasmus: renewing the original ambitions", Tribune, Jacques Delors Institute, December 2017

¹⁷ Yves Bertoncini and Sofia Fernandes, "Extending Erasmus: a new impetus for youth mobility in Europe", Policy Paper, Jacques Delors Institute, 14 June 2017

¹⁸ Jacques Delors & alii, "Erasmus Pro: for a million young European apprentices by 2020", Tribune, Jacques Delors Institute, 12 May 2015

In addition, the EU has recently launched two new initiatives:

- **the European Solidarity Corps:** to encourage mobility among 18-30 year-olds as part of international solidarity, development or humanitarian relief in the EU for two to twelve months.
- **DiscoverEU:** the latest of the many initiatives launched by the EU to promote youth mobility, DiscoverEU is set, as of the first half of 2018, to provide 15,000 young Europeans with the opportunity of using a free "Interrail pass" in the year they turn 18, enabling them to travel for up to 30 days in four EU Member States to experience the principle of freedom of movement, gain a better understanding of Europe's diversity, enjoy its cultural wealth, make friends and to get to know people from other countries better.

Within the Key Action 2 section of Erasmus+, the mobility of students in lower and upper secondary education is already encouraged through "strategic partnerships between schools" with a view to developing cooperation between the pupils and teachers of European countries, proposing educational practices and innovative tools and encouraging the development of joint studies and work. These partnerships may be conducted according to two formats:

- **Class mobility:** the Comenius programme supports cooperation between teaching teams in different European schools on a jointly selected theme, covering travel, accommodation and language preparation expenses. The teams meet and then organise class exchanges of less than two months or study mobility which may last for two to twelve months for pupils aged 14 and over.
- **Remote exchanges in Europe:** eTwinning is an electronic twinning operation between primary schools, lower-secondary schools and upper-secondary schools in Europe via a security exchange platform.

BOX 3 ■ Bilateral exchange programmes

Regardless of the lack of leeway caused by its support competence for education, the EU also encourages European countries to promote their pupil's mobility via bilateral programmes. In France and in other countries, many bilateral initiatives are used for youth mobility without going through an EU programme¹⁹ such as the Voltaire and Brigitte Sauzay programmes for exchanges between France and Germany, the Lefèvre and Charles de Gaulle programmes in partnership with the United Kingdom, the mobility programme "European education- A year in France" between France and Sweden or the "Summer job / Job in the twin city" programme of the French-German Youth Office (OFAJ) which offers an internship or a job in a German company, institution or administration.

1.3 The shortcomings of existing European mobility programmes

The EU has been developing various mobility support mechanisms for all young Europeans for more than thirty years. These initiatives are a great success...for those who have access to them. In practice, despite the number of young people receiving mobility funds increasing regularly, only a minority of young people enjoy the EU's mobility support today.

Only 5% of European university graduates conduct a stay abroad with the assistance of the Erasmus programme²⁰. With regard to these graduates, it should be noted that the various Eurobarometer surveys display constant inequality between socio-professional categories on this point: the more a person furthers their education and is in a high socio-professional category, the more they are likely to have enjoyed the opportunities provided by the EU, and therefore be in favour of the EU for these reasons and feel European²¹. Lastly, **despite a gradual increase in the number of courses, students of social sciences, business and law are**

19. French Education Ministry, "Politique européenne en matière d'éducation, Éduscol", 12 August 2016 (in French)

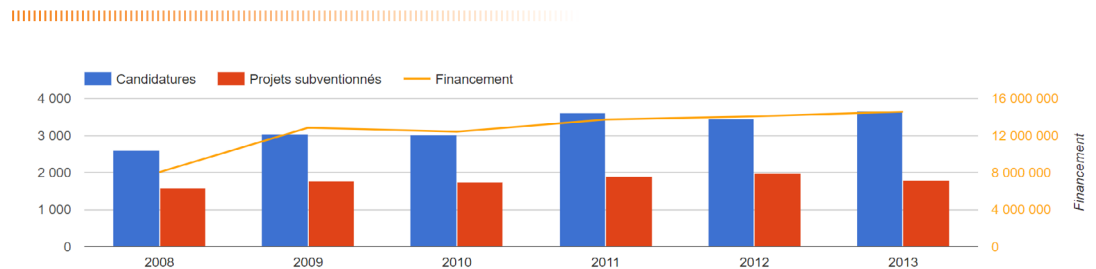
20. Data available in the publication: European Commission, "Erasmus-Facts, Figures and trends: the EU support for student and staff exchanges and university cooperation in 2013-2014, 2015", *Education and Training*, p. 35

21. Eurobarometer Standard 59, "European citizenship", *Kantar Public Brussels on behalf of TSN opinion & social*, March 2018

over-represented in the number of Erasmus students while students studying health and wellbeing are barely represented²².

