



INDIVIDUAL PUPIL MOBILITY PROJECT

FIRST INTERIM REPORT

07/06/2007

SUMMARY

Table of contents

Preface.....	4
1. Methodology and organisation of the study.....	6
1.1 Objectives and scope of the Study	6
1.2 Organisation of the Study	6
1.3 Methodology	8
1.4 Study phase work plan	12
2. Executive Summary and summarised report of findings	13
Executive Summary.....	13
A. General Legislative Framework.....	16
A.1. Sources	16
A.2. Mobility and Recognition of Study Periods Abroad.....	16
A.2.1. For outgoing pupils	16
A.3. Practical aspects of school organisation	25
B. Experience of the schools.....	27
B.1. Sources	27
B.2. Mobility organised by external organisations	27
B.3. Mobility organised by the schools.....	34
C. Experience of Mobility Providers.....	36
C.1. Sources	36
C.2. Types of study abroad programmes offered.....	36
C.3. Mobility Flows in Europe	37
C.4. Age group targeted/interested in study abroad programmes.....	37
C.5. Trends observed by mobility providers	39
C.6. Risk Management.....	39
C.7. Financial aspects	40
C.8. Recruitment of participants	41
C.9. Support to programme participants.....	43
C.10. Evaluations of mobility schemes and providers.....	46
C.11. Rights and Responsibilities	47
C.12. Obstacles.....	47
D. Research and Statistics	48
D.1. Sources	48
D.2. Research and Statistics.....	48
E. Stakeholders: European Associations.....	60
E.1. Sources.....	60
E.2. Mobility, concerns and benefits.....	60

Preface

In preparation of an individual pupil mobility scheme under the new Lifelong Learning Programme (Comenius Subprogramme), the European Commission has awarded a Service Contract (n° 2006-2867/001-001) for a long-term project to EFIL, the European Federation for Intercultural Learning, the umbrella organisation of the European AFS-Organisations. The new programme will enable secondary school pupils to spend a year studying in a school abroad with a grant from the European Commission. EFIL has subcontracted EEE-YFU, European Educational Exchanges, the umbrella organisation of Youth for Understanding in Europe. Over the next 20 months EFIL/AFS and EEE-YFU will work together on this project. In June 2008, EFIL will present its final report to the Commission.

The project consists of three consecutive parts: (1) an analysis of the context in 31 European countries, (2) drafting of recommendations on the practical implementation of the action, and (3) a pilot phase with intra-European exchanges of up to 500 secondary school pupils. The results of the project will be taken into account when designing the practical implementation of the new action.

This “**First Interim Report**” is the second report to the European Commission, following the “Initial Report” that was submitted on 01.12.2006. According to the terms of reference, the First Interim Report must include the following:

- full results of the analysis described in point 3.2.1 of the terms of reference;
- update on the overall progress achieved towards the results specified in section 2.3 of the terms of reference;
- problems encountered, solutions found or proposed, and impact on future work;
- detailed time schedule and methodology for the completion of the second phase of the project concerning the development of a framework for the pupil mobility action.

This First Interim Report focuses on the results of the study phase. By analysing existing documents, through questionnaires and through interviews with relevant actors (including public administrations dealing with formal education, pupil exchange organisations, National Agencies managing Socrates/Comenius, schools with experience in mobility, parent organisations, student organisations), an overview is drafted of the current European context in relation to individual pupil mobility at secondary school level. This overview refers to specific information concerning existing mobility schemes, as well as legal aspects and official documents linked to mobility and recognition issues.

On behalf of the Project Management Team, EFIL/AFS and EEE-YFU would like to thank the European Commission for the opportunity given to both organisations, to run this challenging project.

1. Methodology and organisation of the study

1.1 Objectives and scope of the Study

The study aims at a thorough analysis of the context in which secondary school mobility will take place.

The focus of the analysis was on:

- existing major pupil mobility schemes (duration of the exchange periods, age limits for participating pupils, selection and possible remuneration of host families, possible grant schemes for pupils, selection criteria for pupils; training and support services provided for pupils, schools and families) and any evaluations made thereof;
- legal issues related to the mobility of minors in each country;
- the recognition in different countries of study periods spent abroad;
- possible obstacles to pupil mobility and good practices and know-how in pupil mobility.

1.2 Organisation of the Study

EFIL manages the project centrally, putting in place a structure with a Project Management Team and a Project Steering Committee to ensure that the final products combine the most comprehensive technical input and the proper expertise in the area of educational mobility and intercultural learning.

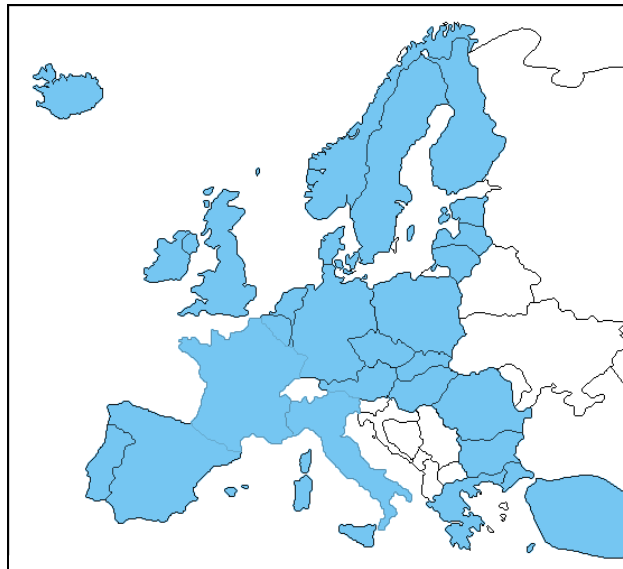
Project Management Team		
Name	Role in the Project	Position
Mr. Paul Claes	Project Director	EFIL Secretary General
Ms. Michela Bortoli	Project Coordinator Study	EFIL Project Officer
Mrs Frini Ezunkpe	Project Financial Coordinator	EFIL Executive Manager
Mr. Lennart D'hulst	Project Coordinator Pilot	EFIL Director Partner Development
Ms. Elizabeth Niland	Project Coordinator for EEE-YFU	EEE-YFU Office Co-ordinator

Project Steering Committee	
Name	Position
Ms. Joke M. Zwart	Chair person of the EEE-YFU Board
Mrs. Elisabeth Hardt	Board Member - AFS Germany
Mr. Roberto Ruffino	Secretary General Intercultura - AFS Italy
Mrs. Ina Winther Groth	International Advisor for CIRIUS - Danish National Agency

EFIL, main tenderer and Contractor, subcontracted to EEE-YFU, the Subcontractor, the work related to the study phase in 7 countries: Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

Project Partners:

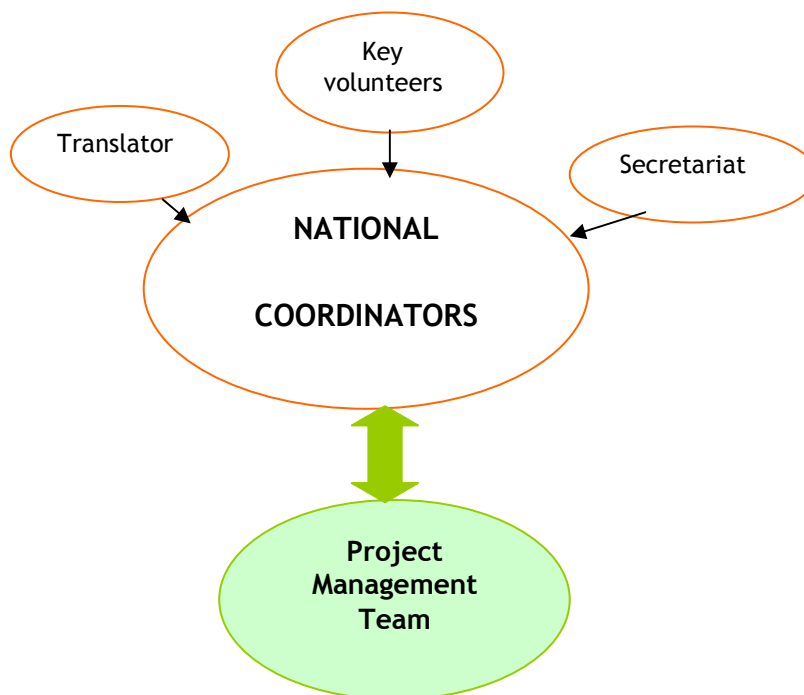
- AFS coordinated the study in 18 European countries: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and United Kingdom.
- As Subcontractor, YFU carried out the study in 7 countries: Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Romania.
- In Cyprus, Slovenia and Ireland, the study was carried out by some established bi-lateral contacts in these countries. In the remaining three countries, AFS organisations in a neighbouring country coordinated the study (AFS Switzerland for Liechtenstein, AFS Italy for Malta, and AFS Belgium French for Luxembourg).



In order to coordinate the project on national level, each Partner Organisation had appointed a National Coordinator. The National Coordinators were responsible for the research and the survey to be conducted at the national level and all follow-up that it required. They were the main liaison persons for the Project Management Team.

Role of the National Coordinators

- organise translations in the local language of the questionnaires for Schools and Mobility Providers (if needed);
- identify the key target groups (Mobility Providers, Schools, relevant actors in the school education sector);
- distribute questionnaires and all necessary information to the Mobility Providers and to the Schools;
- do research by analysing existing documents;
- conduct interviews with the relevant actors in the school education sector and write the official report;
- collect the questionnaires and interpret and compile the answers in the two Country Reports for respectively Mobility Providers and Schools;
- keep track of all sources (providers of information);
- ensure the quality of the research results (ensure that questionnaires are completed, information is collected, data are consistent, contradictions are cleared up before they reach the Project Management Team, etc.);
- ensure that deadlines are strictly adhered to by everyone involved;
- liaise with the national AFS or YFU organisations (where applicable), and with the Project Management Team and keep them informed of progress, difficulties, etc.



National Coordinators were given the following documents:

01	Instructions and Guidelines
02	Contact list of the Study Coordinators
03	Project Timetable
04	Glossary in English
05	Official Report
06	Questionnaire schools
07	Country Report Schools
08	Questionnaire Mobility Providers
09	Country Report Mobility Providers
10	Introduction letter EFIL
11	Introduction letter European Commission

1.3 Methodology

Drawing from EFIL's previous experience in implementing the study "Mobility of Secondary School Pupils and Recognition of Study Periods Abroad" in 20 out of the 31 countries mentioned in the tender, EFIL had opted for the following standards and methodology for the analysis of the current European context for pupil mobility.

- *Consistency of data collection*

The data collected in the 31 specified countries need to be comparable and easy to analyse. Therefore the common framework for the study has been developed with the help of leading experts and researchers in the field, the members of the Steering Committee.

Several questionnaires were used (containing multiple choice questions as well as open questions), as well as qualitative interviews and meetings (telephone and face-to-face), document analysis and internet search.

The questionnaires have been drafted by the Project Management Team and then analysed and commented upon by the Project Steering Committee at a meeting in Brussels in November 2006. Before the distribution of the questionnaires to the partners, the Project Management Team has consulted DG Education and Culture of the European Commission. Comments and suggestions from the Commission have been taken into account. After the approval of the Commission, the questionnaires were sent out to the defined target groups.

EFIL provided standard questionnaires in English and the National Coordinators had the responsibility to translate the questionnaires into the national language.

- *Consistency of respondents*

EFIL and EEE-YFU have ensured that the same target group of respondents was identified in each country.

Four main categories of relevant actors or key players in school education and in the field of mobility were the targets for the study.

- Relevant actors in the formal education sector: public administrations at national, regional and/or local level dealing with formal education and/or trans-national pupil mobility (Ministries of Education, Boards of Education, City Councils, National Agencies managing Socrates/Comenius);
- Schools that have already taken part in mobility schemes, as a sending or hosting institution. Among them are public and private schools, as well as academic and technical schools.
- Profit and non-profit mobility providers;
- Associations of relevance: parent associations, pupil associations, head teacher associations.

- *Data Return & Analysis and Evaluation of Data*

In each Partner Country a National Coordinator has been appointed. National Coordinators have compiled the data of their country using a template for the so-called "Official Report" and the "Country Reports".

The Project Management Team has compiled empirical data and carried out the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the final findings in close cooperation with the Project Steering Committee.

An overview:

Relevant actors in the formal education sector: ‘Official Report’

Through research, analysis of documents and interviews with relevant actors, the National Coordinators collected information needed for an overview of the context in their country regarding individual pupil mobility.

The National Co-ordinator has set up one or several meeting(s)/interview(s) with the relevant actors in the school education sector:

0. office or department responsible for secondary school mobility programmes (national level or federal/regional level if applicable).
1. office or department responsible for the international dimension of school education (national level or federal/regional level if applicable).
2. National Agencies.

The questionnaire/document called ‘Official Report’ contained a list of questions regarding issues to be discussed during these interviews and/or meetings with the target group. The questionnaire served as a guideline for the National Coordinator during the interviews. Filling out the report was the responsibility of the National Coordinator.

Profit and non-profit Mobility Providers: questionnaire ‘Mobility Providers’ and ‘Country Report Mobility Providers’

National Coordinators were asked to target as many Mobility Providers as possible, who have operated on long term mobility schemes (three months or more). This includes AFS and YFU organisations.

Questionnaires were distributed (after translation, if needed). An overview/compilation of all questionnaires returned, was presented in the ‘Country Report Mobility Providers’ by the National Coordinators.

Schools: questionnaire ‘Schools’ and ‘Country Report Schools’

In order to obtain relevant information, only schools with experience in long term individual pupil mobility were contacted. It was recommended to include different types of schools: public and private, vocational (technical) and general, etc.

As the aim of the survey was not to collect statistics on mobility, there was no need to include a large sample of schools or to cover the country completely by including all possible regions. National Coordinators were asked to target specific schools that can provide useful information, and were told to aim for the following numbers (based on population numbers).

Country	Schools	Country	Schools
Austria	10	Latvia	5
Belgium Flanders	10	Liechtenstein	5
Belgium French	10	Lithuania	5
Bulgaria	10	Luxembourg	5
Cyprus	5	Malta	5
Czech Republic	15	Netherlands	15
Denmark	10	Norway	5
Estonia	5	Poland	20
Finland	10	Portugal	15
France	20	Romania	20
Germany	20	Slovakia	10
Greece	15	Slovenia	5
Hungary	15	Spain	20
Iceland	5	Sweden	10
Ireland	5	Turkey	20
Italy	20	United Kingdom	20

Questionnaires were distributed (after translation, if needed). An overview/compilation of all questionnaires returned, was presented in the ‘Country Report Schools’ by the National Co-ordinators.

1.4 Study phase work plan

Action	Date
Translation of the questionnaires using the template for on-line completion	28.11 - 01.12.2006
Arrange an appointment with the relevant actors in the school education sector for the Official Report	28.11 - 05.12.2006
Distribute the questionnaires to the schools and the Mobility Providers and set internal deadlines	01.12.2006
Communicate to the Project Management Team : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the dates set for the meetings/interviews - the list of Mobility Providers contacted - the list of Schools contacted 	by 08.12.2006
FIRST UPDATE REPORT to the Project Management Team	15.12.2006
Hold meetings and conduct interviews with relevant actors in the school education sector	December 2006
Closely monitor the distribution and the return of questionnaires	Ongoing
Send to the Project Management Team the Official Report Send SECOND UPDATE REPORT	by 29.12.2006
Start compiling the data from the questionnaires in the 'Country Report Mobility Providers' and 'Country Report Schools'	According to internal time tables
Send to the Project Management Team the 'Country Report Mobility Providers' and the 'Country Report Schools'	by 15.01.2007

2. Executive Summary and summarised report of findings

Executive Summary

Between December 2006 and February 2007, the European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL) with the assistance of EEE-Youth for Understanding, undertook a study in 31 countries on existing major pupil mobility schemes and any evaluations made thereof; legal issues related to the mobility of minors; the recognition in different countries of study periods spent abroad and possible obstacles to pupil mobility.

