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Erasmus+ and other tools to foster mobility in vocational education and training**European Parliament resolution of 12 April 2016 on Erasmus+ and other tools to foster mobility in VET — a lifelong learning approach (2015/2257(INI))**

(2018/C 058/07)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), in particular Articles 165 and 166 thereof,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, in particular Article 14 thereof,
- having regard to the Copenhagen Declaration of 30 November 2002 on enhanced cooperation in European vocational education and training,
- having regard to the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020') ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to the Council resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing 'Erasmus+: the Union Programme for education, training, youth and sport' ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to the Council recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning ⁽⁵⁾,
- having regard to Decision No 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass) ⁽⁶⁾,
- having regard to the Council recommendation of 28 June 2011 entitled "'Youth on the Move" — promoting the learning mobility of young people' ⁽⁷⁾,
- having regard to Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning ⁽⁸⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 6 July 2010 on promoting youth access to the labour market, strengthening trainee, internship and apprenticeship status ⁽⁹⁾,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 155, 8.7.2009, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 119, 28.5.2009, p. 2.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 311, 19.12.2009, p. 1.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 50.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 398, 22.12.2012, p. 1.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ L 390, 31.12.2004, p. 6.

⁽⁷⁾ OJ C 199, 7.7.2011, p. 1.

⁽⁸⁾ OJ L 394, 30.12.2006, p. 10.

⁽⁹⁾ OJ C 351 E, 2.12.2011, p. 29.

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- having regard to the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF-LLL) ⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to the different instruments for recognition of competences, such as the European Framework of Certifications (CEC), the European Credits Transfer System (ECTS), the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), and the European Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations project (ESCO),
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 20 November 2012 entitled ‘Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes’ (COM(2012)0669),
 - having regard to the report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council of 28 January 2014 on the implementation of the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (COM(2014)0030),
 - having regard to the Council conclusions of 20 May 2014 on quality assurance supporting education and training,
 - having regard to the Declaration of the Ministers in charge of Vocational education and training of 22 June 2015 on a new set of medium-term deliverables in the field of VET for the period 2015-2020,
 - having regard to the Paris Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education, adopted at the informal meeting of EU education ministers on 17 March 2015 in Paris (8496/15),
 - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture and Education and to the opinion of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (A8-0049/2016),
- A. whereas learning mobility and training mobility are important for personal development, young people’s social inclusion, multicultural dialogue, tolerance, the ability to work in an intercultural environment, and active citizenship, and have clearly proved their potential to contribute to high-quality education and employability;
- B. whereas learning mobility and training mobility should be further strengthened in the context of both current and successive EU programmes in the area of education and training, employment and cohesion policy;
- C. whereas in 2002 the EU ministers responsible for vocational education and training (VET) launched the ‘Copenhagen process’ with the aim of enhancing European cooperation in this field with the objective of improving the performance, quality and attractiveness of VET in Europe;
- D. whereas the Copenhagen process is based on mutually agreed priorities that are periodically revised, seeking amongst its goals, to facilitate mobility and promote the use of different vocational training opportunities within the lifelong learning context;
- E. whereas, according to Eurostat, unemployment in the EU remained as high as 10,2 % in 2014 despite there being a slow recovery; whereas across the EU youth unemployment currently stands at 22,1 %, while only 51 % of the 55-64 age group is in work and the gender gap in the employment rate for older workers stands at 13,6 percentage points;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 111, 6.5.2008, p. 1.