As regards exchanges for young people aged under 18, for whom very few statistics are available, the situation is even more disappointing. Despite excellent results with regard to pupils' advancement and teachers' skills development, the number of applications remains low, and the number of projects funded is even lower (see chart). The number of pupils taking part in funded projects (13%) and in mobility (2%) is extremely low²³.

FIGURE 1 ■ Evolution of applications and funding for the Comenius programme



Source: [European statistics from the Education and Lifelong Learning programme](#)

While criticising the elitism of European mobility programmes is unfair in view of their ambitions, it is undeniable that, in practice, these initiatives only benefit a small number of young Europeans who are generally well-informed, and who sometimes enjoy several opportunities provided by the EU whereas others do not access any during their school or university education or professional career. The ambitions stated in the new Erasmus + programme (see Box) and the new "Education and Training 2020"²⁴ Strategic Framework intend to remedy the qualitative and quantitative shortcomings of the programme, and highlight in particular the importance of raising awareness of mobility and exchanges from a very early age.

BOX 4 ■ Erasmus + ambitions

In 2014, Erasmus + became the umbrella structure for European programmes aimed at encouraging mobility for all young Europeans. It now groups together initiatives in terms of education and lifelong learning and also of youth, which always co-existed in the past despite the fact that the Erasmus programme for students is the best-known initiative to date.

Over the 2014-2020 period, the Erasmus + budget exceeds €16 billion and will benefit:

- 2 million students in higher education who will be able to study or train abroad
- 650,000 apprentices and vocational training students who will receive a scholarship to study, train or work abroad
- 800,000 teachers, assistants, trainers, education staff members and youth workers who will teach or train abroad
- More than 500,000 young people who will volunteer abroad or take part in exchanges
- 125,000 schools, teaching institutions and vocational training centres, higher education institutions, adult learning centres, youth organisations and companies which will receive funds to create 25,000 "strategic partnerships" aimed at promoting experience exchanges and fostering links with the labour market
- 3,500 teaching institutions and companies which will receive assistance to create more than 300 "knowledge alliances" and "sector skills alliances" in order to improve employability and stimulate innovation and an entrepreneurial spirit

All these programmes target as a priority the most underprivileged young people with the poorest access to mobility opportunities, thereby confirming the EU's staunch drive to foster mobility for all.

²² Yves Bertoincini and Sofia Fernandes, "Extending Erasmus: a new impetus for youth mobility in Europe", Policy Paper, Jacques Delors Institute, 14 June 2017

²³ Académie de Bordeaux (Education Authority), "Etude d'impact des partenariats scolaires Comenius", Europe and International, November 2014 (in French)

²⁴ European Commission, "Strategic Framework-Education and Training 2020"

2. ERASMUS TEENS: A MASS MOBILITY PROJECT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGED BETWEEN 15 AND 16

Mobility provides many opportunities that can benefit European citizens and European construction (strengthening of the single market, promoting freedom of movement and heightening the feeling of being European). It is, however, not yet beneficial for everyone. **Europe has successfully promoted and encouraged mobility and must now create ways for younger people to experience it.** To do so, it must favour mobility to all and create opportunities which suit young people across Europe based on their age and situation.

So that all European citizens have the opportunity before turning 25 to enjoy the area of free movement in the EU, the Jacques Delors Institute is calling for European decision-makers to implement a new mobility programme, “Erasmus Teens”. This programme aims to support the **organisation of mobility for classes which would allow young people aged 15 to 16 from across the EU to set up a project with a partner class in another Member State** and to experiment with virtual mobility and exchanges throughout the year and actual mobility during group stays of one to three weeks with the partner class.