Regulatory Frameworks affecting pupil mobility

For outgoing pupils, very few restrictions exist on the interruption of a school year. Specific legislation dealing with the certification of studies taken abroad has been developed fairly recently and bilateral or multilateral agreements exist only in rare cases. Study periods abroad may be recognised even in the absence of proper legislation. Schools have great freedom in deciding whether pupils should be allowed to interrupt their schooling in order to participate in an exchange programme.

Several governments encourage the mobility, notably through governments grants made available to pupils that undertake successful studies abroad.

From our respondents we found that, aside from intangible and practical aspects such as the importance of the last year of studies, the incompatibility of the curriculum between the sending and the hosting school is seen as one of the main obstacles to proper recognition. This is followed by the legal vacuum on matters of recognition.

For incoming pupils, specific regulations dealing with the certification of foreign pupils who spent up to one school year in the country are rare, although it is always possible to obtain certification of some kind. While theoretically possible in 18 out of 31 countries, obtaining a proper diploma remains difficult. Europass remains the best “informal” option to record study abroad periods, but has been used very little outside the official EU mobility programmes.

All countries welcome foreign pupils into their schools but are rightfully concerned about safeguarding their borders and about protecting young people under the age of 18. In terms of visas and residence permits, the requirements are minimal for pupils from the EU or Schengen countries. For non-EU citizens wishing to spend more than 3 months in a country, visas and/or residence permits are mandatory. Most pupils undertaking study abroad programmes during their secondary schooling are minors and fall under special legal protection.

Experience of schools with mobility projects

For outgoing pupils, most schools encourage study abroad programmes and rely on the assistance of specialised exchange providers to organise it. The majority of the schools do not consider a study abroad programme as presenting any type of difficulty, except perhaps the difference in curricula. The majority of schools did not feel as though pupils having studied abroad faced particular challenges in their re-integration.

For incoming pupils, the hosting schools judged both the lack of proficiency in the language and the different levels of knowledge in specific subject matters as the major obstacles in the integration of the foreign pupil in the hosting school. Schools often develop their own mentoring system to help in the hosted pupil's integration.

On the subject of collaboration between schools, the schools would welcome exchanges of information on the school system, the grades and the foreign pupil's

course programme at home. More than a third also welcomes regular contacts between the schools during the exchange.

According to the schools, the major advantage provided by private associations organising pupil exchanges is the know-how and the expertise. Schools organising their own mobility do so for programmes of shorter duration and it appears that schools work primarily on a bilateral level and very much within school partnerships.

When going on an exchange, most pupils are between 15-19 year old. According to the schools, popular European destinations of pupils are: Germany, United Kingdom, France and Italy. In terms of hosting, most countries host from: Germany, Italy, Belgium, Finland, Norway and France.

Experience of Mobility Providers

Experienced mobility providers offer primarily year-long, multilateral study programmes. They usually select both the participants and the host families based on a number of criteria. Support to pupils, families and schools during the exchange are the major part of the mobility provider's tasks: aside from assuming the risks associated with the exchange of minors, all of them offer ongoing mentoring support and structured training opportunities to outgoing and incoming pupils, families and, more rarely schools at different times during the lifecycle of the programme. They propose specific (and often mandatory) insurance.

In the absence of a proper implementation of the European Quality Charter for Mobility, no specific accreditation system for mobility providers exists, although several adhere to a quality charter of their own.

Research and Statistics

Very few statistics exist. The most prolific research on the subject of pupil exchanges has been published in Germany, the European country with perhaps the most mobile pupils. The most common findings of relevance to the individual mobility programme is that life and socialisation outside of school is the Achilles heel of successful exchanges and that preparations and orientations as well as an independent (neutral) mentoring system to support the hosted pupils are a key success factor in exchanges.

Other stakeholders

The European Secondary Heads Association (ESHA), the European Parents Association (EPA) and the Organising Bureau of Secondary School Student Unions (OBESSU) all support the individual mobility of pupils even though each federation sees slightly different objectives in the programme. While ESHA focuses on the European idea and European citizenship and the pupil's development, EPA underlines the learning of foreign languages and the cultural experience as the main added value for pupils.

ESHA, while acknowledging the benefits of year-long exchanges also sees the academic benefit of three-month exchanges.

Summarised Report of Findings

The following report summarily reports the enquiries made in 31 European countries on the state of mobility. The responses have been provided by persons in charge of pupil mobility issues at national (and/or regional) level and aim at providing an overview of the context in which individual pupil mobility takes place.

The report is articulated around different aspects:

- A. **General Legislative Framework:** the official framework related to the mobility of individual pupils, and in particular the legal and academic implications of such mobility;
- B. **Experience of the schools** that have taken part in mobility projects or organised such mobility themselves;
- C. **Experience of mobility providers;**
- D. **Research and statistics;**
- E. **Stakeholders: European Associations.**

Methodological aspects are the subject of the previous chapter.

The supporting documentation, including the reports per country (official report on legislation, country report on mobility providers, country report on schools) for each of the 31 European countries involved in the study, as well as lists with the names of all contacted officials, and the schools and mobility providers who responded to the questionnaires, are to be found in annex.

A. General Legislative Framework

A.1. Sources

In the 31 countries, we have relied on official sources to gather information related to regulatory aspects of the individual mobility of minors. We have sought information on:

- the legal framework, including recognition aspects;
- cross-border mobility within Europe in practice;
- issues of risk management (child protection); and
- logistical aspects such as school schedules, etc.

Our sources include the Ministries of Education, Ministries of Youth, Ministries of Arts and Culture, the National Agencies and educational foundations. In Germany, where each federal state has its own school laws, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs has provided most of the official input.

A.2. Mobility and Recognition of Study Periods Abroad

A.2.1. For outgoing pupils

A.2.1.1. Regulatory Framework

With respect to pupils wishing to spend part of their studies abroad, the following has been explored:

- How is the interruption of a school year regulated and by whom, with references to administrative or legal frameworks
- How does the recognition of study periods abroad work in practice?

A.2.1.1.1. Interruption of schooling at home

None of the governments of the 31 European countries that have been studied prohibits the interruption of a school year. In several countries, the schools decide on this independently and generally favourably. A majority of them poses no conditions at all for mobility to take place and those that do, do so for academic reasons, making sure that the pupils catch up all their course work.

In most countries, no particular legal framework applies to the exchange of pupils so that the general educational regulatory framework would apply. The latter confer a certain degree of autonomy to the schools. They are also often mute on the particularity of temporary studies abroad, which means that in most countries the schools have quite some leverage in deciding about individual cases. In Greece, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden and the UK, the pupils may decide independently whether they wish to study abroad. In some countries, either the timing of the study abroad programme (early in the school year in Austria, Belgium-French and Luxembourg), the level at which the pupil undertakes his studies abroad (Luxembourg, German States), the length (2 weeks- the traditional Comenius exchange up to a trimester only in the French-Speaking Community of Belgium, Poland and Portugal) or the curricula

followed abroad (Latvia, Romania) conditions the interruption and the academic reintegration of the pupil.

Other countries restrict the possibility of leaving for a study abroad programme (France), but leaving nevertheless schools some flexibility in organising exchanges.

A.2.1.1.2. Recognition of study periods taken abroad

Specific legislative measures have only been initiated in the last 12 years. Austria, Hungary and Italy are the only three countries that address the unique situation of both pupils returning from study abroad programmes and foreign pupils temporarily studying in their countries.

Only Dutch, Irish and UK pupils are denied the opportunity to have their studies abroad recognised. All other countries either recognise them by law or have practical provisions that will allow pupils to obtain equivalencies.

Austria, the German states, Hungary, Italy, Spain and Turkey have passed laws specifically addressing the recognition of exchange periods undertaken by pupils during their normal schooling at home. Bilateral agreements on recognition of studies undertaken within certain programmes, such as the one between France and Germany or multilateral ones, such as the Nordic Agreement on Pupil Mobility are not very common.

Where specific legislation addressing the situation of exchange pupils exists, it is relatively recent. The earliest legislative initiative dates from 1994 (Italy) and the most recent from last year, with plans to develop one in Latvia in 2007-2008. In some countries there is no legislation in the pipeline because there has been no practice or need for it (for example Liechtenstein, Lithuania and Cyprus), while others have a body of legislation but no real experience yet on how it will work in practice (for example Bulgaria).

In half of the European countries assessed for this study, conditional recognition of periods of 3 months or more spent in another educational system exist. In 10 more countries, such recognition is enshrined in official legislation. In most cases, the responsibility lies with the school officials. This is the case for the Czech Republic, the Flemish-Speaking community of Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, in several German Länder, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden. Only the Dutch, Irish and UK educational systems, while not discouraging mobility, do not certify studies abroad.

Often, legislation has been enacted to deal with the certification of studies taken abroad - more rarely does it deal with rules or guidelines on certifying studies that foreigners may have taken in the country. Two examples worth noting are Austria and Italy. Both of these countries have specifically addressed the unique situation of exchange pupils who spend limited periods of time studying in another country, with the express wish to reintegrate their own class back home. Not only do these regulations deal with the situation of their own pupils, but address the status of foreign pupils and the certification of their study periods in one of the local schools.

Italy was the first European country to adopt a decree on the accreditation of limited periods of study undertaken by national pupils. The Italian legislation provides for a readmission into the Italian school of any pupil and the recognition of foreign school reports. The legislative Decree n° 297 of 16 April 1994, Article 192 § 3B applies both ways and foresees contacts between the sending and the hosting school in order to assess the curriculum and the performance of the student.

The 1998 amendment of the **Austrian School Instruction Act** (Schulunterrichtsgesetz) SchUG § 25 (9) automatically

recognises the certified attendance of 5 months to one year as being equivalent to the same period spent at home.

This past year, the **German** the Standing Conference of Ministries for Cultural Affairs (KMK) adopted a new agreement on "gymnasium upper class arrangements". The agreement provides for the recognition of studying abroad during the school time for up to one year. The agreement is based on the unanimity of all states and is binding for all states. Under this agreement, a study period abroad for up to one year can be calculated into the school time, providing corresponding credits can be proven and it can be expected that the student can and will successfully continue with his/her education.

Hungary, through a 2001 amendment to its School Education Act, regulates the recognition of foreign certificates and degrees obtained abroad - including those obtained thanks to a study abroad programme of limited duration.

Spain has enacted special legislation dealing with school exchanges taking place within the EU and **Turkey's** equivalency regulation is part of a wider series of legislation dealing with stays abroad. In both cases, recognition is facilitated if arrangements have been made with the school at home prior to the exchange.

Bilateral agreements between countries, such as the one signed between France and Germany help in ensuring full recognition. A case in point would be the government-sponsored exchange (the Franco-German Youth Office *Voltaire* and *Brigitte Sauzey* programmes) which are fully recognised. Next to that, French students attending other study programmes abroad have to respect special recognition procedures in order to have their learning recognised. In Bulgaria, bilateral agreements with several countries simplify an otherwise cumbersome process.

Noteworthy too are the initiatives taken by several Scandinavian countries, where positive national policies promote exchange programmes in different ways.

The Scandinavian countries lead the example in promoting cross-border mobility of pupils.

The Nordic Agreement of pupil mobility set up by the Nordic Council since 1993 gives Nordic citizens the right to choose to study in another Nordic country at upper secondary level without any restrictions and full recognition of shorter study periods in another Nordic country.

Through Lånekassen, the **Norwegian** State Educational Loan Fund, the Norwegian government has managed to link successful study abroad programmes to the availability of government scholarships (see further under fiscal measures). **Denmark** also proposes grants to pupils wishing to undertake their studies abroad (see further below).

Another noteworthy example is provided by the **Finnish** National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools, which includes cross-curricular themes of social significance dealing

with issues concerning the way of life as a whole. Finnish schools will thus recognise part of foreign study periods in terms of intercultural learning and language learning.

References to regulations, legislations, guidelines or administrative circulars that deal with the certification of schooling abroad with a duration of up to one year are provided as part of the individual country profiles.

In several countries, no specific legal framework exists.

In the following countries, no specific legal framework exists: Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia (but one is being drafted), Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Romania, Slovenia, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom. However, this does not mean that exchange periods are not recognised, even unconditionally, as for example in Slovenia.

A.2.1.1.3. Fiscal Measures

Several governments encourage their pupil's successful mobility periods through fiscal measures.

As highlighted above, the **Norwegian** Lånekassen provides grants and loans to pupils in upper secondary schools, to university and to college students who successfully complete a year of study abroad. Most Norwegian students finance their studies through grants and loans from this Fund. The loans are meant to cover the costs of studying in Norway, and the objective is to give everyone in Norway equal rights to education. Since June 1999, secondary school pupils who participate in a long-term mobility scheme and get their year recognised as a valid one in Norway have been eligible for a government scholarship from the Lånekassen. The scholarship consists of two parts: a basic scholarship and a travel scholarship. The total sum per participant is approximately 35,000 NOK (approximately € 4,190).

In **Sweden**, special resources are allocated to encourage pupils in vocational training to spent time abroad on work placement training (APU). Another initiative is the "One Year Programme" for individual pupil mobility in which participants can keep their upper secondary student aid during their study periods in specific countries.

In **Denmark**, the "School Year Abroad" grant system provides financial support to pupils wishing to pursue part of their studies abroad. A grant of 1,350 Euro encourages youngsters "to strengthen their professional, personal and intercultural competencies through an exchange programme abroad".

In the Federal State of the Free City of **Hamburg**, parents can apply for additional financial support if their child spends time studying abroad. Hamburg has established that a pupil outside the educational system saves costs for the state - the money saved should nevertheless benefit the pupil, hence the grant. The grant depends on the income of the family and does not exceed 2.900 Euro per school year spent abroad.

In virtually all countries, natural parents continue

In 25 of the countries studied, the natural parents will continue to receive child benefits during the stay abroad of

to receive child allowances while their child is abroad.

their child. This is because the entitlement is based on the age of the youngster, whether he/she is at home or not. No child support is paid in Bulgaria, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Poland and Turkey.

A.2.1.2. Authority deciding on periods of study abroad and their recognition

Schools have great freedom to decide on whether to allow a pupil to participate in an exchange programme. In most cases, a regulatory framework set the conditions that the schools have to respect.

The authority deciding on a year abroad is primarily the principals or school officials. In 16 countries, the schools have complete freedom to decide and in another 10 countries, schools may decide within the regulatory framework set at federal level. Only in 6 countries does the government play an important role, primarily ensuring equivalency. These 6 countries/regions are either of a smaller size (Belgium-French, Cyprus and Liechtenstein) or located in former centralised government structures such as Bulgaria, Romania or Poland.

In most countries, it is also the schools that have the authority to decide at what level a pupil should re-integrate school when he returns from an exchange programme.

A.2.1.3. Mobility in practice

Greece and Slovenia do not impose further conditions and in the remaining 30 countries more than half recommend appropriate consultations between the pupil and the home school. The most restrictive country would be Turkey.

In many countries, whether regulatory conditions or not exist, most pupils need to prove their ability to integrate their academic level back home. Where studies abroad are recognised, in over half of the countries it is expected that the pupils make appropriate arrangements with his/her home school before embarking on the exchange. This safeguard guarantees in some cases that recognition will not fail, particularly since schools hold some authority in this case (specifically the Flemish-speaking community of Belgium, Cyprus, Iceland, Luxembourg and Spain (for shorter periods).

This recommendation is accompanied or not by additional conditions, such as minimum (for example Greece, Spain and Poland) and maximum length of stays and level at which the exchange period takes place (for Austria, the French-speaking community of Belgium, Luxembourg, Norway and Portugal). The French-speaking community of Belgium, Malta and Norway also foresee that pupils having studied abroad for a temporary period sit their exams with the remaining classmates in order to re-integrate their class.