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- F. whereas non-formal and informal learning and vocational training have an important contribution to make in tackling current challenges in lifelong learning, such as early school leaving, unacceptable numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs), and skills shortages and mismatches;
- G. whereas the persistence of skills mismatches on the labour market is evidenced by the high job vacancy rate recorded in the Commission's 2015 Autumn Economic Forecast;
- H. whereas language skills are lower in VET and need specific boosting;
- I. whereas it is necessary to reaffirm the political commitment to support EU action in the areas of lifelong learning and VET, notably through mobility activities that focus on developing transversal competences such as adaptability, curiosity, learning to learn, and interpersonal and civic skills;
- J. whereas recent socio-economic developments have accentuated the need to make lifelong learning and VET systems not only more efficient, but also more accessible and inclusive with respect to disadvantaged groups and people with special needs; whereas wider access to education should not be implemented at the expense of the quality of education;
- K. whereas continuous financial support for mobility measures and activities related to lifelong learning and VET knowledge is crucial, especially in the current period of economic crisis;
- L. whereas the regional and local level is crucial for supporting initiatives exploring new paths for mobility in order to ensure the effectiveness, transparency and quality of funds and programmes devoted to VET; whereas mobility in VET of young people and apprentices promoted at regional and local level should be coordinated in a broad process of democratic and participatory governance aimed at addressing the most relevant socio-economic and environmental issues, involving micro, small and medium enterprises, start-ups, local communities and social partners;
- M. whereas entrepreneurs, chambers of commerce and industry and the equivalent professional bodies for craft trades and farmers, as well as trade unions and other relevant social partners, should be actively involved in the design, organisation, delivery and financing of VET, including mobility; whereas with regard to the design of VET, a social dimension should be addressed to include areas such as fair trade, social entrepreneurship, and alternative business models such as cooperatives, and should be organised with relevant partners in those fields;
- N. whereas while youth mobility must be encouraged so as to enhance employability, it must not become the only envisaged solution for youth unemployment;

Taking stock of results and identifying key challenges

1. Believes that education is a fundamental human right and a public good that should be equally accessible to all; calls on the EU and the Member States to address all socio-economic limitations that prevent equal access for all to VET opportunities, including mobility; acknowledges that the role and results of existing programmes and initiatives for mobility in VET should be enhanced in terms of accessibility, openness and inclusiveness, in order to promote a personalised approach to education, reduce school dropout rates, and guarantee equal access to Erasmus+ mobility actions for disadvantaged groups and those with special needs; stresses, therefore, the need for flexible, diversified and customised range of mobility options for training, also maintaining a gender perspective, for people from immigrant backgrounds or economically disadvantaged families, learners from remote regions, people with disabilities and those with other specific needs;

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2. Affirms the need, when dealing with the issue of mobility and education, to maintain a gender perspective and to take into account the needs of people suffering from multiple forms of discrimination, including people with disabilities, people identifying as LGBTI and those from marginalised communities; encourages, in this perspective, further measures to facilitate access for people from disadvantaged groups or with special needs to Erasmus+ mobility actions;
3. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and key stakeholders to increase the visibility of VET programmes in order to remove cultural barriers and combat the phenomena of lack of motivation, lack of proactive predisposition and lack of language skills, particularly in those areas most affected by youth unemployment; believes that it must be ensured that these programmes are accessible to all citizens without discrimination; calls for the targeting of groups at risk of unemployment, such as people with disabilities; calls for access to VET and qualifications to be made easier by promoting adaptability in apprenticeship pathways and adjustability of arrangements, as well as training opportunities for groups with insufficient basic skills and employees with low or intermediate-level qualifications; recalls that the gender balance in access to such experiences has to be taken into account, in the context of the efficient promotion of VET mobility programmes among women; considers, in this regard, that ambitious targets should be set and progress monitored;
4. Highlights the gender gap in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education, skills and employment across the EU, and calls on the Commission and the Member States to fully commit to Erasmus+ and to use this mechanism as a key opportunity for developing STEM education in order to enhance women's ability to embark on a career in the STEM field and thus reduce the existing skills gap in this area;
5. Highlights the importance of a common European education area grounded in a strong mobility component — including not only higher education but also VET — that will contribute to the creation and development of a stronger European identity and enhanced citizenship;
6. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to make every effort with a view to attaining the objectives of the European Strategy for Education and Training 2020; believes that mobility must take account of the continuous vocational education and training (CVET) aspect, as it is key to the improvement and updating of skills and expertise; stresses that lifelong learning and VET are key to achieving better employment prospects for the long-term unemployed;
7. Believes that the above cooperation should result in a review of requirements with the aim of ensuring their relevance as regards duration, content, competences and learning outcomes, while combining mobility for both training centres and the workplace and also giving priority to longer-term experience periods (e.g. for six months) over their shorter-term equivalents;
8. Notes that the European resources allocated to Erasmus+ and VET programmes are not proportional to the numbers or needs of the potential beneficiaries of the mobility offered by these schemes, and accordingly calls on the Member States to promote bilateral agreements to supplement the activities of Erasmus+ and the European VET programmes, thus increasing the mobility of young Europeans;
9. Acknowledges the important role and results of existing programmes and initiatives for mobility, such as Key Action 1 in Erasmus+, Europass, the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF); calls on the Commission to create a 'European student e-card' which would grant the status of EU student in a mobility context and offer access to services;
10. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, as well as on EU agencies such as CEDEFOP, to take action to improve the VET mobility programmes so that they deliver added value for all participants as regards qualifications, recognition and content, and to ensure that quality standards are introduced for apprenticeships;