2.1 From Erasmus for secondary pupils to Erasmus Teens

In his Sorbonne address²⁵, President Macron proposed the creation of an Erasmus programme for upper secondary pupils and a “Sorbonne Process”, in reference to the Bologna Process which brought about a harmonisation of European higher education systems by means of a system of recognition and equivalence for qualifications, knowledge and skills between national systems.

2.1.1 Mobility aimed at 15-16 year-olds

While the concept of an Erasmus programme for upper secondary pupils is appealing, we prefer to consider the initiative in terms of age and not school attendance, as the age at which secondary education begins and ends is not the same in all Member States. As the minimum school-leaving age in most EU Member States is set at 16 years, any initiative aimed at creating mass mobility opportunities for young people would have to focus on young people aged 15 to 16 in order to involve the teaching structures attended by a majority of young Europeans in this age bracket.

This is why the Jacques Delors Institute has put forward the idea of naming the initiative Erasmus Teens, understandable on a European scale and not requiring a harmonisation of primary and secondary education systems. Such an obligation would hinder the principle of subsidiarity with which European educational programmes must comply. In addition, it could have the adverse effect of undermining the diversity inherent in the EU’s motto, while the fields of learning and education display this diversity. It is, however, necessary to create a process which enables the recognition and equivalence of mobility experiences during this Erasmus Teens programme, and the Bologna Process model can be used as an appropriate guide to this end.

Erasmus Teens is to be considered as part of a European mobility pathway for citizens. All elements of this pathway already exist and only require support and development to enable all young Europeans to enjoy access to the programme.

25. Emmanuel Macron, “Initiative for Europe—A sovereign, united, democratic Europe”, The Sorbonne, 26 September 2017

BOX 5 ■ In France, the possible synergy between TPE (supervised personal work) and Erasmus Teens

The creation of Erasmus Teens does not necessarily disrupt how learning is organised on a national level.

In France, for example, the supervised personal work (*Travaux personnels encadrés - TPE*) conducted in high school could be an excellent framework in which pupils and teachers can become involved in a class mobility project. The hours are already allocated in the curriculum, a European dimension would simply be given to the projects completed for this subject, which would naturally result in a mobility experience.

If the TPE work was replaced by a major oral presentation following a cross-disciplinary project prepared over two years, introducing a European angle to this cross-cutting project could also serve as a framework for Erasmus Teens.

2.1.2 A short class mobility experience for a long-term project

Unlike the mobility proposed at university level, a shorter mobility experience seems more appropriate for classes taking part in Erasmus Teens, conducted as part of a joint project between pupils from different countries. The Erasmus programme is not currently enjoyed by all, the reasons for this being the restrictions due to a limited budget and poor levels of recognition and valuing of mobility experiences. Another reason is that too many young Europeans are unaware of the programme or believe that it is not aimed at them.

In view of this, Erasmus Teens will strive to whet young Europeans' appetite for mobility and also to reassure them by providing a mobility experience which is supervised and short to dispel any fears raised by mobility for young people, and very often their families. It will enable all young Europeans to enjoy at least one mobility experience and will necessarily result in a positive skills development for pupils and teachers alike, as well as an increased importance for mobility among young people from all backgrounds who will be able to consider longer individual experiences more serenely, for their personal and professional advancement.

To address the question of inequality between individuals, this mobility must be conducted in groups. Firstly, because an individual mobility opportunity may not be considered as an opportunity by families who may feel it best that their child remains in the country of origin to study rather than travelling abroad for several days or weeks. Secondly, there is a question of funding: currently, individual study mobility scholarships in the EU rarely exceed 250 Euros, which is not sufficient to live anywhere in Europe, requiring families to supplement the scholarships, thereby creating a level of inequality. For this initial mobility experience to be enjoyed by young people from all backgrounds, group mobility, organised with one or more teachers and concerning an entire class, may recoup some costs such as accommodation by proposing host families as part of a class exchange, for example. This would be a solution to the first issue, and would cost less than resolving the second through an individual scholarship of an amount sufficient to cover all the young person's needs abroad. Lastly, this group mobility would resolve legal issues with regard to mobility for minors, which requires burdensome administrative formalities when it is not supervised²⁶.