In the remaining cases, the pupil has to either provide proof that he/she successfully passed the courses abroad (in the German Länder (except Saxony), Latvia, Liechtenstein and Turkey) and/or has to pass entry exams when returning to his home school (Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Turkey). The two extremes would be Turkey, who imposes several academic hurdles to returning pupils and Greece and Slovenia, neither of which imposes any.

A.2.1.4. Obstacles to educational mobility

Aside from intangible and practical aspects such as the importance of the last year of studies, the incompatibility of the curriculum between the sending and the hosting school is seen as one of the main obstacles to proper recognition. This is followed by the legal vacuum on matters of recognition.

Incompatibility of curricula is given as the main reason as to why the recognition of study periods abroad is difficult. This is followed by the perceived legal vacuum. While there may be no absolute restrictions, the importance of the last school year in determining higher education choices, as is the case in Sweden (qualifying grades on a certain number of modules), Finland and Italy (matriculation exams), France (Bac), Germany (Abitur), Spain (Selectividad) discourages pupils from studying abroad.

A.2.2. For incoming pupils

With respect to foreign pupils wishing to study in the country for a limited period of time, we have explored:

- How the presence of hosted pupils is regulated and by whom
- What kind of certification is provided to hosted pupils and how it works in practice

A.2.2.1. Regulatory Framework

Several arms of the governments are concerned when it comes to hosting foreign pupils. The countries are concerned about safeguarding their borders, but also about protecting minors and, to a much lesser degree, ensuring the appropriate recognition of the studies that they have followed in the host country.

In the case of incoming pupils, the regulatory framework becomes more complex. Not only are the Ministries dealing with Education or Culture, but also the Ministry of the Interior and Youth that may have a say. In almost all countries, it is thus the national authorities (in Belgium, the regional and in Germany, the individual states) that are in charge of the legal framework regarding the long-term mobility of pupils. In the absence of a special regulatory set-up, the Danish, Slovak, Slovenian and Swedish schools decide themselves on the admission of foreign pupils.

A.2.2.1.1. Visa and Residence permits

For pupils from the EU or Schengen countries, the requirements are minimal. For non-EU citizens wishing to spend more than 3 months in a country, visas and/or residence permits are mandatory.

The mobility providers act as guarantor/tutor vis-à-vis the authorities in

In general, pupils coming from a EU country merely have to register themselves with locally designated authorities if they intend to stay for more than 3 months. This is the case for Austria, Finland, Germany, Spain and Sweden. A residence permit (called “Residence Card” by now in some countries) will sometimes trigger the entitlement of a number of social services, as is the case in Denmark. In Italy, a pupil wishing to study in Italy is required to obtain a residence permit, whether he is EU citizen or not. For non-EU citizens, wishing to stay more than 3 months, requirements may include obtaining a visa, for which a number of supporting documents have to be provided:

- Passport or other form of ID

order to obtain visa and residence permits.

- Parental consent for pupils under 18 years of age
- Proof of purpose of the stay (for example school registration)
- Proof of financial independence and appropriate health coverage

Mobility providers play a big role in the obtention of the appropriate documentation and in the successful delivery of a visa or residence permit. On the sending side, the mobility provider ensures that the proper documentation is submitted to the appropriate authorities in a timely fashion. On the hosting side, the mobility providers act as the guarantor/tutor of the exchange pupil, certifying suitable levels of financial independence, proper accommodation arrangements, health insurance and takes civil and penal responsibility for the minor.

Noteworthy is the **German** example of dealing with visa and residence permits for minors. The so-called “Schweigefristverfahren” forces foreign consulates to issue visas for students hosted by the four major non-profit exchange organisations if the authorities in Germany do not object within a short period of time to the requested visas. This allows for a faster and reliable process than is usually observed.

A.2.2.1.2. Protection of Minors

The legal age in all European countries surveyed is 18. Exchange pupils are minors when they embark on an exchange programme and fall under the protection frameworks that exist in the various hosting countries.

In all European countries, laws protect the right of children and young people under 18. Most pupils undertaking study abroad programmes during their secondary schooling are younger and fall under the legal protection of acts protecting minors (which includes children - generally under 14 - and young people - 14 to 18).

The protection afforded to minors will often deal with a number of aspects such as media access, media use, protection against sexual misconduct and prohibitions (access to pubs, gambling houses, etc. after certain hours). In some countries a distinction is being made between nationals and foreign minors.

A.2.2.1.3. Criminal Responsibility of Minors

The age of at which a young person becomes criminally responsible lies, on average, around 14 to 15.

The age at which a young person may be prosecuted for crimes can be as young as 10, but in most European countries there is a distinction between children and juveniles and the minimal age tends to be 14/15. Special prosecution rules, courts, corrective measures (for example of an educational nature) or custody rules apply in most cases.

A.2.2.1.4. *The recognition of studies undertaken*

Specific regulations dealing with the certification of foreign studies of up to one school year in the country are rare.

In most countries, the basic legal frameworks applying to school education also apply when it comes to the certification of study abroad programmes of up to one year. These general acts on national education will address issues of certification for pupils enrolling into national schools for longer periods than those traditionally undertaken by exchange students.

This means that legislation dealing specifically with the case of young people on exchange programmes is rare. There are some notable exceptions: Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Italy, Spain (with geographic limitations) and Turkey provide the best example of specialised frameworks for exchange pupils. Slovakia has a special legislation dealing with the acceptance of foreign pupils in its schools, but remains mute on the subject of recognition.

In other cases, pupils are assimilated to national pupils and may receive a diploma under the same conditions as nationals (Greece, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden and the UK).

While theoretically possible in 18 out of 31 countries, obtaining a proper diploma remains difficult.

When it comes to the official certification for the studies attended, 6 countries report that this is impossible. Where in theory it is possible, most countries report that in practice it is not feasible. There are several reasons that explain this:

- Some countries only deliver a proper diploma to pupils who have attended the entire schooling period in the country (for example Bulgaria and Spain) or a certain number of classes teaching the national language (Finland)
- Some countries require either a proficiency in a particular curricula, the language or in other national cultural matters such as literature that it is virtually impossible to pass (Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Sweden)
- In some countries, the certification process for the final diploma takes place over more than two semesters, making it impossible for exchange students to obtain it (Germany)
- Often, pupils are not placed in the grades that would allow them to pass the final exams (The Netherlands, Germany)

However, all countries will provide a certification of some kind: of attendance, the courses attended or passed.

The schools will usually attest the subjects studied and/or the marks obtained (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia) or at the least a certificate of attendance. In half of the countries the decision on what to deliver is left up to the school - this means that in even more countries one will obtain a certificate of some kind. It is up to the pupil to obtain proper accreditation for the courses passed once he

returns home.

Europass remains the best “informal” option to highlight study abroad periods, but has been used very little outside the official EU mobility programmes.

All countries, with the exception of Bulgaria, Poland, The Netherlands and Turkey have introduced the use of EUROPASS. At the moment, this would have to be considered as the most “pan-European” form of informal recognition offered to most European pupils wishing to benefit from some form of substantiation of their studies abroad.

A.2.2.1.5. Fiscal Measures

No child allowance is paid for hosted pupils and there are no tax breaks for taking a foreign pupil into one’s home.

Tax deductibility for hosted pupils is not possible, except (theoretically) in the Flemish Community of Belgium and France. In all other countries, the families cannot declare an additional family member on their annual tax declaration and do not receive social security benefits (child allowance) for the hosted pupil.

A.2.2.2. Authorities deciding on foreign pupils' attendance of local schools

All countries welcome foreign pupils into their schools.

To the question of whether it is possible to undertake studies of limited duration, all countries responded positively and pupils may do so virtually at any grade level. Obviously, in some countries, the school principals have a say in this - and even if only three countries highlighted this fact, we think that this applies probably in more cases. Some countries specifically pointed out that the decision to host a pupil could have financial implications for the school, as is the case in Belgium where foreign pupils are considered as "free" pupils for which the school does not receive operating subsidies. In Bulgaria, the Minister of Education may waive the tuition of a foreign pupil.

In the majority of cases, the schools decide in accordance with the laws set by the state.

Except for Cyprus, Greece, Liechtenstein, Malta, Poland, Romania and the United Kingdom, where the national or regional authorities determine whether a foreign pupil may or may not attend a local school, in the majority of the countries it is the school that decides, sometimes in agreement with regional or local authorities (municipalities) or in accordance with the laws set by the state. Again, the situation is particular in France and in the United Kingdom, where no specific regulation on the presence of foreign exchange students exists: once they are admitted into the country they become children entitled to an education and are treated the same as any other school pupil.

Technically, exchange students may attend any grade in virtually all European countries, but schools usually orient the pupils according to age and course load.

Exchange students may attend any grade (except in Austria, where exchange students are placed in grades 9 to 11 and only exceptionally in grade 12). In most cases, the schools will determine the grade according to the age of the pupil but also the language proficiency and the course load. For example, German schools will avoid placing pupils in the qualification phase grades (lasting two years), judged too demanding and neither providing a fixed schedule nor a permanent peer group.

A.3. Practical aspects of school organisation

Semester-based schooling prevails.

Two thirds of European schools are organised on the basis of semesters.

The majority of schools start early September and end mid- to end of June.

The school calendars are mostly decided at national level (except, where appropriate, as in Belgium, Germany and Spain). Italy has a hybrid system (national/regional). Almost two thirds of the European schools start in the weeks 36-37 and one third of the European schools end in week 26 and another third during the preceding two weeks. This means that the majority of schools start early September and end mid- to end of June

Pupils range in age from 10 to 20.

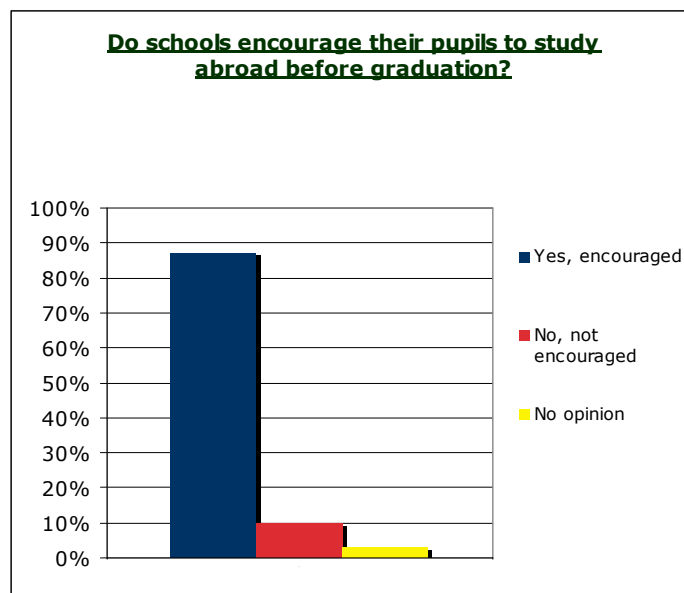
Pupils start secondary education between 10 and 16 and finish between 18 and 20. In Estonia, Iceland, Sweden and the United Kingdom, schooling is only compulsory until the age of 16.

B. Experience of the schools

B.1. Sources

This section concerns the experiences that schools have made with educational exchange programmes. We have had 324 responses from the 31 countries, which makes our sample quite small. The idea was to obtain useful information from schools that are known to have sent pupils abroad and/or hosted pupils from abroad. Please note that some schools have confused very short periods of mobility (for example typical Comenius exchanges) and long-term exchanges, which make the responses slightly unreliable. We did not obtain any responses from Maltese schools.

B.2. Mobility organised by external organisations



The following section focuses on the mobility of pupils organised through external organisations. The majority of schools contacted for this survey used the services of such organisations. For a description of the main mobility providers, please see section C. below.

Out of all the schools that responded to our questionnaire, only 12% have experience in organising their own long-term mobility. 60% have had pupils that have undertaken periods of study abroad and almost 70% of

them have hosted pupils on an exchange programme in the past.

To the question of whether the schools generally encourage pupils to study abroad before their graduation, less than 10% responded negatively and all of them would welcome foreign pupils in their schools.

B.2.1. Outgoing pupils

Most schools participating in mobility projects have relied on the know-how and expertise of 17 organisations, of which the non-profit exchange organisations were the most popular. A total of 187 schools have reported having experience with sending pupils abroad for a total of 1.563 pupils.

B.2.1.1. Length of exchanges

Pupils overwhelmingly chose to study abroad for the duration of one year, followed by programmes abroad of 3 months. Out of the 1.563 pupils, 65% went on a year-long programme, $\frac{1}{4}$ on a trimester exchange and 10% on a semester exchange.

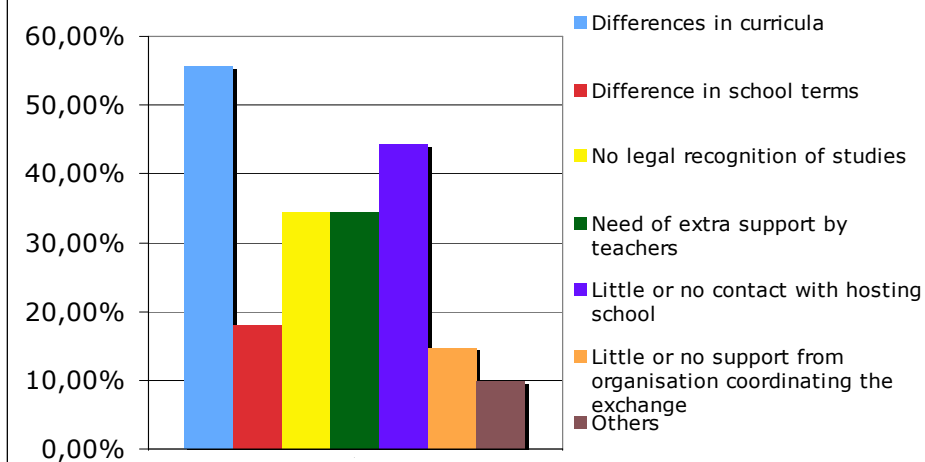
B.2.1.2. Obstacles and difficulties encountered

Of the schools that had experience in sending pupils abroad, 67% felt that the experience had not presented any obstacles. 29% identified obstacles in the following order of importance.

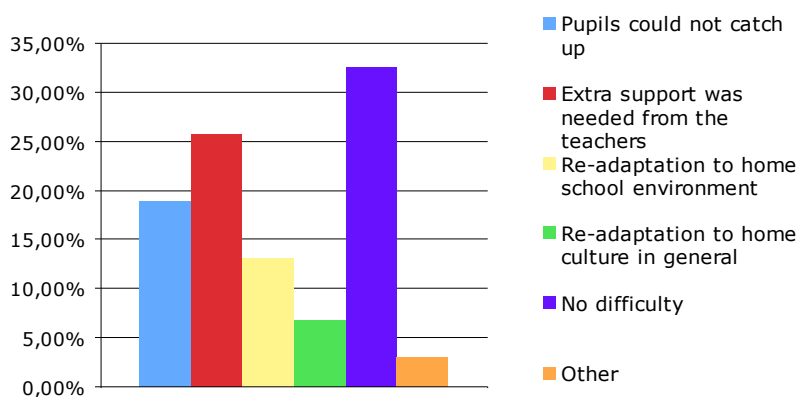
The majority of respondent s felt that no particular difficulties were faced by the schools when the students came back to continue their schooling. 1/5 of the schools felt

that the pupils had difficulties in catching up subject matters, and extra support was needed from the teachers. Re-adaptation to the home school environment was also identified as a difficulty.