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11. Points out that the mobility initiatives contribute to improving not only learners' civic values and sense of belonging to Europe, but also their academic skills and job prospects, and more specifically those skills linked to problem-solving capacity, planning and structuring, capacity to act and adapt in the face of new situations, entrepreneurship, leadership and decision-making, social responsibility skills, knowledge of foreign languages, communication skills and teamwork skills, as well as those personal skills that impact on employability such as confidence, motivation, curiosity, critical and creative thinking, initiative and assertiveness;

12. Insists on the need to facilitate the implementation of mobility in Erasmus+, by taking action to raise the success rate of applications, simplifying the design and use of electronic tools for mobility management, raising awareness of the value of mobility programmes in all general and vocational education establishments in the Union, and providing better-targeted information and training to beneficiaries and intermediaries of the programmes and actions, including school and college staff; stresses the importance, in this regard, of the contribution made by EuropeanSchoolNet; asks the Commission to reduce the present excessive and over-complex administrative burdens, both for applicants and for the sending and hosting companies and institutions involved in Erasmus+ projects, facilitating and simplifying the processes for application, registration and reporting, and the projects themselves; points out in addition that excessive red tape in the schools and colleges concerned acts as a barrier to the simple implementation of the programme;

13. Asks the Commission to put in place schemes aimed at reducing linguistic and cultural barriers to the organisation of mobility programmes; considers that such schemes should be able to assess implementation progress; stresses that action schemes should, in particular, support the learning of basic elements of the language of the host country; encourages Member States and regional and local authorities to examine the specific learning needs of VET teachers and trainers, encouraging and supporting the exchange of best practices, and to provide them with more professional development opportunities; highlights the importance of designing a basic training model that can provide information on the key features of the business and working culture of the destination country, as well as promoting and providing specific programmes for the training of teaching staff in the context of mobility management by the training centres;

14. Points out that occupations linked to VET have the necessary flexibility to be carried out anywhere, and that, therefore, mobility in the VET context is a key tool in the fight against unemployment, as it enhances employability, helps reduce the skills gap and facilitates job matching, especially for young people, providing skills and a unique experience of the kind needed for competitiveness in today's labour markets in the EU; considers that Erasmus+ helps develop specific professional skills and transversal and transferable competences such as entrepreneurship, as well as broadening opportunities for the involvement of the production sector, thus constituting an effective tool for the job market;

15. Stresses the significance and importance of recognisability concerning brand names and logos connected with Erasmus+ and its subprogrammes; considers that these brand names should be used in particular for the purpose of Erasmus+ publications and brochures;

16. Expresses concern that Erasmus+ is viewed by young people primarily as a programme for students in higher education; recommends, therefore, that greater importance be attached to raising the profile at European, national and regional level of the different areas and the subprogrammes relating to each area, including school-level education (Comenius), higher education (Erasmus), international higher education (Erasmus Mundus), vocational education and training (Leonardo da Vinci), and adult education (Grundtvig), as well as youth (Youth in Action) and sport;

17. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and public employment bodies to publicise and raise awareness of the Erasmus+ programme and other tools aimed at promoting mobility in the area of VET, in particular among SMEs; believes that maximising the effectiveness of these tools will allow more people to benefit from these opportunities, so that the goal of mobility may be achieved;

