

IVET learners European and international mobility

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGY/ACTION PLAN

 FRANCE

Timeline



ID number 28216

Background

An apprenticeship reform had been initiated in October 2017. Strengthening European mobility for young people is a priority at national and European levels.

Objectives

The aim of the measures is to provide legal security to both employers and training organisations that offer alternance training schemes involving training mobility abroad.

Description

Apprentice mobility was enshrined in the Labour Code (2017). New legal provisions have come into force, aimed at removing obstacles to long-term mobility in Europe for apprentices and trainees in alternance training schemes. Recent laws reforming the Labour Code (March 2018) and vocational education and training (September 2018) include measures that apply to all young people under the apprenticeship contract (*contrat d'apprentissage*) and the professional development contract (*contrat de professionnalisation*):

- (a) suspension of French employer liability during the mobility period abroad;
- (b) facilitating long mobility periods abroad and simplified processes for short mobility periods;
- (c) introducing more flexibility regarding the content of training courses abroad;
- (d) new funding mechanism to be managed by skills operations that will be in charge of developing apprenticeship and professional development contract schemes.

Mobility abroad for 15 000 young apprentices is planned under Erasmus Pro mobility in Europe as of the school year 2022/23.

A special representative in charge of the development of Erasmus Pro for apprenticeship training was appointed by the Employment Minister in July 2017, with particular responsibility for developing apprentice mobility.

A user's guide 'Doing your work-study period in Europe' for young people on apprenticeship and professionalisation contracts was published in September 2018.

In November 2018, the Erasmus+ national agency (Erasmus+ France Education and training) published a guide on 'Skills of mobility referents in apprentice training centres'. The guide presents the role, tasks and competences of the referents who promote the implementation of international mobility projects for apprentices, and specifies conditions for success.

2017 Approved/Agreed

2018 Approved/Agreed

2019 Implementation

International mobility has been offered as part of the vocational baccalaureate since 2014 (7 000 applicants in 2018). Currently it is promoted in IVET, in both school-based and apprenticeship programmes:

- (a) new legislation (orders of 30 August 2019) re-establishes the terms of the optional mobility unit in the vocational baccalaureate (BAC-pro), and extends its offer to other professional diplomas: the professional certificate (*Brevet professionnel*); the trades certificate (*Brevet des métiers d'art*) and the professional skills certificate (CAP, *Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle*);
- (b) a reference curriculum defines the assessment criteria in terms of skills and cultural and professional knowledge;
- (c) the optional mobility unit can be assessed either as part of the compulsory units of the vocational training programme curriculum or be assessed separately and recognised (mobility certificate). The evaluation takes place abroad in the host institution (company or training organisation) and the second part when the learner returns to France (home institution);
- (d) the procedures for implementing placements for apprentices are specified by decree on 24 October 2019 (and orders of 22 January 2020). The maximum time to be spent abroad is one year, with at least six months spent in France. During the period abroad, alternating work-study training is no longer obligatory. For placements lasting more than four weeks, the employment contract is put on hold; the host organisation is responsible for the conditions of the contract. Placements not exceeding four weeks may be undertaken in the form of an apprentice secondment.

The optional mobility unit increases the attractiveness of the vocational baccalaureate by strengthening its openness to the world. Originally implemented on an experimental basis, it is now mainstreamed and its international scope emphasised.

2020 Implementation

Several studies have been published evaluating the expansion of international exchanges for VET staff and learners.

- (a) The Erasmus+ France Education and Training Agency; the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation and the *Régions de France* association have published a report ('A territorial atlas of European and international mobility'), which provides an overview of exchange programmes for students, researchers, higher education staff and vocational training students across the French regions.
- (b) As every year, the Erasmus+ France education and training agency has published its activity report and the results of last year's call for proposals, giving an overview of the impact of the Erasmus+ programme in the VET sector for France. The budget dedicated to VET mobility grew by 23% between 2018 and 2019. Among the exchanges for apprentices funded in 2019, 1 986 were long Erasmus pro exchanges.
- (c) The Refernet network has published a thematic study on the development of long-term mobility for apprentices.