Main obstacles faced by pupils studying abroad

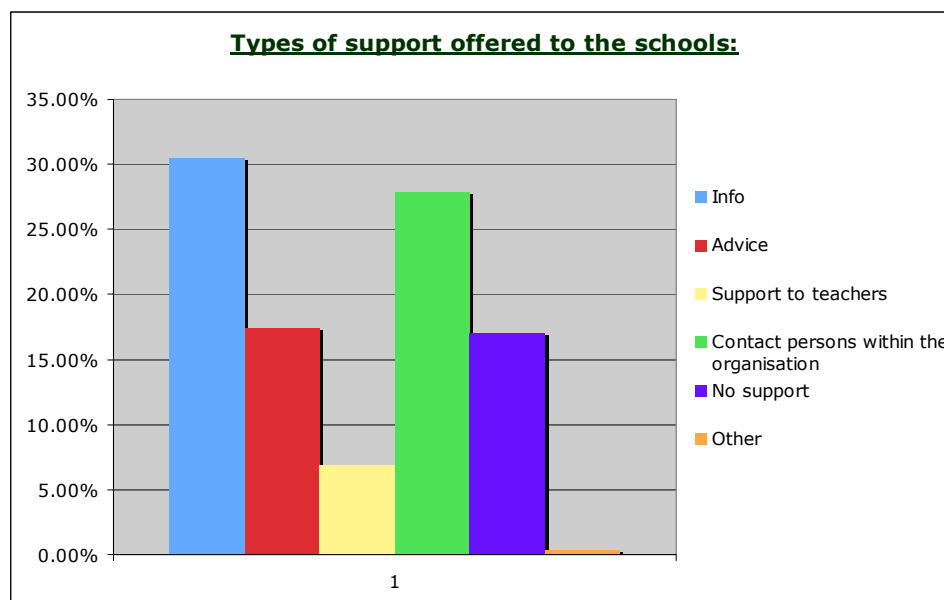


Difficulties faced by pupils re-integrating their schools after their exchange



B.2.1.3. Services provided by external organisations

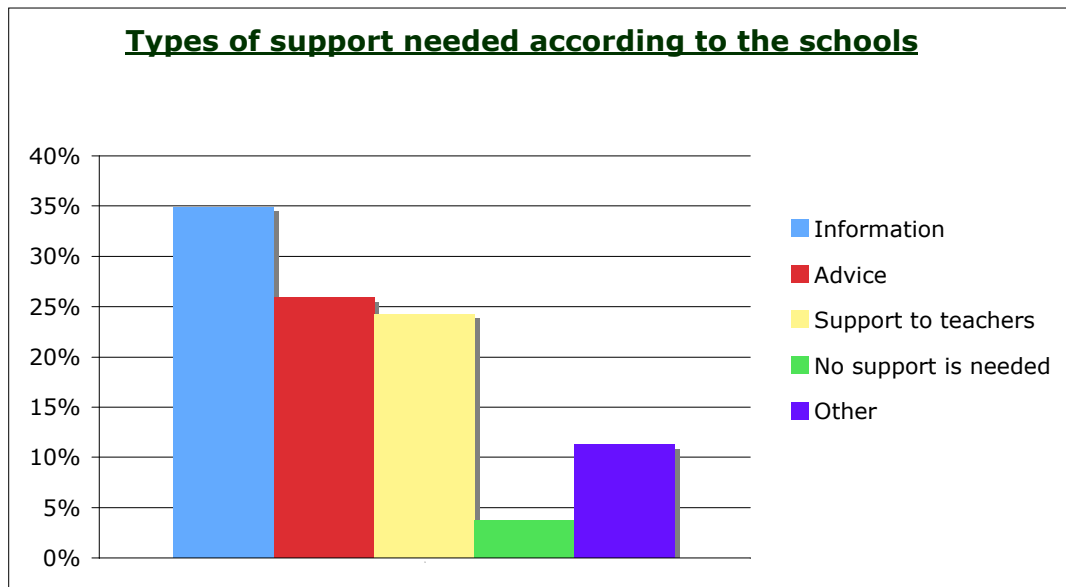
According to the schools sending pupils abroad with the help of mobility providers, the associations or companies organising the exchanges mostly provide know-how, information and expertise as well as a direct personal contact person. Another, less widely proposed service was advice on how to support the outgoing pupils. More than one fourth of the respondents stated that the mobility providers gave no support and less than half judged the service to have been sufficient.



According to the schools, the mobility providers have provided the right services, since they list know-how, information and expertise as the most important support issue. Advice on how to give support to the outgoing pupils and support to the teachers and the school upon the return of the pupils were also identified as relevant support issues. Other support needs of an academic and an administrative nature were also identified: the need to exchange information about the whereabouts of the students (school, contact person in that school, curricula followed, grade system, etc.). Furthermore, some schools felt that extra support was needed to help students learn the language of the hosting country as well as special assistance in math and science classes.

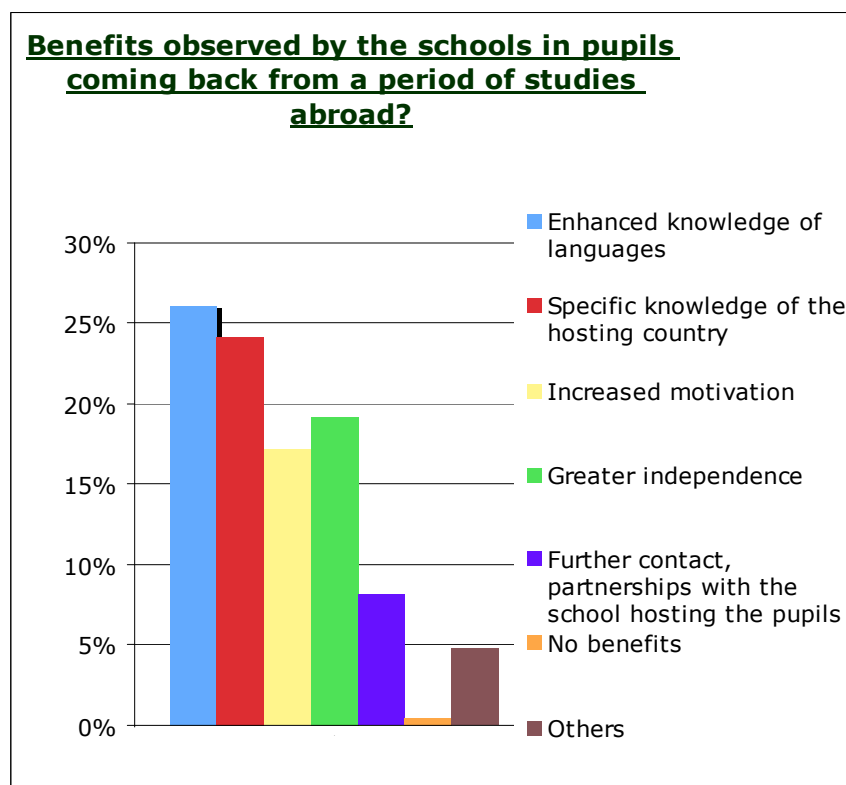
B.2.1.4. Cooperation between sending and hosting schools

In terms of cooperation between sending and hosting schools, the schools that have pupils abroad would foremost like to exchange information with their partner schools on school systems and grades being used as well as the curriculum of the hosting school. Regular contacts are also considered important by almost half of the respondents. Only 10% of the respondents felt that co-operations among schools exchanging pupils was irrelevant.



B.2.1.5. Benefits of a study period spent abroad

When it came to describing the benefits of a study period abroad, the schools enthusiastically reported, adding many comments on benefits not already suggested in the questionnaire. The schools identified other benefits, primarily centred on the pupil: self-confidence, assertiveness, appreciation of what they have back home, leadership skills, etc.



B.2.2. Incoming Pupils

Of all the schools that answered the questionnaire, 224 had past experience in hosting foreign pupils.

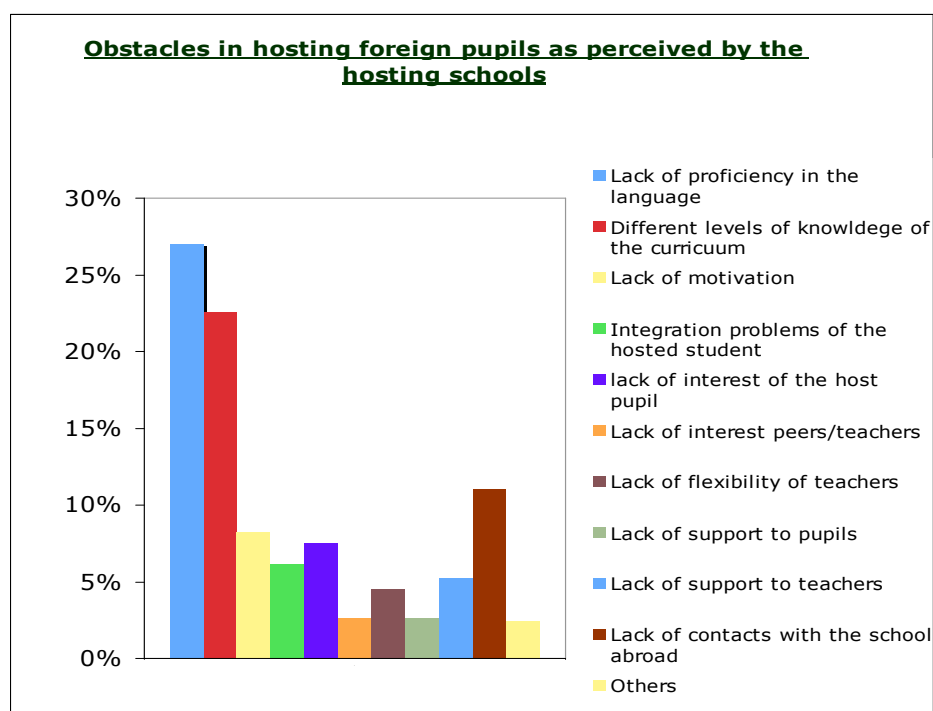
From a financial point of view, foreign pupils are assimilated to national pupils when it comes to school subsidies. This means that the bulk of the hosted students are considered the same as the national pupils in the school. Less than a quarter of them do not consider the foreign student as a regular student. Mobility providers will generally cover the costs associated with school attendance: books, excursions and other extra-curricular activities.

B.2.2.1. Recognition of study periods spent at hosting school

Only slightly over half of the schools hosting foreign pupils deliver a certificate of some kind. This is in most cases a certificate of attendance, a statement of the courses followed and grades obtained or an academic record or similar documents.

B.2.2.2. Obstacles and difficulties encountered

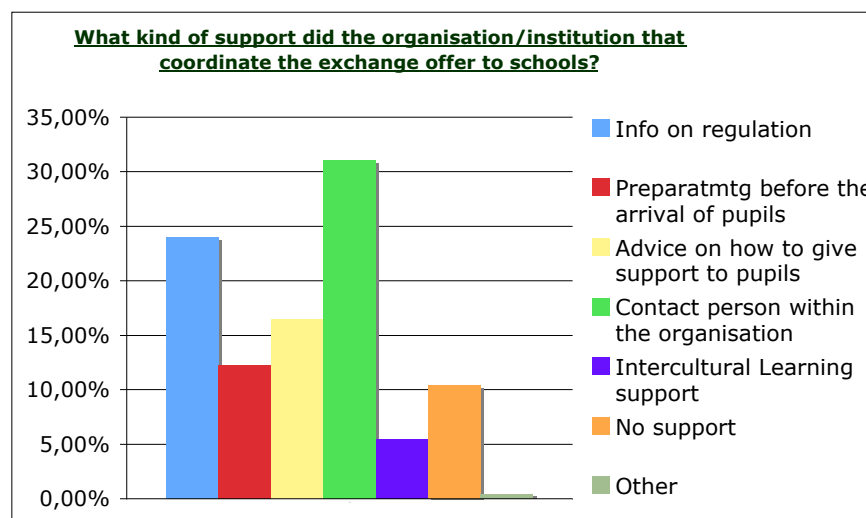
The hosting schools judged both the lack of proficiency in the language and the different levels of knowledge in specific subject matters as the major obstacles in the integration of the foreign pupil in the hosting school. Both the lack of motivation in adapting to the new school environment and, in general, the lack of interest of the host pupil does not help the integration either. This phenomenon is traditionally encountered in situations where the pupil does not receive a proper certification. Again, the lack of contact with the school from which the pupil originated echoes the complaints made by the sending schools.



B.2.2.3. Support needs and services provided by external organisations

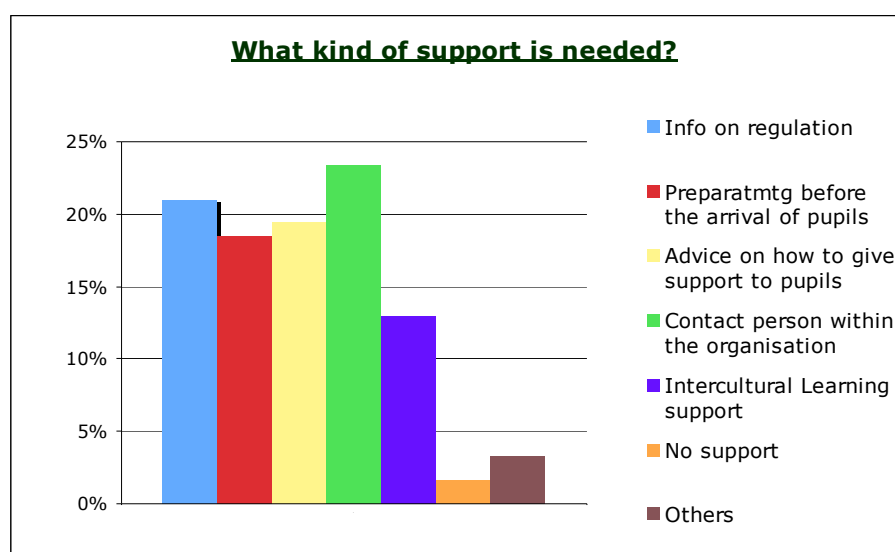
Mobility providers coordinating the hosting programme of exchanges on behalf of the schools have, according to the schools and by order of importance, offered the following services: a personal contact within the organisation providing the mobility, information on regulations, legislation, policies, or administrative guidelines that

regulate the mobility of secondary school pupils; advice on how to support incoming pupils and orientation meetings before the arrival of the pupils. Intercultural learning support comes last.



More than half of the respondents felt that this support was sufficient and one third felt that it was not.

Asked what kind of support is needed from the external mobility providers, the hosting



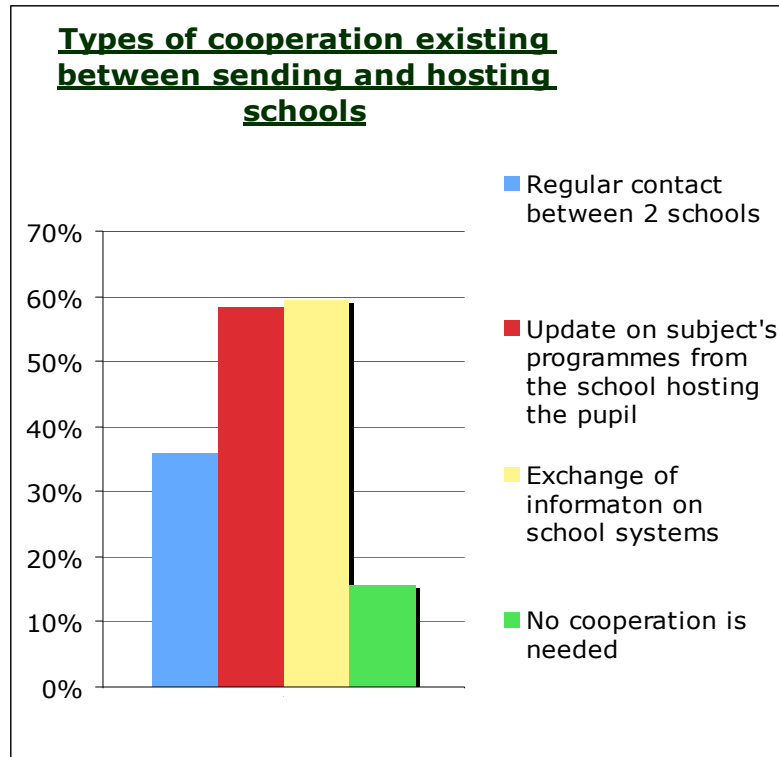
schoools valued most the know-how on regulations, legislations, policies or administrative guidelines that regulate the mobility of secondary school pupils and the permanent access to a mentor from the organisation

organising the study programme. This is closely followed by preparation meetings for pupils upon arrival and advice on how to give support to pupils. Intercultural learning support also figures relatively high on the wish list of schools. Recognising the problem of the lack of proficiency of the language, schools also recommend additional language classes for the hosted students.