The proposal is therefore to set up a cross-cutting project over one or two years—depending on national education systems—that pupils and teachers of two twinned schools or classes will define together. The *eTwinning* and *School education gateway* platforms and the European Youth Portal are full of tools and resources available to teachers and schools to conduct a mobility project, find partners, define themes, objectives and appropriate methodologies, and to support their pupils along this process. These highly intuitive resources simply need to be better-known by teaching teams and used in more instances to create partnerships and projects.

²⁶. European Commission, *Travel documents for minors*, Your Europe, 07 May 2018

Synergies with civil society, which are already promoted under Erasmus +, also need to be further developed. Why not conduct the joint project with the assistance of an association operating in both countries or with a partner in the country with which the joint project is conducted? This type of partnership would have the advantage of enhancing the project's citizen impact among young people and would also involve external stakeholders, thereby multiplying the opportunities for it to have an impact on all pupils, including the most reluctant, to endorse and take part in projects connecting them to a school framework in which they do not feel comfortable. These external stakeholders may also support teachers in the use of the technological tools required for the proper functioning of the virtual part of the mobility project.

BOX 6 ■ Drawing inspiration from the best practices of European and binational classes

Many national or bilateral initiatives are already in place in the EU which could serve as inspiration for the Erasmus Teens initiative. In France, European and binational classes give pupils options aimed at acquiring additional skills, knowledge and qualifications and fostering open-mindedness.

European classes²⁷ could be an excellent springboard for Erasmus Teens. In the current system, lessons in a subject are conducted in a language which is different to the language in the country where the classes are held. They could therefore be used as part of Erasmus Teens as time devoted to exchanges with a class in another country which speaks the language in which the subject is taught.

Binational classes²⁸, leading to a "double baccalaureate" qualification – currently French and German, French and Spanish or French and Italian, could also inspire Erasmus Teens. They confirm the importance of the long-term project resulting in mobility and the need for it to involve an exchange so that pupils invest more in the project and in the resulting opportunities. By giving some pupils who wish to go further the option of spending an additional month in the partner school, they show that it is always possible to extend and further develop the mobility experience, for those who want to and are able to.

2.2 Four priorities for the creation of Erasmus Teens

Many tools and best practices already exist for youth mobility through schools. There is therefore no need to create new tools for Erasmus Teens, as existing resources can be leveraged, promoted among stakeholders and developed. Schools and teachers must also enjoy access to them and pass the information onto their pupils. Efforts still need to be made, however, to **provide better training for teachers, to promote the advantages of mobility, to boost language learning and to fund this ambitious programme.**

2.2.1 Teacher training and a transversality of the European subject

Out of the challenges to be met, the priority remains teacher training. This is naturally a competence belonging to Member States, and the EU can therefore only encourage European nations to introduce a European dimension in the training of their teachers.

This European dimension must focus on both content and form and must enable all teachers, in all fields, to support an Erasmus Teens project. The initiative is aimed at a class project conducted over a year and involving virtual and physical exchanges. This means that all teachers of the participating classes must be able to be involved in its success via their different fields.

Teachers will need to have knowledge of European construction and the mobility opportunities it offers younger citizens, so that they can introduce and present Erasmus Teens in context; master the IT skills needed for exchanges to occur under the best possible conditions and to acquire the language skills necessary for international cooperation.

²⁷. French Education Ministry, [Les sections européennes ou de langues orientales en lycée](#), Les programmes du lycée (in French)

²⁸. Éduscol, [Présentation des sections binationales : Abibac–Bachibac–Esabac](#), Sections binationales (in French)

In order to pass onto pupils the importance of mobility, teachers must experience its advantages first-hand. Feedback is almost unanimous: any teacher which has had a mobility experience as part of their training believes it was a positive experience²⁹, like this teacher at the Ozenne upper secondary school in Toulouse who sums it up as follows: “resources, sharing and pleasure” and praises its benefits for her—she was able to teach abroad, improve her language skills, find out about other teaching methods, etc.—and for her pupils, to whom the school can now offer exchanges³⁰. As demonstrated by the SPIRAL project conducted in five European countries and steered by the Centre international d’études pédagogiques in France³¹, a mobility experience during teacher training develops skills in four different fields: professional values, teaching practices, language skills and intercultural understanding. The EU already supports many teacher mobility projects through the Erasmus + Key Action 1, which has highlighted the impact that teaching staff mobility can have on the interest and results of pupils in terms of languages and mobility, like the “Innovative teachers—motivated students” project which received funding in 2016³². This can also contribute to adding extra value to the teaching profession, which is struggling to hire new teachers in France.