2021 Implementation

In the 2021 session, 2 929 candidates participated in the optional mobility test, which was negatively affected by the mobility restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports, the Erasmus+ Agency and the VET team of experts have updated the Vademecum on the implementation of mobility abroad for the purposes of certification in VET qualifications, under the authority of the Ministry of National Education, adding: the professional skills certificate (CAP), the vocational baccalaureate, the professional certificate (BP) and the applied arts certificate (BMA). The development supports the work of IVET schools/education institutions for valorising and assessing the learning outcomes related to learning mobility.

In September 2021, a nationwide event, the General forum on the mobility of apprentices, was organised on the initiative of the European Apprentices Mobility (EAM) association. It brought together the main decision-makers and representatives of stakeholders involved in apprenticeship to share best practice and to affirm their commitment for developing apprentice mobility.

A report was produced at the request of the minister responsible for national education and the minister responsible for higher education, to establish the impact of the health crisis on European and international mobility of young people. The report measures the impact of the crisis on the international mobility of apprentices: the periods of training in workplace mobility of VET learners and apprentices have fallen by almost 90% in 2020-21, while professional mobility under Erasmus+ have fallen by 37% compared to the previous year. It underlines the strong reactivity shown by the mobility players and stakeholders during the crisis. Finally, it notes the priority will of those players for a resumption of mobility activities and anticipates the possible difficulties, in particular those related to financial inequalities.

To facilitate mobility, the *1 young person, 1 solution* site of the youth plan, launched in the summer of 2020 as part of the national recovery plan, brings together a set of tools for young people to find an apprentice mobility, to simulate the financing of their mobility and to test their level of English:

- (a) *I am looking for a job* redirects applicants to a new job engine in Europe, thanks to EURES data (400 000 job offers);
- (b) *I am looking for an internship* gives access to the existing internship engine supplied by 2 000 offers in the EU;
- (c) *I want to do part of my apprenticeship in Europe* redirects applicants to Euro App Mobility;
- (d) *I am looking for an international internship* redirects applicants to Business France;
- (e) *I carry out an aid simulation* redirects applicants to the aid simulator;
- (f) *I want to test my level of English* redirects applicants to a free test in partnership with Wall Street English.

2022 Implementation

From 2022 this policy development is part of the national implementation plan (NIP): Measure 'Reinforcing the individualisation of training paths and the fluidity of lifelong learning', action 'Measures to strengthen the individualisation of in initial vocational education'.

5 951 candidates registered for the upcoming 2022 exam session of the optional mobility test; this significant improvement is undoubtedly linked to the changes in travel conditions (vaccination and PCR tests). The eligible area for mobility was also extended to the whole world. This mobility unit is available to all young people, whether they are students or apprentices; it is also available for adults in CVET.

Concerning the vocational diplomas delivered by the ministry, it should also be underlined that learners can have a training mobility period abroad (in a company for

example), and the competences, skills and knowledges acquired can be recognised for their exam back home. A certificate is delivered by the head of the regional education authority (recteur) to all learners that pass the mobility Unit (attestation MobilitéPro).

A guide was elaborated, jointly by the ministry and the Erasmus + Education and Training Agency to explain this scheme and the mobility optional unit.

Vocational high school students can benefit from reinforced modern foreign language teaching within the framework of European sections through a non-linguistic subject (DNL). This DNL, partly taught in the foreign language, most of the times applies to vocational teaching areas. The aim is to strengthen language skills and develop cultural knowledge. The European sections in vocational high schools rely on periods of training in a professional environment abroad to organize activities that combine a professional approach and a cultural approach. These sections contribute to the European and international opening of vocational high schools. Students have the indication 'European section' on the professional baccalaureate diploma.

Also, the law 2022-217 of 21 February 2022 on regional differentiation, decentralisation, and devolution, including various measures to simplify the functioning of local government, introduced a legal framework for cross-border apprenticeships. This system is conditional on the signing of bilateral agreements with the respective bordering countries. Order 2022-1607 of 22 December 2022 on cross-border apprenticeships lays down the applicable regulations.

The EuroApp Mobility association, whose goals are to promote and develop apprentices' mobility, launched in June 2022 the Mona project 'My apprenticeship in Europe'. The project aims at enabling more than 15 000 additional apprentices / professionalisation contracts to acquire professional experience in Europe during their training by 2026. To achieve this objective, funding of EUR 25 million (including EUR 17 million under the France 2030 Recovery Plan) is dedicated to the recruitment of specialised staff in CFAs to develop the long term mobility of apprentices.