The schools initiate themselves a support system for the foreign pupils. One of the support measures is the designation of a mentor/tutor, followed by additional language classes. Ad-hoc support is given on a case-by-case basis, as well as special tutoring for certain subjects.

B.2.2.4. Partnerships between sending and hosting schools

On the subject of collaboration between schools, the respondents stated that they are interested in exchanges of information on the school systems, the grades and the foreign pupil's course programme at home. More than a third also welcomes regular contacts between the schools during the exchange. All of these recommendations echoes those given by the sending schools whose pupils are abroad (see B.2.1.4. above)



B.2.2.5. Financial support for schools hosting foreign pupils

Schools hosting pupils generally receive no financial support from the government, except in France where the local academic administration might provide some and in Sweden for pupils moving thanks to the Nordic Cooperation Agreement.

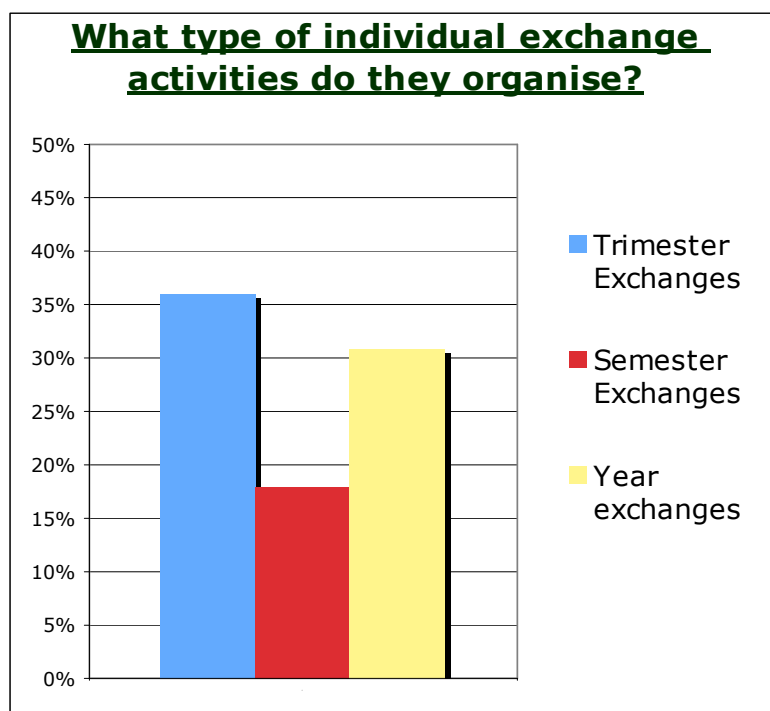
B.3. Mobility organised by the schools

Very few of the schools that responded organise their own mobility schemes. Only 39 of our respondents in Austria, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden stated that they organise their own mobility schemes. From the information gathered (the sample being very small), the majority of these programmes are of a shorter duration (up to 12 weeks or less). A little over one third of the respondents offer full academic (one year) programmes.

B.3.1. Incoming and outgoing pupils

B.3.1.1. Types of mobility

Those that do, offer primarily programmes of 3 months or less and the full academic year. Some schools have been involved in these exchanges for almost as long as some of the established mobility providers (40 years). They are overwhelmingly organised privately, with the exception of the shorter programmes for which EU programme funding is used. As a matter of fact, the only funding mentioned is that of the European Union (Leonardo and Socrates). We presume that all exchange programmes of longer duration (year programme and semester) are thus financed privately.



It appears that schools work primarily on a bilateral level and very much within school partnerships. While reciprocity is encouraged, only about $\frac{1}{2}$ of the exchanges are reciprocal. When they are reciprocal, it is at the level of the school.

B.3.1.2. Age of participants

Pupils are between 15 and 19 years old when they go on an exchange. The average age is 16 3/4th - or almost 17.

B.3.1.3. Risk Management of exchanges

Only slightly over half of the schools take out insurance for pupils involved in study abroad programmes. Health insurance is the most common type of insurance chosen, followed by third-party liability and lost baggage insurance. The majority of schools do not require guarantees of any kind for pupils that they host (in order to obtain visas, residence permits, school enrolment).

B.3.1.4. Sending and hosting destinations

According to the schools, the most popular European destinations of pupils involved in mobility projects organised by mobility providers on behalf of schools are, by order of preference: Germany, United Kingdom, France and Italy.

In terms of hosting, most countries host, by order of importance from: Germany, Italy, Belgium, Finland, Norway and France.

C. Experience of Mobility Providers

C.1. Sources

70 Mobility providers of study abroad programmes answered our questionnaire. The research among the mobility providers has proven the most challenging as most of them consider the European Federation for Intercultural Learning and our member organisations as competitors. There has been a lot of reluctance to share data. This explains the low response rate. Overall, the respondents receive an average of over 11,000 applications on a yearly basis. On average, between 80-90% of the applicants are accepted.

Only in 25% of the countries or regions do governmental agencies keep information on or about mobility providers. Although this is obviously not an exhaustive list, we have reproduced the information provided by official sources.

C.2. Types of study abroad programmes offered

C.2.1. Length of programmes

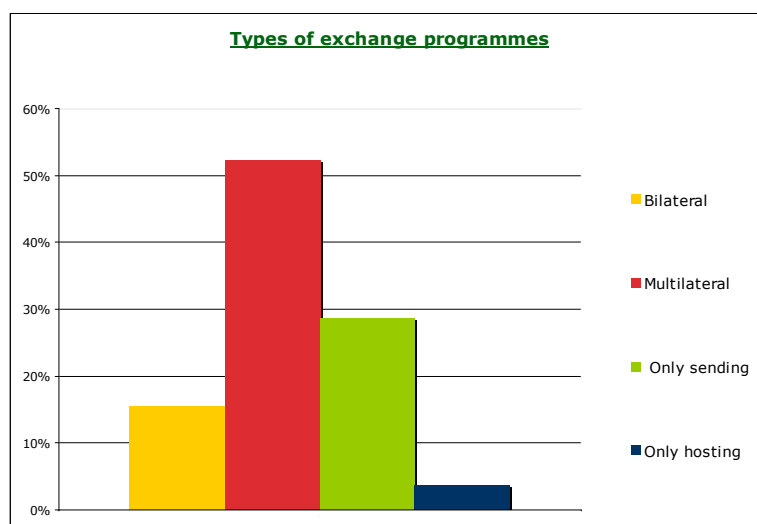
The majority of the respondent offer the full academic year programme, slightly over half propose semester exchanges and one third trimester exchanges. Still another third propose other types of programmes.

C.2.2. Main type of programmes

The programmes offered by most mobility providers are multilateral programmes, followed by bilateral programmes (but limited to 16% of the respondents). Interestingly, almost 30% of the respondents only offer programmes to their national pupils, e.g. study abroad programmes but no hosting programmes at home.

Reciprocity is encouraged by less than half of the respondents. The organisations that encourage reciprocity, primarily encourage reciprocity between countries, followed by reciprocity between families. In reality, the 30 respondents specifying reciprocity of some kind as an aim stated that less than 20% of the exchanges really were reciprocal.

Two mobility providers operate the largest hosting programme for full academic programmes: AFS and YFU. AFS hosted 892 European pupils in 2005-06 and is hosting



957 this academic year. YFU hosted 419 European pupils in 2005-06 and is hosting 416 this academic year. The next largest hoster (SILC), a French-based organisation, hosted close to 100 over the same two-year period.

There is much less hosting activity on semester exchanges. Here the private leader is “En Famille International”, a French-based organisation. They hosted 50 European pupils on semester exchanges during the last two academic years, followed by AFS and SILC. The French and German government also offer Semester programmes called VOLTAIRE. It targets German and French pupils aged 15-16, attending grades 9 and 10 and is based on reciprocity. 250 pupils are exchanged each year. The programme is advertised by the cultural authorities of the Länder, and applications have to be submitted to them.

Hosting on trimester exchanges is almost exclusively offered by AFS. Sending and hosting on trimester exchanges is also encouraged by German government agencies. While the AFS programmes take place among several European countries, the German government-sponsored programmes all take place between Germany and a variety of other countries (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Great Britain, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Russian Federation, Czech Republic). Most of these are reciprocal programmes.

Shorter hosting programmes for European pupils are offered by very few organisations - notably AFS Finland, and APAL, a Portuguese mobility provider. Shorter programmes are also the speciality of government agencies, especially in Germany where large numbers of them take place each year (10.000 on average, this includes semester and trimester programmes).

C.2.3. Timing of study abroad programme

The timing of the exchange corresponds to the academic year. This means that year-long study abroad programmes usually start in August or September and last until June, while semester programmes start during the same months or January, lasting until June or January (depending on the month in which they were started). The Trimester exchanges last from August/September to November/December - e.g. the first trimester of schooling.

C.3. Mobility Flows in Europe

According to the mobility providers, the most popular European destinations are, by order of preference: France, Germany, Italy, Belgium and Austria. In terms of foreign pupils, the European countries hosted, by order of importance German, French, Belgian, Hungarian and Italian pupils.

C.4. Age group targeted/interested in study abroad programmes

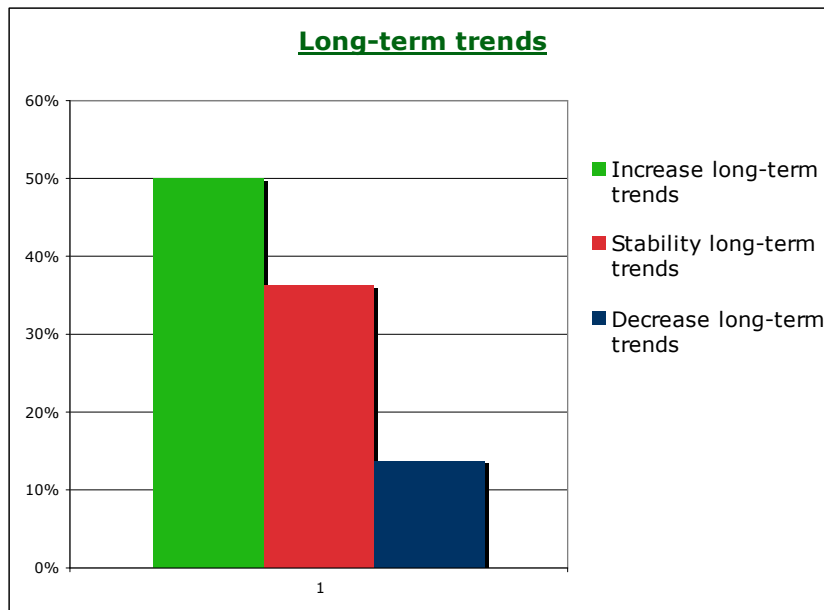
In terms of age group, very few organisations have experience in organising study abroad programmes for 12-14 year olds. The minimum and the maximum ages tend to be situated between almost 15 and slightly over 18. Most providers offer programmes to 16 to 17 year olds.

12 years old	9,83 %
13 years old	1,83 %

14 years old	1,47 %
15 years old	10,50 %
16 years old	36,55 %
17 years old	41,48 %
18 years old	14,36 %

Most pupils tend to spend an exchange period abroad during and not after their school education.

C.5. Trends observed by mobility providers



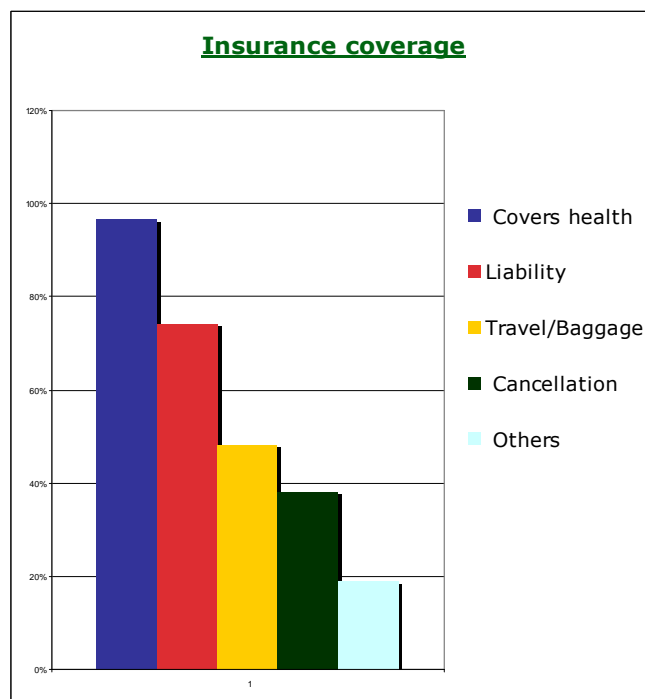
The respondents observe an overall increase in the popularity of long-term study abroad programmes. Only 14% of the respondents have observed a decrease. No particular conclusions can be drawn from these observations - the sample is quite small and the responses are geographically spread. Increasing popularity for long-

term exchange programmes was typically reported by the Scandinavian mobility providers.

C.6. Risk Management

The majority of mobility providers that responded, offer insurance and for 70% of them, it is actually mandatory. Health and third-party liability are the two most popular categories of insurance coverage, as already observed for the schools providing mobility schemes.

Almost 60% of the mobility providers request guarantees for legal reasons when bringing pupils into the country. These may range from the supporting documentation for visa purposes but may also include one of the following: a guaranteed school enrolment, a parental authorisation, a commitment from the natural parents that they provide financial guarantees, amongst others.



C.7. Financial aspects

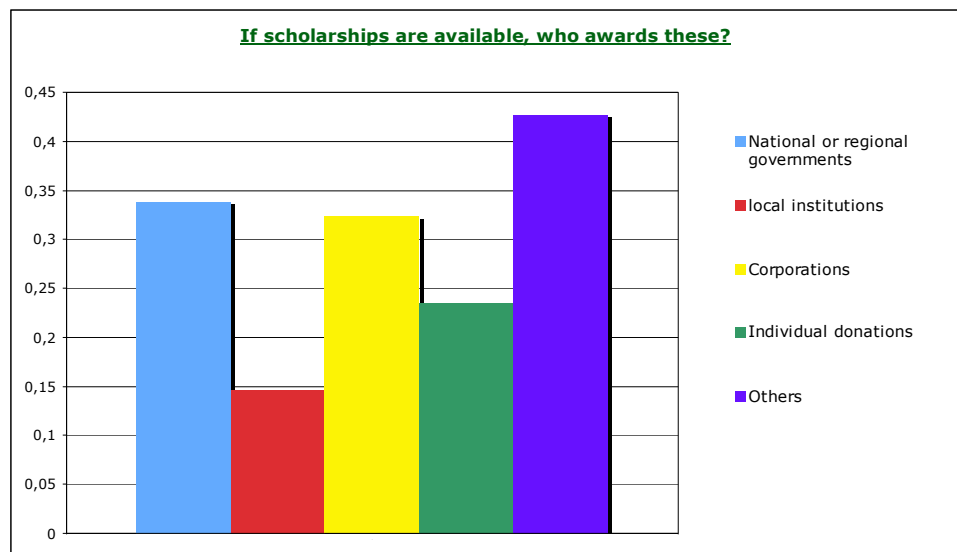
Scholarships are available from foundations, mostly the non-profit organisations' own foundations,

local governments but also corporations.