The number of teaching staff mobility projects in the European Union stagnated at 2,542 in 2015 and in 2016 despite an increase in the budget of Key Action 1 aimed at these professionals and growing demand from teaching staff for this³³. It is therefore essential to increase both funding as well as information and support for schools applying for funding for new projects to be created and for the rise in the number of teachers with mobility experience to result in a greater appetite for mobility among pupils. This enhanced information could also familiarise teachers with the European platforms which already exist and would thereby favour contacts between teachers with similar centres of interest which could be used to create a partnership and to conduct projects together.

2.2.2 Recognition and promotion of mobility and mobility projects

As it promotes an educational approach based on a project conducted jointly between pupils and teachers of classes in different countries, Erasmus Teens involves the development of tools that recognise and promote project management and mobility.

To do so, the initiative can leverage the resources of the Europass Portfolio, which translates into skills and knowledge qualifications obtained, internships conducted and professional experience, and above all the resources of the Youthpass. Initially designed to promote knowledge and soft skills acquired during mobility in an informal framework, the assessment, self-assessment and skills and knowledge translation tools developed in this context are resources to be recognised and value both the mobility experience and the project conducted as part of Erasmus Teens.

In addition, knowledge, expertise and soft skills acquired during mobility are frequently under-valued by the persons benefiting from it³⁴. The tools developed as part of the Youthpass allow pupils to consider what the experience has brought them and to express it clearly and positively.

²⁹. Académie de Bordeaux (Education Authority), “*Etude d’impact des partenariats scolaires Comenius*”, Europe and International, November 2014 (in French)

³⁰. Génération Erasmus, “*Erasmus + permet d’ouvrir le lycée sur le monde*”, account by *Nathalie, international business teacher at Ozenne upper secondary school in Toulouse*, 2014 (in French)

³¹. Centre international d’études pédagogiques, “*SPIRAL, schoolteacher professionalisation for primary level: intercultural resources and languages*”, project conducted between 2013 and 2016 (in French)

³². Erasmus +, “*Innovative teachers—motivated students*”, *good practice example*, 2014-2016

³³. European Commission, “*Erasmus+ programme annual report 2016*”, 2017, p. 17

³⁴. Finnish national agency for education, “*Hidden competencies*”, Studies, analyses and evaluations, 2013

The aim is to give pupils from all backgrounds, regardless of their academic results or access to mobility outside school, the opportunity to create, conduct and complete a project which will enable them to acquire new skills and which will contribute to their development as a person, a professional and a citizen. For all pupils to be able to enjoy this opportunity without their academic level as assessed by conventional tools undermining their involvement and ability to conduct the project successfully, it is important to use different tools which value these new skills and which help pupils to take greater ownership of the project.

2.2.3 Language learning

A priority of youth strategies for more than twenty years, language learning in Europe remains a key factor for the success of any mass mobility project in Europe.

The “Education and Training 2020”³⁵ Strategic Framework reasserts European and government institutions’ ambition to enable all European citizens to master two languages in addition to their native language. Once again, the teaching of languages comes under the competence of each Member State. The EU does encourage, however, cooperation between European schools to develop new tools and exchange good practices in this field.

As part of Erasmus Teens, it is necessary to add to the toolkit available to teachers when embarking on a mobility project with their classes so that they are able to use a set of resources which allow all pupils to improve their language skills, in particular via innovative teaching methods.

2.2.4 Budget

As with many projects, the key issue remains the amounts that the EU and its Member States are willing to invest in this ambitious project. While the Erasmus and then Erasmus + budget has risen constantly, to paraphrase Jacques Delors, at each new round of budget negotiation: it takes endless battles to obtain derisory sums³⁶. The weighting of Erasmus in the European budget is currently 14 times greater than it was thirty years ago, but it still only accounts for 0.42% of the EU budget. For the 2014-2020 period, the Erasmus+ budget has increased by 40% and accounts for 1.4% of the EU budget. The Commission has proposed to allocate an additional amount of €200 million by 2020³⁷.