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18. Stresses the urgent need for industry and services in both private and public sectors, including the production sector (notably SMEs and micro-enterprises), to be consulted and/or involved in the design, framing, implementation and support of quality VET mobility programmes; considers that the programme selection should take account of job opportunities with host businesses and organisations; believes that a flexible and constructive partnership based on dialogue, cooperation and best practice involving all stakeholders will ensure the success and the added value of VET; takes the view that the exchange of knowledge and best practices between training centres and firms is also needed; calls on the Commission to keep track of demand and supply on the labour market within the EU, as well as of geographic and occupational mobility, in order to match the needs of the labour market; considers that this would reduce the gap between, on the one hand, the training on offer and what actually awaits young people in the business environment, and, on the other, market needs in added value sectors (e.g. the digital and green economies, energy, defence, the care sector and housing rehabilitation);

19. Underlines the key aspects that need to be taken into account when planning mobility actions and assessing their implementation, namely: learners' economic capacity to engage in mobility; recognition of studies, competences and qualifications, and training content between countries, whether via credits or certificates; level of language knowledge; organisation of curricula or studies; the practical value of students' credits and examinations once they have returned to their university of origin; legal aspects; information or motivation to complete studies; guidance and counselling activities throughout the mobility period; and students' personal situation; calls, therefore, on the Commission to improve indicators and assessment criteria so as to enable the monitoring on a more regular basis of the effectiveness of EU programmes and make it possible to carry out any necessary improvements;

20. Points out that, at present, only 1 % of young people in work-related training schemes, including apprentices, are involved in mobility schemes during their training; points to the vital need to create the conditions for greater apprentice mobility within the EU, so as to give apprentices the same opportunities as higher education students; encourages, therefore, the definition by the EU of a statute of the 'European Apprentice'; calls on the EU and the Member States to ensure that both apprenticeships and traineeships remain formative opportunities that are not used as a source of precarious labour, do not substitute full-time professional positions, and guarantee dignified working conditions and students' rights, including financial and remuneration-related rights; encourages the Commission, in addition, to analyse the implications of the above-mentioned statute, monitor the implementation of related measures, to prompt all related stakeholders, including those of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships, to follow its recommendations with a view to improving the conditions, quality and availability of apprenticeships in the EU, and to consider this issue as a strategic priority;

21. Calls on the Commission to present, and on the Member States to endorse, a proposal for an EU apprenticeship scheme that would guarantee a set of rights for apprentices and VET learners; highlights the positive role that 'seniors' can play in the education and training of youth with a view to maximising intergenerational exchange through traineeships and mentoring, as well as facilitating experience-based learning in cross-generational teams; encourages the Commission and the Member States to adopt concrete measures to ensure that apprenticeships and traineeships under Erasmus+ are not misused by being turned into an instrument for lowering the cost of labour;

22. Values positively the launch of pilot projects, as well as the recently approved 'European framework for mobility of apprentices', as a basis for improvements to the Erasmus+ programme aimed at enabling more and better VET mobility of long-term duration; urges the creation of a framework for long-term initiatives as opposed to solely project-focused actions, in order to establish a permanent and sustainable system that is fully operational, is predictable, and encourages the free movement of skills across Europe;

23. Notes that early school leaving is one of the most distinct problems faced by mobility target groups, and that better vocational options lead to fewer dropouts from education and training; stresses, therefore, how important the results of educational systems may be in reducing early school leaving and in better equipping students with transversal skills which will eventually help them match their qualifications with the demands of the labour market;

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24. Stresses the need to help young people in vocational training overcome their difficulties by means of certain complementary and accompanying measures, such as reinforcing the group nature of the mobility schemes, better mentoring and accompaniment by the home and host institutions before and during their mobility, improving access to high-quality information on VET opportunities, offering specialised guidance and counselling activities and tools, and financing linguistic support for all participants without language restrictions;

25. Points out that a number of factors that impact the expectations of young people being trained in VET systems can be identified, in particular socio-economic factors, family typology and a lack of guidance (and tutorial) tools once compulsory secondary education has been completed or during vocational training courses;

26. Emphasises the key role of learning and training mobility in tackling social and cultural challenges, with a view to maximising young people's opportunities to develop their own scheme of action in society; recalls that the EU has focused its efforts, notably through the Europe 2020 strategy, on increasing the competitiveness of its economy, generating employment and, ultimately, strengthening its capacity to compete globally in the third decade of the century; emphasises, in this context, the important role of research, innovation, the digital society and energy sustainability, as instruments to provide higher added value;