Among the scholarships that are provided, only 14% tend to be full scholarships.

The majority of them only covers half of the programme cost or are limited to lump-sums such as those

provided by the Franco-German Youth Office (€ 500 and a grant towards travel expenses).

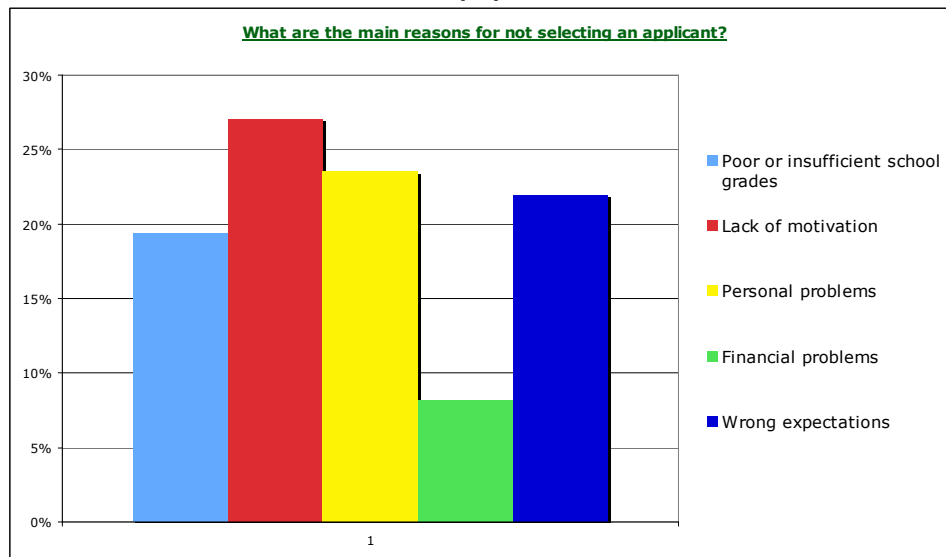


Of the little information we have received on scholarships, we learned that AFS provided the most (almost four times as many as the next largest provider, YFU), but this can be attributed to the fact that AFS organisations were perhaps more willing to disclose this data. The average scholarship provided by AFS was close to € 3,000. One of the major foundations supporting pupil mobility is the Rotary Foundation, although very little of the scope of their work has emerged in the responses received from the 31 countries.

Criteria to determine the recipients for a scholarship vary. For YFU, they depend on the aims and target group of the programme, such as specific age limits, ethnic background, city of residence, parent's employer (in case of some corporate scholarships), etc. Sometimes the eligibility criteria can be very specific - for example, in The Netherlands they had a scholarship programme for students who had a grand parent or great grand parent who had been a war victim during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia. For AFS, it is generally the financial background that is taken into account. There are also some diversity scholarships that specifically aim at pupils of a certain ethnic, gender or social background. AFS also hands out corporate scholarships which have their own specific criteria (very often the beneficiary needs to be the child of an employee). In the latter, the employer provides scholarships to children of its employees and it is AFS that handles all aspects of the exchange.

C.8. Recruitment of participants

C.8.1. Recruitment and selection of pupils



Mobility providers use a number of methods to reach interested pupils. The most popular methods are the

information that they distribute directly via the schools and the internet, a most popular source of information for the targeted age group.

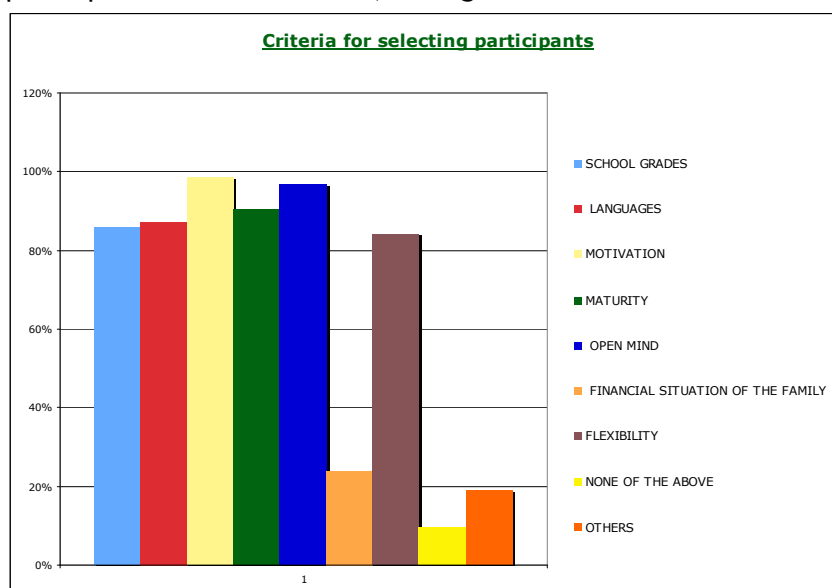
An overwhelming majority of the mobility providers select the pupils they sent abroad according to a set of criteria. The survey results clearly show that several selection criteria are used in order to assess whether the pupil is fit for a study abroad programme. School grades play a role, but so do personality traits such as motivation, open-mindedness and flexibility and are sometimes even considered more important. The knowledge of languages obviously is also a criterion. The financial situation of the family is the least important criteria used in the selection process.

A combination of staff members and volunteers organise the selection of the pupils in most cases.

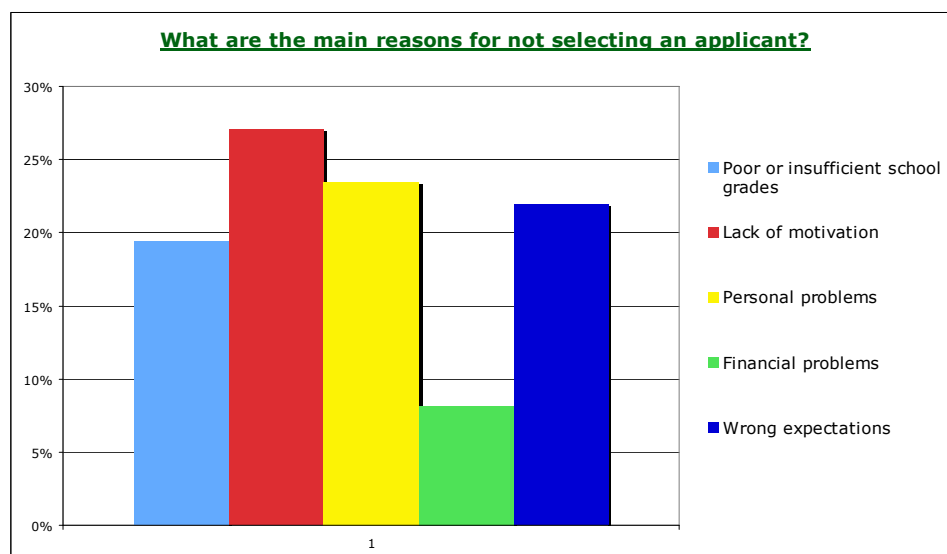
Almost in equal measure, the lack of motivation and the wrong expectations as to what a study abroad programme can be like are sufficient reasons to deny a participant the benefit of an exchange. Financial challenges are not used as criteria when turning down a potential exchange.

C.8.2. Recruitment and selection of hostfamilies

Finding host families for young exchange students is a major challenge for mobility providers. Most of them are found with the help of volunteers and former programme participants and their friends, through local media and schools.



Over three quarters of all respondents use criteria when it comes to selecting hosting families. The key factor in choosing a family is the motivation of the family to welcome a foreign pupil into their home. This is followed by the housing situation of the family (proximity to school, living arrangements) and their past experience in hosting a pupil.



A combination of staff members and volunteers organise the selection of the families in most cases. The primary responsibility of the families is to provide food and accommodation followed in equal parts with typical responsibilities carried out by parents: contacts with school, caring for the student and ensuring his well-being.

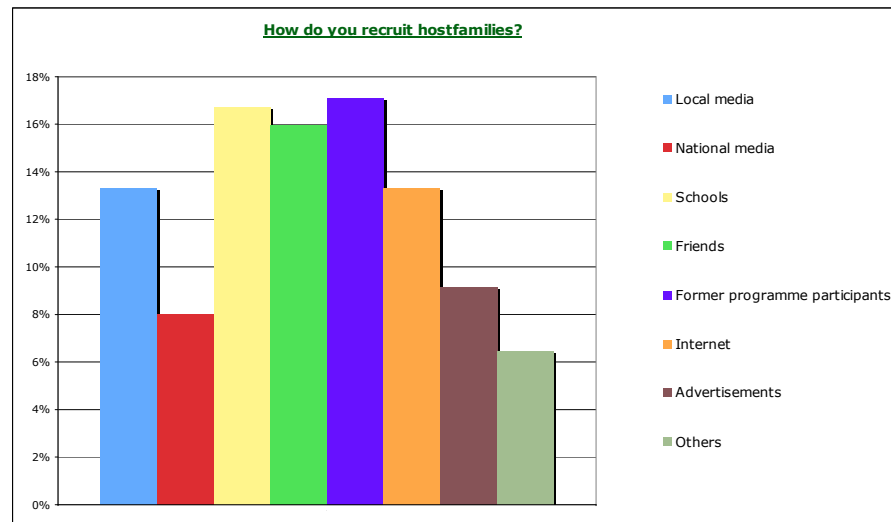
Very few organisations reported paying host families (9 out of 70). The payments that were reported ranged from 100 Euro/month to 140 Euro/week. Only 4 respondents provided any figures.

C.9. Support to programme participants

Support to pupils, families and schools during the exchange is the major part of the mobility provider's tasks. We have researched the practices of the respondents in this survey in order to develop appropriate recommendations for the future individual mobility programme of the EU. When available, the respondents have been

identified in the detailed tables - most of the information has been provided by non-profit organisations: AFS, Rotary and YFU.

It is here that the most distinct differences can be noticed between the various services that are proposed by mobility providers.



C.9.1. Support to outgoing pupils

C.9.1.1. Before going abroad

Mobility providers focus their preparations on providing information both to pupils and their parents. The applicants are given preparation courses lasting between 1 to 3 days in which a variety of methods are used to help the participants deal with ambiguous or unfamiliar situations abroad. Pupils and parents are also provided with written guidance material.

Logistical support is also an important aspect of the mobility providers' services: travel arrangements, advice on insurance to be taken, visa procedures, health certificates and assistance on the day of travel are typical services provided before the departure of the participant.

Some mobility providers will also offer orientations for natural parents and a special link through regular newsletters and communications.

C.9.1.2. During the time they are abroad

Mobility providers will stay indirectly in touch with their programme participants while abroad. The sending organisations will continue to play an important role in assessing and mediating problems that are faced by the student while abroad and liaise with the partner organisation and the natural parents.

The mobility providers will also be in constant touch with the natural families thanks to newsletters, direct communications and sometimes special activities bringing them together.

Sending organisations will also assist the pupils in obtaining the proper certification for the studies taken abroad in liaison with their hosting partner organisations abroad.

C.9.1.3. After their return

Exchange organisations will offer homecoming orientation to their participants, “welcome back” packs for natural families and pupils. The orientation will typically deal with re-integration challenges and help the pupils get adjusted as quickly as possible to their former environment.

Volunteer-based organisations will typically offer their programme participants the opportunity to join the organisation as alumni. This is an important re-integration factor for most youngsters, allowing them to share their experiences and adjustment challenges and successes with like-minded youngsters and help other young persons benefit from this experience.

C. 9.2. Support to incoming pupils

The most important support provided to incoming pupils is the 24/7 access to a knowledgeable support system that can deal with unforeseen difficulties or emergencies.

Logistical support (arrangement of visa or permit of stay, airport welcome, transport to the hosting community, liaising with the insurance etc.), intercultural learning support (ad hoc support in conflict situations, addressing of intercultural learning issues during trainings and preparatory camps) and full-time mentoring support are all part of the typical services provided by mobility providers.

Aside from these, there are three structured learning activities that are provided to all hosted students. The activities are designed, organised and run by volunteers and/or staff receiving regular trainings. All activities are complemented with written guidance material.

C.9.2.1. Upon arrival: orientations and language courses

Arriving students are typically taken immediately or a few weeks after they have settled in, to an orientation camp that can last between 3 and 6 days.

The orientation sessions are structured learning activities focusing on intercultural learning, life at school, safety issues, living with a hostfamily, integration issues, etc. The camps are used to start language classes that may go on beyond the length of the camp itself.

C.9.2.2. Mid-term during their stay: evaluations

For programmes lasting between 6-11 months, mid-stay orientations are proposed for all incoming pupils. This activity, lasting between one week-end and a full week, focuses on adaptation issues, communication challenges, learning opportunities, intercultural issues and also self-evaluations. It is an important moment for the hosted pupils, allowing them to share their everyday experience with like-minded youngsters.

C.9.2.3. Before departure

Shortly before their return home, hosted youngsters are offered another structured activity to evaluate their experience and to prepare them for their return home.

C.9.3. Support to hostfamilies

The success of exchange experiences depends to a large degree on whether the student is well integrated in his family and out-of-school activities. Mobility providers will thus provide a number of measures to help host families have a successful hosting experience.

Families will be assigned a contact person that they can rely on as a first point of contact in case of need. This mentor is often a trained volunteer based in the same community or area as the host family. The contact persons are responsible for the support and guidance to the family - not the hosted pupils.

Some mobility providers will offer structured activities to bring host families together and offer short training sessions.

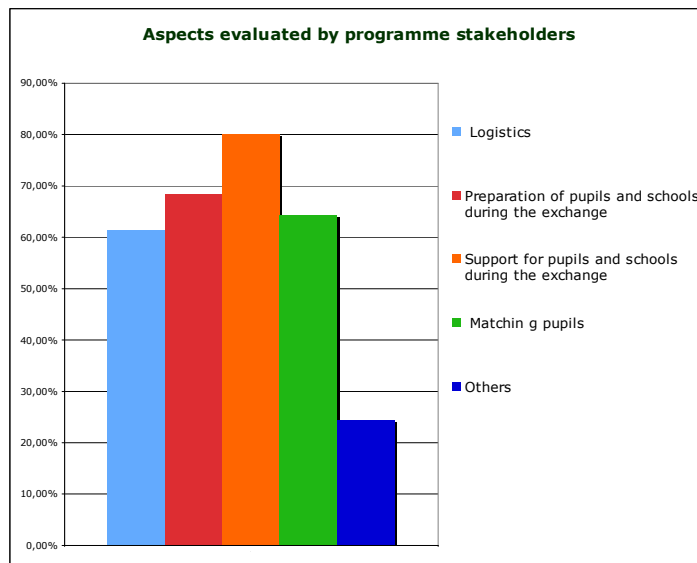
C.9.4. Support to schools

Schools are obviously very important stakeholders in study abroad programmes. It is crucial that the school environment contributes to a successful learning experience. This entails that the pupils are placed in the right grade or age group and that they receive adequate support to help in their integration, academic and otherwise.

Prior to the enrolment in the school, local volunteers will be in direct contact with the school to manage expectations and to arrange appropriate support. Typically, a permanent contact person will continue to liaise with the school and remain available for any kind of concerns that the school or the hosted pupil may have in relation to his schooling.

Mobility providers have developed a number of written guidance materials on hosting a foreign pupil in school. Many of them will also offer seminars for teachers or headteachers.

C.10. Evaluations of mobility schemes and providers



the preparation of the pupils and schools.

The mobility providers all seek feedback on their programmes, their services and the support they provide to pupils, families and schools through regular evaluations. Mobility providers chose different stakeholders to provide different types of feedback.