These efforts, which demonstrate the EU’s desire and that of its Member States to provide ever-greater mobility opportunities to an ever-greater number of young people, are insufficient and will not be enough to support a project on the scale of Erasmus Teens.

To date, less than 30% of project applications were granted Erasmus + funding for a virtual and/or physical mobility project in primary or secondary education³⁸. In order to increase the mobility opportunities for 15-18 year-olds, this figure must be increased. As the digital tools and twinning platforms already exist³⁹, progress must be made on the funding of physical mobility experiences.

While the Commissioner in charge of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor Navracsics, stated in an interview in March 2018 that the Erasmus + budget should be doubled at least to

³⁵. European Commission, “Strategic Framework–Education and Training 2020”

³⁶. Address of Jacques Delors to the Loire-Atlantique Regional Council on 19 March 1988 (document available in the Jacques Delors archives)

³⁷. European Commission, “Investing in Europe’s youth”, *Communication*, 7 December 2016

³⁸. European Commission, “Erasmus+ programme annual report 2016”, 2017, p. 34

³⁹. The “eTwinning” platform already provides many tools and resources which can be developed in line with Erasmus Teens (site in French).

meet the objectives set by the European Commission⁴⁰, the funding of Erasmus Teens would require a tripling of the budget in its pilot phase—i.e. €44 billion.

This project is in line with the European Commission's objectives and could therefore be granted a mere doubling of the budget, which could prove sufficient in an initial pilot phase involving a limited number of schools in various Member States. In the longer term, once you add to the Commission's current objectives, leading the Commissioner to propose a doubling of the budget, a significant effort to improve teacher training and the need to offer full coverage of pupils' travel expenses across Europe so that this opportunity is available to all 15-18 year-olds in the EU, an increase of an additional third is necessary. This age group accounts for 20 to 25 million people⁴¹. This figure alone adds an additional argument in favour of group mobility for 15-18 year-olds: funding individual mobility for each young person based on the funding model of Erasmus programme mobility aimed at students would result in very excessive costs for Member States and the European Union alike. Group mobility, in addition to the educational and legal arguments in its favour, therefore brings about significant economies of scale.

Whether the EU is able to double or triple the Erasmus+ budget, this measure will only ever be implemented with the logistical and financial assistance of Member States, which, in an initial phase, would turn national funding for mobility and educational innovation into European funding in order to support a pilot phase of the initiative. Given that education remains a national competence, it is with national funding and a commitment from education ministries in each Member State that resources commensurate with the ambitions of Erasmus Teens can be unlocked.

CONCLUSION

The Jacques Delors Institute lends its full support to the ambition of enhancing the Erasmus + programme and is in favour of its extension to young people under 18 years of age. It suggests the creation of an initial step in a European citizen mobility pathway in which all young people are offered this mobility opportunity before they turn 18, as this would enable them to experience the benefits and whet their appetite for other similar experiences in later years.

Given the legal challenges related to the mobility of minors, and also the inequality between young people in terms of the financial and personal management of a mobility experience, it is necessary that this first experience is proposed as part of a class project, so that it can be accessed on a large scale by young people of all backgrounds. By involving young people in such a project, in which mobility is not the aim but rather the logical result, young people will gain a better understanding of the importance of mobility. Mobility is only useful in strengthening the feeling of being European and personal development and empowerment if it allows young people to build and conduct a joint project for which they can measure the implementation and impact.

Many tools already exist to conduct this project which, while being ambitious in its objectives and impacts, does not require new instruments to be created. Rather, the tools which already exist on platforms and the exchange of best practices of formal and informal mobility projects should be developed. There is a need, however, to create a shift in national outlooks by introducing Europe and mobility in teacher training and to give a cross-cutting dimension to the educational project of classes who will experience it. An increase in the budget and the resources dedicated to mobility on both a European and a national scale is a key factor for this programme's success.

⁴⁰. Tibor Navracsics, "Erasmus+ budget should double at least", *Europe Daily Bulletin No.11972*, 2 March 2018

⁴¹. Calculations made on the Eurostat database, "Being young in Europe today—demographic trends," December 2017

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