27. Stresses the role of the EU and the Member States in developing and encouraging a high-quality and well-organised VET system by implementing a holistic approach that balances theoretical education focused on the profession concerned, practical training and general, formal, informal and non-formal education; calls on the Member States to introduce a 'dual education' approach into their upper secondary school systems, or to strengthen existing systems through traineeships and work placements, thus facilitating VET students' sustainable integration into the labour market and increasing their participation in transnational mobility programmes; recalls that in general, improving the quality of VET in cooperation with social partners and public employment services, is a means to address social inclusion, increase participation in higher education, promote student success and ease integration into the labour market, which should facilitate mobility in the lifelong learning process;

28. Calls for the issues surrounding the European Voluntary Service (EVS), with regard to insurance for participants, approval, database management and support for volunteers, to be addressed in a targeted manner, so as to prevent a decrease in participation;

29. Deplores the fact that non-formal learning has lost visibility and budget share in the current Erasmus+ programme; highlights the importance of non-formal learning at European level, especially through youth work and senior volunteering; calls for non-formal and informal learning to be given a clear and visible place in the Erasmus+ programme; believes, in addition, that the possibility should exist of submitting applications in respect of large-scale adult education projects that would be governed by the same principles as sector skill alliances or knowledge alliances;

30. Supports the development of modern technologies and infrastructures in strengthening and modernising national vocational education systems so as to improve access to and quality of mobility; considers that, in order to tackle skills mismatches, greater emphasis should be placed on innovation and the development of new academic and professional skills, digital learning and teaching platforms, life technologies, innovative technologies for the enhancement of cultural heritage, and information and communication technologies; strongly believes that the EU and the Member States should deliver an effective strategy aimed at matching current and future circular economy job opportunities with VET systems;

31. Notes that in the transition to a more digitised economy a redefinition of jobs and skills is taking place; calls, in consequence, on the Member States and the Commission to work in conjunction with the private sector in order to develop skilling strategies and VET programmes for the reskilling of workers;

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Access: improving mobility options for young people in vocational training

32. Encourages the creation of a framework along the lines of the previous Leonardo da Vinci programme, to be referred to in the dedicated Erasmus+ calls, that identifies as clearly and precisely as possible the mobility options for young people in VET, especially through cross-platform campaigns launched by public authorities, with the coordinated participation of all stakeholders who play an active role in or have an influence on VET;

33. Encourages the Commission and the Member States to provide sufficient financial resources to support mobility programmes, taking into account potential financial barriers; advocates examining the issue of broadened visibility concerning how companies complement the allocated allowance or the possibility of providing other types of aid; considers that complementarity between the European Social Fund (ESF) and Erasmus+ should be ensured and monitored with a view to successful outcomes;

34. Calls for improved synergies between EU policies and instruments impacting on mobility and education, and in particular for complementary measures between the ESF and Erasmus+, as well as for greater coordination of all actions at all levels (national, regional and local planning);

35. Reiterates the need for measures to ensure coordination, complementarity and consistency between Structural Funds including the ESF and programmes such as Erasmus+ at national, regional and local level;

36. Underlines the need to compensate for the obstacles that derive from the lower socio-economic status of VET students, through measures such as a possible increase in the amounts of individual grants from the Commission, or an increase in the contributions made by Member States and regional and local administrations, intermediate institutions or NGOs, whether funded from their own budgets or via partnership schemes involving businesses, foundations and organisations collaborating in the system of qualification and vocational training in their region or territory;

From mobility to employability: validation and recognition of learning outcomes, skills and competences

37. Underlines that acquiring new, diverse and creative ideas abroad may motivate and boost entrepreneurship and creativity; stresses that the opportunities offered by learning and training mobility, such as building international networks, may also have positive effects on employability, transnational cooperation and Europe's competitiveness;

38. Considers that current and future measures to tackle skills mismatches should both facilitate the involvement of employers, businesses and local communities, and be better connected with forecasts concerning labour market developments and future skill needs;