The programme elements that are looked at particularly are the support of the pupils and the schools during the exchange, followed by the matching of the pupils and

C.11. Rights and Responsibilities

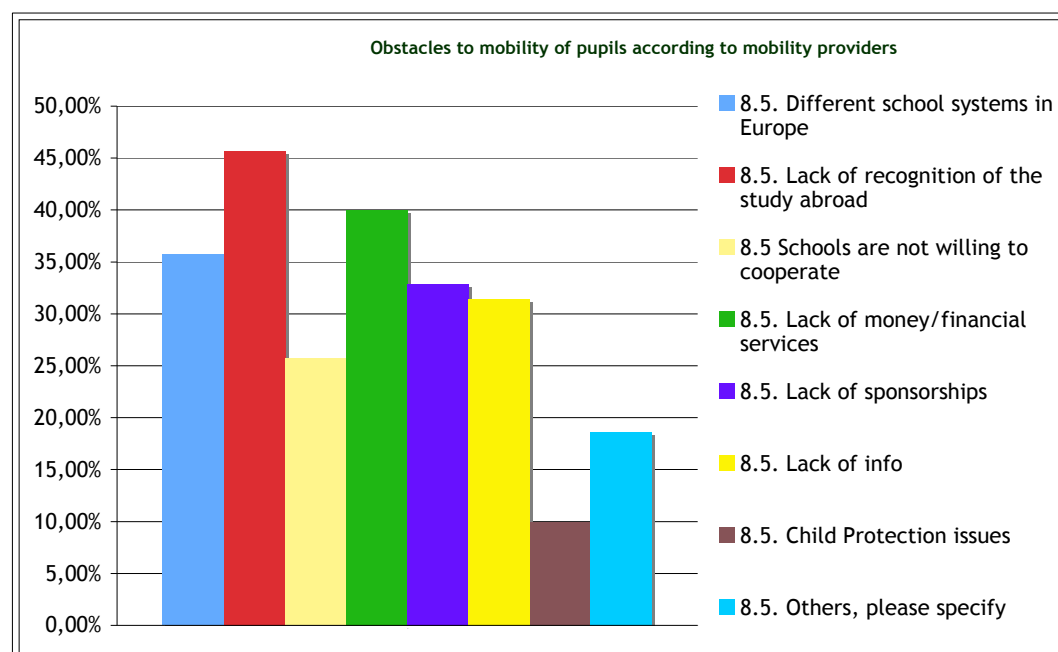
A total of 29 mobility providers reported the existence of a quality charter for mobility. We fear however that the responses received do not always reflect the reality since many appear to have referred to internal quality charters/standards that sending and hosting organisations agree upon.

However, in several countries (notably Germany (http://www.aja-org.de/images/pdf/aja_qualitaetskriterien.pdf) and Finland) they do exist and in others, government requirements for the recognition of youth organisations or consumer protection groups have actually developed quasi-standards. Accreditation schemes don't exist, except in the French-speaking community of Belgium. Aside from the usual requirements that apply to most associations and various independent recommendations from consumer groups or agencies running exchanges on behalf of the government, there is no quality framework to speak of. It is expected that the recent EU Quality Charter for Mobility will change this situation.

Only 42 organisations, or 61% (10 organisations did not respond) make pupils sign a charter of rights and responsibilities. A similar proportion of natural parents sign a contract or a charter. Usually, host parents, sending or hosting schools are not asked to sign a charter.

C.12. Obstacles

The mobility providers blame the lack of recognition of study periods spent abroad as the main reason for the lack of mobility of pupils. The next obstacle is of a financial nature.



D. Research and Statistics

D.1. Sources

There are no public or official statistics that are maintained in any of the countries. In countries that promote mobility through grants, as is the case in Denmark and Norway, statistics are being gathered by the organisations or institutions administering the grants. Some of the respondent suggested that either the mobility providers or the schools themselves kept their own statistics, but this has not been ascertained.

D.2. Research and Statistics

In terms of research, aside from references to EU studies undertaken in the framework of Socrates and other mobility programmes, we obtained references to studies or research in the educational mobility field. In addition to those identified, we have highlighted a few of the more recent studies and evaluations that have taken place. The largest amount of literature on the subject can be found in Germany, where, as we have seen, a great number of exchange opportunities for secondary school pupils exist.

The section below has been broken down into four sections:

- research and evaluations by international public institutions (EU and Council of Europe)
- research and evaluations by private international organisations
- research and evaluations by national agencies
- other, independent research

The most common findings out of this research, of relevance to the individual mobility programme, can be summarised as follows:

- the most effective actions of Socrates have been those that involved mobility;
- intercultural understanding is a catalyst in the process of language learning;
- preparations/orientations as well as an independent (neutral) mentoring system are a key success factor in exchanges;
- life and socialisation outside of school is the Achilles heel of successful exchanges;
- pupils returning from an exchange generally do better academically than they did before and then did their classmates;
- exchange students become multipliers in promoting respect for cultural diversity and tolerance - they seek out new intercultural contexts and civil/political commitments.

D.2.1. International Public Institutions

D.2.1.1. The European Union

In 2003, the EU Commission ordered an ex-ante evaluation of the Socrates I and II as well as Leonardo I and II programmes¹. The study focused on the achievement of the *linguistic objectives* of the programmes. Overall, the study concluded that the impact in relation to the linguistic objectives of the programme had been confined to project co-ordinators and direct beneficiaries of the actions and had not had any long-term effect within the institutions or in policy developed at a local level. In the view of the researchers, **intercultural understanding is a catalyst in the process of language learning**. Accordingly, the researchers found that the linguistic objectives of the programmes can only be achieved through intercultural understanding in the first place, followed by a growing awareness of the importance of linguistic diversity and motivation.

The main findings and conclusions of the Deloitte & Touche survey were as follows:

- **Enabling students and teachers to go abroad is a major incentive for language learning. Mobility plays the role of eye-opener** and develops other important skills and attitudes (self-confidence, social inclusion, communication skills, etc.)
- The programmes have had most impact in relation to intercultural understanding and support for activities improving linguistic diversity or language knowledge - this awareness has grown most among the **direct beneficiaries** and the **project co-ordinators**.
- There is evidence that **only a limited number of beneficiaries have learned a new language**.

Breaking down the impact on various stakeholders in the programmes, further findings of interest may be highlighted:

For pupils and students, the impact was as follows:

- development of personal skills and intercultural understanding;
- enhanced awareness of the importance of learning foreign languages;
- enhanced motivation;
- dedramatisation of the learning process of foreign languages.

For the institutions (schools, universities, etc.), the impact was as follows:

- effect on the internationalisation climate and understanding of other cultures;
- non systematic dissemination of the tools, products or outputs of the projects.

The researchers deplored that at policy level, no appropriations of the outcomes had taken place within the EU or its Member States and that the effects of the programme were limited to some practices with a rather low impact on appropriate legislative changes. The researchers also stated the need for a better communication between policymakers, NAs and project coordinators.

The researchers made the following recommendations for the future lifelong learning programme of the EU:

¹ Evaluation ex-ante and post/midterm of the extent to which the Socrates (Socrates I 1995-1999 and first phase of Socrates II 2000-2006) and Leonardo da Vinci (Leonardo da Vinci I 1995-1999 and Leonardo da Vinci II 2000-2006) have achieved the programmes' linguistic objectives, Final Report, December 18, 2003, Deloitte & Touche Management Solutions SA

- Reflections would be useful on the role of Erasmus students as cultural agents;
- Early-language learning is central to the success of the linguistic objectives of all programmes;
- Positive discrimination should be given to mobility to countries with least widely used languages;
- Mobility activities were a key driver for language learning awareness and were therefore essential in achieving the linguistic objectives of the programmes.

The researchers however cautioned *‘that any implementation of their recommendations will need to involve **different players** and will not be the sole responsibility of the Commission. The Member States will need to play a significant role if progress is to be made on any of the recommendations even though the Commission might take a lead in its usual catalytic capacity’*.

In 2004, the Commission published an interim report on the **qualitative and quantitative aspects of the implementation of Socrates II**². In terms of mobility, intercultural learning and practical implementation of mobility programmes, the report highlights:

- **the most effective actions of SOCRATES were those that involve mobility;**
- obstacles to mobility within the educational programmes of the EU were due to the way in which mobility actions are organised nationally, the operating methods of educational establishments and the insufficient knowledge of languages;
- the complex nature of the matching of applications was identified as the main obstacle to the individual mobility of eligible participants in the programmes.

In its conclusions on the effectiveness of the implementation of SOCRATES, the Commission writes *‘the programme as a whole is capable of meeting its specific and operational objectives. However, its effectiveness varies according to the type of activity in question. **Mobility activities are highly effective and beneficiaries are largely satisfied with their results. The European value-added is significant, in terms of awareness of cultural diversity and greater understanding and tolerance of differences. There is a probable benefit in terms of employability and definite one in terms of skills.***’

D.2.1.2. The Council of Europe

The evaluation³ of the Council of Europe’s **European Secondary School Pupil’s Exchange (ESSSE)** published in 2002 provides a thorough evaluation of this intra-European east-west exchange organised from 1998 to 2002. Over 300 pupils were exchanged during the first trimester of the school year between countries of Western and Eastern Europe.

The evaluation was conducted by an external evaluator throughout the five years of the programme implementation and involved the participating students, the teachers, the headteachers and parents in order to monitor the educational effects of the programme. This tracking of students and their experiences, as well as the views of

² Interim Report on the results achieved and on the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the implementation of the second phase of the Community Programme in the field of education ‘Socrates’ (COM (2004) 153 final of 8.3.2004)

³ Jeffers, J., The European Secondary School Student Exchange, Evaluation, Council of Europe, 2002

parents and teachers, provided a rich and valuable set of insights. As the final evaluation of ESSSE (February 2002) states *'There is unquestionable evidence that the experience is an overwhelmingly beneficial one. In terms of social and cultural maturity the students develop an insight during their placement which lasts with them long after their return, and possibly throughout their lives'*. The evaluation also concluded that *'the ESSSE project offers excellent value for money'*.

The main benefits of the ESSSE project appear to be in terms of broadening cultural horizons, promoting intercultural learning, discovering and affirming personal strengths and social competencies, improving language skills - particularly English - and enhancing motivation for learning. According to the evaluation, ESSSE students become catalysts and multipliers, ideally promoting respect for cultural diversity, tolerance and intercultural learning.

- In terms of **intercultural learning**: the ESSSE participants reported a better understanding of their own and the visited country. The sending schools confirmed the broader perspective and world view that pupils had developed, aside from the acquisition of a new language. The students identified their host family and their new friends as the best part of the exchange. 92% of the students believed they were well prepared for the exchange.
- In terms of **personal and social competences**: the ESSSE participants described the following positive results: higher self-esteem, a new insight into family-life, new friends, new study methods, a more focused perception of their (desired) future. The participants credited the programme with a lifelong effect. Similar findings were reported by the sending schools: ESSSE broadened the perspectives pupils had about the world, enabled them to become more independent, made them more apt to determine their destiny and increased their motivation for school achievements.
- Positive influence on the **academic results**: 67% of the ESSSE participants had no difficulty catching up the course work that accumulated during their absence. 75% of the pupils thought that the exchange would allow them to do better at school thanks to the exchange (learning of new study methods, better grasp of their skills and a more focused perception of their future). 86% of the sending schools felt that the academic chances of the exchange participants had increased, 14% find that they remain unchanged.

Specific **recommendations** out of this programme directed to both hosting and sending schools were as follows:

1. Practical involvement in a wide range of activities, inside and outside the classroom, is most desirable, especially in the early period of the exchange;
2. Integrating the ESSSE student in appropriate classes can make a big difference and the students usually prefer to be with their own age group, even when this presents serious language difficulties;
3. Appointing one teacher in the hosting school to be a specific liaison person to whom the ESSSE student can relate facilitates communication;
4. Appointing one teacher in the sending school with responsibility to maintain contact, briefing student on curricula and tests at home and helping in the integration;
5. On returning to school, the ESSSE students should be given opportunities to report on their exchange.

D.2.2. International Private Organisations

D.2.2.1. AFS Intercultural Programs

In April 2002, AFS IP launched a **major study of the educational impact of year-long individual exchanges**⁴. The three-year independent research study was designed and conducted by Mitchell R. Hammer, Ph.D., an expert in international educational exchange. The study represented one of the most comprehensive, scientifically grounded investigations of the impact of international education exchange on secondary school pupils. A total of 2.100 students participated. Of these, 1.500 were involved in a 10-month school-based exchange while the other 600 were “student friends” comprising a control group.

The study was designed to measure the level of intercultural competence gained by AFS exchange participants during their programme, including a rigorous measure of their worldview, based on the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity*, a model of intercultural development elaborated by Dr. Milton Bennett⁵.

The study also assessed the student's level of knowledge about various aspects of their host country's culture and society, the development of their language skills, the level of interaction they have with people belonging to the host culture, their general coping ability in intercultural situations, and their development in terms of a number of key values promoted by the exchange provider.

Findings from this international investigation indicate that secondary school students who participated in study abroad programmes with AFS show **impressive gains in intercultural competence, knowledge about other countries and personal comfort interacting with people from different cultures**. Students who studied abroad with AFS demonstrated significantly greater intercultural skills than students who did not. *“The impacts of the study abroad experience are extensive and include first and foremost, a substantial increase in intercultural competence. The experience reduces prejudices, biases and ethnocentrism; increases students’ interest in other cultural practices; helps students overcome ‘us versus them’ polarization; and aids in the discovery of common bonds across cultural boundaries.”* according to the author of the research findings.

The results of the study also found that students who participated in the 10-month study abroad program returned to their home country **with substantially more comfort and less anxiety in interacting with people from other cultures, with increased knowledge about other countries, and that they developed more friendships with people from different nationalities and ethnicities**.

These gains by AFS programme participants contrasted significantly with the attitudes of students who remained in their home culture during the 10-month period. Of particular importance was the finding that **47% of the students became fluent in the language of their host culture** with 12% achieving bilingual fluency level, as rated by their host country families.

⁴ Hammer, M., Assessment of the Impact of the AFS Study Abroad Experience (2005) available on <http://www.afs.org/research>.

⁵ <http://www.intercultural.org/pdf/dmis.pdf>

D.2.2.2. European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL)

Between 2002 and 2003, with the support of the Commission, EFIL conducted a survey in 19 European countries on the perception that public authorities, schools, public agencies and youth exchange organisations have about the long-term mobility of individual pupils⁶. The survey concerned both the sending and the hosting aspects of exchanges and highlighted the limited knowledge as well as the many obstacles that remain. The survey involved 1.913 schools, 275 public agencies and over 200 “key players” in the field of pupil exchange. Rather than focusing on the official aspects related to the mobility of pupils, the study focused on the **perceptions of school officials and public agencies and in particular their knowledge about the regulatory frameworks and the conditions under which mobility promoted by educational agencies, non-governmental agencies and schools was taking place.**

The survey found that while educational exchanges are valued for their learning experience, especially when it comes to learning foreign languages and developing cultural understanding, teachers and headteachers generally stumble over accreditation problems while families fret over the cost of such an exchange. The survey found that full accreditation and funding support in some countries co-exists with the total absence thereof in many countries. However, the main finding of the survey was the lack of information or the conflicting information: not only were many decision-makers at all levels unaware of important aspects that concern the mobility of this target group, but conflicting information was also widespread.

By order of importance, the following **impediments to mobility** were mentioned:

- Limitations of a financial nature, which becomes an even more important barrier when the study abroad programme is not recognised;
- **The lack of recognition, mostly due to the incompatibility of the curricula** (identified as the major obstacle according to this current study);
- The opposition of teachers and headteachers, who are more interested in the grades and the quality of the teaching abroad, often judged of lesser value. This was also described as a clash between the learner-centred and the curriculum-centred approach;
- The lack of legislation. Although in practice some European pupils undertake successful study abroad programmes, the teachers and headteachers indicate that the existence of proper legislation would be an important step in increasing the volume of exchanges;
- The lack of information and knowledge about the different mobility programmes;
- Visa problems and residence permits.

In general, schools identified many more impediments to mobility than public agencies.

D.2.3. National Governmental Institutions

D.2.3.1. The Franco-German Youth Office

The **Franco-German Youth Office** (Office Franco-Allemand de la Jeunesse (OFAJ) / Deutsch-Französisches Jugendwerk (DFJW)) is financed by both the French and German governments and is listed here under the experiences of governmental institutions.

The Franco-German Youth Office has undertaken extensive research. Its research focuses both on subjects of general interest in the area of educational exchanges, but includes also evaluations of their own programmes (franco-german exchanges).

⁶ Ruffino, R. and Hardt, E., editors, *Mobility of Secondary School Pupils and Recognition of Study Periods Spent Abroad*, European Federation for Intercultural Learning (2005)

In 2002, the institution started a new exchange programme as part of its numerous Franco-German activities: the Voltaire programme. The programme is open to secondary school pupils aged 15-17 years. It is a bilateral, strictly reciprocal programme, whereby French pupils will first stay in a German family for 6 months to eventually host the pupil from the German host family in France. The two exchanges are thus consecutive one to the other and involve the same exchange pupils who will have been in close contact for 12 months, albeit under different circumstances. Starting with 252 exchanges the first year, a total number of 1.000 exchangees were planned for 2005-2006, but it appears that the total number of exchanges is currently about 500.

OFAJ/DFJW involved a 6-member research team composed of 3 German and 3 French researchers from the very beginning of the experience. Their first study⁷ results focused on the responses provided in writing and through interviews by 89 French pupils (25 boys and 64 girls) and 104 German pupils (85 girls and 19 boys). The researchers drew special attention to the fact that the pupils come primarily from classes in which either German or French is taught as a second language and are generally very well prepared. The French students come from "Europaschools" or schools that prepare for a double diploma called "ABIBAC" (for "Abitur" and "Baccalauréat") and are thus very motivated and bright students.

Major learning outcomes: the major benefit of the pupil's exchange that the researchers identified is that of **cultural and linguistic flexibility, one of the basic competences in a multicultural and globalised world**. Moreover, according to the researchers, the Voltaire exchange represents a unique and important 'rite of passage':

- Pupils are given an opportunity to resolve problems of their own: having a fairly easy time during the exchange does not necessarily translate into a better experience - students facing big problems say that the experience was good;
- Pupils learn new personal and social competencies not limited to the development of linguistic competencies: autonomy, adaptation, analysis and interpretation, management of relationships, tolerance and diplomacy;
- Pupils made remarkable progress in the learning of the foreign language. The pupils were not only capable of mastering everyday situations, they were also able to follow the regular school cursus of their classmates in the hosting country;
- The Voltaire participants could identify the relative influence of their cultural imprint and how it bears on their own experience abroad. Through their experience they acquired the skills to consider things from different perspectives;
- The majority of the pupils showed eagerness to experience further mobility opportunities. Most of the pupils wished to intensify their relationships with the other country but it appears that this is not limited to either France or Germany but extends to other countries as well.

Aside from identifying the major learning outcomes of the study, the researchers also highlighted **important aspects that required more attention**, notably:

- 1) The fact that the exchange experience is much more complex for the pupil than largely believed;
- 2) The necessity of a proper preparation and mentoring system for the pupils;
- 3) The importance of life outside the school environment, usually left unconsidered.

⁷ Brougère, G., Colin, L., Merckens, H., Nicklas, H., Perrefort, M., Saupe, V., Das Eintauchen in die fremde Kultur - Auswirkungen auf Mobilität und Identität, Begleitende wissenschaftliche Untersuchung zum Voltaire Programm des Deutsch-Französischen Jugendwerks (Zweiter Zwischenbericht) (2003)

On the complexity of exchanges: The research revealed the **complexity of the exchange experience**, which, according to the researchers, is under-estimated by the adults. The pupils are **managing a diversity of relationships** in a foreign language: their own so-called correspondents (either the German or the French exchange pupil that is hosting the other), their host family, their foreign friends at school, their teachers; while trying at the same time to maintain their relationships with the friends that stayed in their home country, their school back home and their own family.

This is further complicated by the **asymmetry between the French and the German experiences**: the exchange pupils have to manage the prospect of their own return and the hosting of a correspondent. 30% of the German pupils rated their experience in France as unsatisfactory. It appears that in Germany (first part of the exchange, when the French student is hosted) both pupils live their exchange in the present and the future; in France, the French act as if the exchange experience has finished.

Last but not least, hosting someone is a unique experience: receiving a correspondent under the eye of the parents is not easy and the relationship with the correspondent (the exchangee) during one year presents its own challenges.

On the need for a proper preparation/orientation and mentoring of young exchange students: according to the young people involved in the Franco-German Youth Exchange there was neither a proper orientation or introduction into the cultural realities of the hosting country nor a proper mentoring or mediation during conflicts abroad. Once the Franco-German Youth Office was informed of a conflict, the situation had escalated to a point of no return and the organisation needed to remove the student from the family. According to the researchers it appears that it was usually a small and insignificant difficulty that led to misunderstandings and snow-balled into something much larger. It would have been easy for an impartial and interculturally trained person to stop this process. Some school tutors took over this function, but they were seldom properly prepared for the job. The young person is convinced that the mentor sides with the local student, the local school or the host family - a fact which does not make his/her culturally-based intervention very helpful. The youngsters of both countries thus deplored the absence of a mentor or his impartiality.

Importance of life outside of school: Family life, free time and extra-curricular activities are much more important for a successful immersion in another culture than school. This is particularly true for Germany where students sit less in class than in France. It is to be expected that new socialisation experiences take mostly place outside of school.

Recommendations of the group of researchers for the future set-up of the Franco-German Youth Exchange (Voltaire): While the research about the Voltaire programme highlighted many positive aspects, the researchers felt that certain difficulties needed to be addressed. According to them, problems with these programmes are unavoidable but should not negatively influence the image that the youngsters gain from their experience. Henceforth, they recommend:

1. Publication of brochures in both languages to provide better information to all stakeholders (pupils, parents, professors). The brochures should highlight difficult situations, challenges and misunderstandings that the participants may be confronted with. At the same time the brochure should propose strategies to deal with and overcome said difficulties.
2. The set-up of an effective guidance and mentoring system for the youngsters before, during and after the exchange. The goal would be to assist youngsters

with emerging problems and to stimulate the student's learning process in supporting a positive interpretation of these experiences.

3. A qualification of the tutors with regard to conflict mediation and conflict resolution as well as guidance for the students from both countries.
4. The organisation of meetings both for the pupils (before, during and after the exchange), the parents and the teachers, both at national and bi-national level.
5. The putting together of a portfolio that will help the students in the analysis of the learning achievements, both in terms of language and intercultural competence. This document should also help the tutors as a resource in their role as mentor and will help the respective schools better appreciate the learning outcomes.
6. The promotion of networks (internet, funding of meetings, etc.) between schools, teachers and pupils that have participated in the Voltaire programme.
7. The set-up of a partnership system within schools that will allow former programme participants to help new Voltaire exchangees in their integration.
8. The recognition of these types of exchanges as part of the normal school curricula.
9. The implementation of a flexible programme of courses for the hosted exchange students. This goal is not to make the integration of the hosted pupils easier but to allow for a better adaptation of the course level to their language skills and their later re-integration in the school curricula and course load that they will face upon their return.

In **Sweden**⁸, a study took place in 2004 on the effectiveness of the Nordic Agreement on Pupil Mobility. 400 students were sampled for the survey.

Those that had most benefited from the agreement were:

- students in the regions close to the border;
- students looking for a special education;
- students moving with their families.

The following problems were identified:

- the financial aid in the different countries varied as well as the compensation to the schools who accept extra students;
- a lot of students prefer to study outside of the Nordic countries rather than within;
- the language differences;
- getting credit for the year abroad when returning home;
- lack of knowledge of the persons responsible for the implementation of the agreement.

In **Norway**⁹ an evaluation has been made a few years ago by the Ministry of Education to see how the Lånekassen grant system was working out and whether pupils were getting proper accreditation for their studies. As mentioned earlier, Lånekassen provides grants and loans to pupils in upper secondary schools, to university and to college students who successfully complete a year of study abroad.

The main outcomes of the evaluation were:

- a wide geographic spread among the participating pupils (different economical regions of the country);

⁸ Skolverket, Gymnasiestudier i Norden, 2004

⁹ Barstad, J. Utveksling for alle?, 2002

- the recruitment happened among both sexes - but more girls than boys girls participated;
- the recruitment targets different economical and social classes, but a small majority was recruited because of good academic results;
- the pupils went to a wide range of countries, the experience was more challenging for those going to non-English speaking countries;
- 87% of the students got their accreditation and were able to end school without any problems.
- **a large percentage of those that went abroad obtained better school results marks than before they left.** This is a higher percentage then for pupils that stayed in Norway and echoes the findings of the Council of Europe's ESSSE evaluation.

Other positive effects highlighted in the report were:

- The pupils were better equipped to understand/participate in general changes in society;
- The pupils had a better understanding of and tolerance towards other cultures;
- The pupils gained in personal development;
- The exchange year influenced the pupils' academic and/or professional career choices.

D.2.4. Other Independent Research

Two German studies worth noting focus on the **long-term effects of exchanges**. One was conducted by Professor Alexander Thomas, the other by David Bachner and Ulrich Zeuschel.

Ulrich Zeuschel and David Bachner have conducted an ongoing study focusing on the long-term effect of study abroad programmes. The two researchers have been following the **same group of former exchange students, now spanning four decades**¹⁰. The study has attempted to follow the personal and professional development of both U.S. (208) and German students (453), as well as a control group of peers.

Compared to the control group, the participants in this study scored significantly higher on a number of key aspects of their current personal and professional life, including:

- employability;
- the capacity to work independently;
- better understanding of one's own country;
- professional or political commitment;
- the capacity to take on leadership roles;
- foreign language competency;
- capacity to explain one's own viewpoints;
- continued interest in the hosted country;
- involvement in organisations or platforms furthering peaceful international relations.

Asked to assess themselves what aspects of their exchange experience they could directly relate to the way they may intervene in interpersonal situations, the former exchange participants mentioned the following, by order of importance:

- empathy: the capacity to put yourself in the other person's shoe;
- informing others of their former host country, promoting a positive image of the host country;

¹⁰ Bachner, D. and Zeuschel, U., Students of Four Decades, 2001

- fighting prejudices.

Just as the Norwegian study by Johan Barstard, the US/German study also found that the exchange year influenced rather directly on the career choice of former exchange participants.

Professor Alexander Thomas undertook a study on the long-term effects on the personal development of young people living in Germany and having participated in **intercultural exchanges of short length more than 10 years ago** (before 1994)¹¹. The 2005 study explored the impact of different programme formats, namely:

- pupil exchanges of 14-18 year olds for a duration of 1-4 weeks in hostfamilies;
- bilateral group exchanges and project-oriented group encounters of 16-20 year-olds during 5-15 days;
- multinational work-camps of 18-21 year-olds of 1-4 weeks.

The study highlights the **long-term effects on the personal development of participants** as follows:

- 71% of the participants continue to attribute great significance to the intercultural experience and its effects on their personal development;
- 41% of the participants continue to be in touch with persons that they have encountered during their exchange period abroad and 59% of these contacts are with other nationalities;
- the young people having participated in the exchange as well as those having experienced the hosting side of the exchange attribute a multitude of effects that have had lasting effects:
 1. personal competences (self-confidence, independence, self-knowledge), open-mindedness, flexibility and inner calm, social competences, intercultural competences;
 2. a confrontation with one's own image and cultural imprint (behaviours that are culturally influenced, advantages and disadvantages of being "German")
 3. new language competencies and interest and readiness to learn/improve knowledge of new languages.

Overall, the pupil exchanges lead to higher intercultural and foreign language competencies. The study showed that the long-term effects of these intercultural experiences were clearly linked to a trigger and not related to the type of programmes undertaken.

After the exchange, most participants sought other intercultural contexts and took up volunteering commitments.

Worth mentioning too is the ongoing and substantial amount of research on the subject of international youth encounters produced by the **Forscher-Praktiker Dialog**, a German platform of researchers active in the field of exchanges. <http://www.forscher-praktiker-dialog.de/>

In Germany again, the recognised experts on nationally active exchange organisation is the **Recherchen-Verlag** which has surveyed all 43 German mobility providers who service the 12.000 German pupils participating in semester or year long programmes every year

¹¹ Thomas, A., Langzeitwirkungen der Teilnahme an internationalen Jugendbewegungen auf die Persönlichkeitsentwicklung der TeilnehmerInnen, 2005 (www.jugendaustausch-langzeitwirkungen.de)

(www.schueleraustausch.de/sa/aktuelles/2005/11/07/bundeslaender2.shtml). The Recherchen Verlag publishes an annual overview, complete with customer feed-back and useful tips and resources on choosing the right kind of exchange organisation and making the most of one's year abroad.

E. Stakeholders: European Associations

E.1. Sources

This section concerns the vision of European Associations as relevant actor and key player in school education and the field of mobility:

- ESHA, European School Heads Association
- EPA, European Parents Association
- OBESSU, Organising Bureau of the European School Students Unions

Members that took part in the study:

ESHA	
Burkhard Mielke	Chair of ESHA and Chair of the German branch
Antonio Petrolino	Former Chair of ESHA and member of the National Executive Board of the Italian branch (ANP)
Gloria Sepou	Chair of the Pancyprian Secondary School Heads Association
Jaume Prat	member of the Executive Board of the Spanish branch
Molnar Geza	founding president of the Hungarian branch
EPA	
Diego Barroso	President
OBESSU	
Jovana Bazerkovska	Secretary General

E.2. Mobility, concerns and benefits

E.2.1. Overall position towards intra-European mobility schemes

ESHA generally supports individual mobility schemes as they:

- promote the European idea and European citizenship;
- foster pupils' self development, individual growth and give a wider world view;
- let young people experience differences, leading to a deeper awareness of the own cultural background;
- enable schools to establish links and raise awareness;

EPA underlines the learning of foreign languages and the cultural experience as the main added value for pupils.

OBESSU expresses concerns, referring to the budget cutbacks in the Lifelong Learning Programme and the reduced budget for student mobility, which is contradictory to the Parliament's and the Commission's claim for a better investment in youth.

E.2.2. Duration of mobility and age issues

There appear to be different opinions regarding the length. EPA insists on trimester exchanges only, while OBESSU would leave the choice to the students, keeping all options available: trimester, semester, year exchanges.

ESHA acknowledges that one year exchanges allow a deeper understanding of the hosting culture, but three months would be the best option not to affect the students academically. There is a strong concern about the differences among the school curricula. Some respondents proposed different schemes according to the age of the pupils (trimester exchanges for 15 year old pupils up to one school year for 17 year olds).

As most suitable age for long-term programmes, all associations show a preference for 15-18 years.

E.2.3. Benefits of mobility

- Personal development and growth, greater independence, increased maturity.
- Widening cultural horizons, enabling broader views and respect for different values and diversity. Development of skills to live and work in an intercultural environment.
- Improved knowledge of foreign languages.
- Active citizenship and social awareness, development of a European perspective.
-

E.2.4. Major concerns and obstacles to mobility

- Recognition of study periods spent abroad. No harmonization of secondary school education on European level.
- The success of this kind of programmes requires the participation and cooperation of European countries in different areas: schools need to assure quality, respect of democratic principles, and recognition of formal and non-formal education abroad.
- Lack of interest by governments to invest in mobility programmes.
- Low awareness of schools on the need of mobility.
- Maturity of pupils, balanced character and personality. There is a need for a well organised and strong family/school/social environment to minimize risks. A proper selection of host families is crucial, as well as a well worked out support structure including guidance (for academic and social matters).
- Individual mobility can be a risk with some students.
- Visa issues: most non-EU students have problems entering the EU because of not getting visas, due to nationality or unaffordable costs related to the process.