39. Highlights that there is a positive association between learning mobility and future mobility and earnings, since EU and international mobility programmes enhance participants' employability abroad, as the Commission's Joint Research Centre found in 2013; stresses that apprenticeships and traineeships abroad improve participants' language skills (as occurs in 79 % of cases, according to Eurobarometer in 2013) ⁽¹⁾;

40. Underlines the importance of mobility retraining programmes, for unemployed people of all ages and for people threatened by restructuring measures;

⁽¹⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_378_en.pdf

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41. Draws attention to the diversity and uneven development of validation and recognition systems between Member States, despite growing convergence in the last decade; stresses the need to improve compatibility between different vocational education and training systems and facilitate the validation and recognition of skills and competences acquired in companies or training centres in different Member States, as also to increase the attractiveness of the Erasmus+ programme; calls on Member States to improve the implementation of the EQF ⁽¹⁾ and remove barriers; encourages the definition of a European standard that is acceptable and implementable at all levels (national, regional and local);
42. Encourages further measures to promote the recognition and validation of learning outcomes, including those developed through non-formal and informal learning, particularly through better use of existing tools such as Europass and ECVET;
43. Recalls that important improvements have been made thanks to the EQF, as regards the recognition of diplomas, credits, skills certificates, competency accreditations and acquired expertise in the context of VET; calls for the establishment of specific targets, among them the implementation of a fully operational system of credit transfers and recognition, to be based on ECVET; encourages the development of joint VET qualifications that can ensure the international recognition of qualifications;
44. Advocates drawing up a Green Paper on vocational education, training and mobility and the recognition of skills and competences in Europe, to be drafted in close cooperation with all key stakeholders; recalls that the current recommendations concerning VET need to be fully implemented; points out that the non-recognition of competences has a negative impact on the Europe 2020 employment rates target, and hinders free movement as enshrined in the Treaties;
45. Favours greater mobility in employment, education, apprenticeships and traineeships in the context of national European Youth Guarantee Schemes, in order to improve the skills of young people and reduce the geographical skills mismatch in the EU;
46. Stresses the importance of the Youth Guarantee and the Youth Employment Initiative in supporting apprenticeships, traineeships, VET, job placements and further education leading to a qualification; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that adequate funding is allocated to these programmes for the whole programming period 2014-2020;
47. Urges the translation into all official languages of the Union of the EU Skills Panorama website, in order to make it a source of information accessible for all on skills needed throughout Europe;
48. Notes the progress that have been achieved towards ensuring higher VET quality in numerous Member States, supported by the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) framework; and encourages those Member States that are currently in the process of developing a national quality assurance approach in line with EQAVET; stresses that Member States should make more effort to ensure that quality assurance arrangements take greater account of learning outcomes and that they value and support non-formal learning and work-based learning in either formal or non-formal settings, as appropriate to the national context;
49. Underlines that apprenticeship programs should be conducted under the guidance of a competent supervisor;

Towards more efficient, accessible and inclusive mobility programmes

50. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, also in collaboration with CEDEFOP, to define and strengthen the role of the intermediary institutions, both territorial and sectoral, involved in the preparation, management and follow-up of mobility, while demanding that they practise the highest standards of transparency, and to assist in the setting-up of such institutions at national, regional and local level;

⁽¹⁾ See: Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning.

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51. Stresses the need for such intermediary institutions to have adequate budgetary and human resources to enable mobility organisation and management structures to guarantee the involvement of the network of vocational training schools, and to have the power and capacity to establish operational alliances and agreements with potential partners, both at home and in the Member States participating in mobility programmes;

52. Stresses the need for legal protection of minors abroad;

53. Emphasises that mobility actions and/or services adapted to the needs of trainers, tutors and entrepreneurs should be encouraged and highlighted within ERASMUS+;

54. Points out that coherent, complementary and well-coordinated co-funding schemes at European, national, regional and local level are necessary in order to enable training centres to cover the total range of costs and plan and implement permanent actions;

55. Welcomes the fact that Erasmus+ has significantly expanded the number of beneficiaries of VET programmes among those young persons who do not go to university or college;

56. Supports all necessary accompanying measures, first of all to assist and encourage apprentices wishing to take part in mobility programmes, and later to help them better communicate their acquired skills through mobility and develop their self-assertiveness in order to make their know-how and the richness of their experience visible and worthwhile;

57. Considers that the learning outcomes of apprenticeship should be designed and discussed with the apprentice in line with ECVET principles before the apprentice embarks on training, and that the outcomes should be listed in the Certificate Supplement after completion of the training;

58. Emphasises the importance of quality teacher training and of monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance in this field, as well as the need to encourage inclusiveness and tolerance in mobility programmes;

59. Emphasises the need for quality placements that can enable students to acquire desirable professional skills, in addition to highlighting the need, at all levels, for good communication vis-à-vis entrepreneurs in order to bring them on board with a view to further recognition of the experience acquired by young people taking advantage of mobility schemes;

60. Supports all measures in line with the Erasmus+ objectives taken by entrepreneurs, NGOs or civil society to develop mobility schemes for young employees or apprentices, either by branch of activity or in interaction with bodies representing the industries, such as chambers of commerce and industry, in addition to European networks such as Eurochambres and the relevant trade unions; calls for the recognition of the role of Skilled Craft Chambers and their training centres in supporting mobility and very small companies; believes that all measures taken to improve VET schemes should also focus on domains promoting zero carbon energy and sustainable mobility;

61. Recommends that all key stakeholders work on joint strategies aimed at enhancing either the return home of vocational education trainees and apprentices or their mobility to other parts of Europe, while respecting their preferences, the aim being to channel the knowledge and experience acquired 'abroad' for the reduction of imbalances and enhancement of cohesion in their own 'skill-deprived' areas of origin or elsewhere in Europe;

62. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to establish and effectively implement a European network of workshops and incubators, as being crucial for encouraging knowledge alliances among schools, universities and businesses and promoting access to training, experience, refresher courses for teachers and lecturers, apprenticeships and start-ups;

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63. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to support and strengthen the European Network of Science Centres (ECSITE), which brings together science centres as places providing access to scientific culture;
64. Calls for the setting-up of a one-stop-shop mechanism for pooling data and communication tools in order to provide a convenient and efficient service for those seeking information and support regarding the various mobility programmes existing at EU, national, regional and local level;
65. Calls on the Commission to provide up-to-date statistics and to carry out assessments and/or studies regarding Erasmus+ and other VET mobility programmes, where feasible, in order to measure their impact in matching work experience with jobs with regard to the hiring rate, and also to examine why some Member States are generating more applications for VET work and learning experiences abroad and draw up a plan for their greater involvement; believes that the resulting statistics and assessments should be included and taken into account in the mid-term review of Erasmus+;
66. Welcomes the conclusions agreed by the ministers responsible for vocational education and training in Riga on 22 June 2015, proposing a new set of medium-term deliverables in the field of VET for the period 2015-2020, and calls for their timely and thorough implementation;
67. Stresses the importance of promoting the gains derived from mobility in terms of employability and acquired skills, in order to demonstrate its genuine utility and to reduce the perception that time is wasted on training which a priori depends on purely national competences;
68. Encourages improving the promotion and visibility for young people and enterprises of such platforms as Drop'pin@EURES, the aim of which is to facilitate the mobility of young people in terms of apprenticeships, internships, training programs, and e-learning language courses;
69. Encourages Member States to promote the full range of opportunities offered by the new Erasmus+ programme, which provides young people not only with opportunities to study abroad, but also with opportunities for apprenticeships and work placements;
70. Encourages the introduction of a minimum level of allowances, adjusted in accordance with variations in living conditions, prices and costs between Member States; supports the notion that Member States should introduce measures to enable necessary and beneficial support where relevant, e.g. for accommodation and transport, paying special attention to the needs of minors, as well as preparing students before their international experience, for example through career guidance, language teaching and cross-cultural communication;
71. Calls for a review/revision of the multiannual financial framework (MFF), to be based on criteria including the prior assessment of the effectiveness of measures to combat unemployment, with funding for the less effective provisions being cut; considers that such an approach is particularly important in times of crisis, such as the present moment, which are marked by unacceptable imbalances;

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72. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Member States.
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