The Euroguidance France network published a poster on the mobility opportunities of the Erasmus+ programme, which was updated at the end of 2022 to be distributed to more than 2000 organisations active in the field of guidance, support and training. At the end of 2022, the Guide 'Internships in Europe' was published by Euroguidance France in order to support vocational students and supervisors to find internships in Europe. It includes a methodological step by step guide and some country-specific resource sheets.

As part of the *Printemps de l'orientation*, organised by the National Office for Information on Education and the Professions (Onisep), a day dedicated to international mobility was held at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, on 15 March 2022. The event focused on discussions and exchanges devoted to the mobility of apprentices.

The second report of the 'Territorial Observatory of International Students and Researchers Mobility' (*Observatoire territorial de la mobilité internationale des étudiants et des chercheurs*) was published in May 2022. This observatory was set up by Campus France, in partnership with the bodies 'Regions of France' and 'Urban France' on the initiative and with funding of the Ministry for European and Foreign affairs. The report presents the key figures of the international mobility of French regions and cities while illustrating the territorial strategies of internationalisation.

Also the Erasmus+ France education and training agency is continuing its efforts and initiatives aimed at developing apprentice mobility. As regards the mobility of apprentices, the agency federates the main networks of Apprentice Training Centres (CFA) and other apprenticeship stakeholders in charge of Erasmus+ projects, within a national working group with the aim of sharing good practices, producing and disseminating resources to apprenticeship training organisations, and enabling them to promote mobility to IVET learners.

At the request of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Integration, the French General Inspectorate of Social Affairs (IGAS) submitted a report in December 2022,

identifying the obstacles to the development of European apprentice mobility schemes and formulating recommendations with regard to legal, financial, organisational, academic and governance issues.

As part of the French presidency of the EU, a ministerial conference was organised in January 2022, during which the European ministers pledged to strengthen partnerships between Member States to develop European mobility for young people in apprenticeships.

2023 Implementation

As part of the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme, the Erasmus+ France education and training agency is responsible for coordinating a network of vocational education and training experts. Under the supervision of two ministries – the Ministry of National Education and Youth and the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Integration – this team of experts provides support to VET bodies on raising awareness about and recognition of the educational benefits of international mobility. This team has produced a guide for the promotion of mobility in initial vocational training and runs information webinars.

On Erasmus+ TCA (Transnational Cooperation Activity) a Mobility event for apprentices were held in Bordeaux in November 2023, organised by the national Education and Training Erasmus + Agency. Over 3 days, the event brought together almost 150 participants from 27 EU Member States and non-EU countries associated with the Erasmus+ programme, representing networks of apprenticeship training establishments, for conferences and workshops to exchange practices and networking opportunities.

The law of 27 December 2023 aim to facilitate the international mobility of apprentices, creating an Erasmus for Apprenticeship. Key highlights include the simplification of the mobility status by giving employers and apprentices the opportunity to choose how to manage mobility as part of their contractual relationship and future financing prospects through skills operators (OPCO).

On 11 and 12 October 2023, in Lyon, the CCCA-BTP, a network to support apprentices training centres in the field of building and constructions, organised the inaugural Pedagogical Innovation Days, *Journées de l'Innovation Pédagogique*, focusing on European and international mobility for training organisations in the construction and public works (BTP) sector. In addition to exploring the various apprenticeship opportunities abroad provided by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Commission, the Pedagogical Innovation Days served as a platform to inform and raise awareness among BTP training organisations, businesses, and learners about the challenges and benefits of transnational mobility in vocational training for professions in the construction sector. The event aimed to facilitate connections among mobility stakeholders and training organisation leaders in the BTP sector who are not yet involved but are interested in engaging.

2024 Implementation

Actions to promote European and international mobility intensified in 2024. Moreover, in his speech at the Sorbonne on Europe in April 2024, the President of the French Republic emphasized the need to amplify the Erasmus programme for apprenticeships and vocational training, setting a target of having at least 15% of apprentices in European mobility by 2030.

As part of the national day 2024 of Future Skills and Jobs (*Compétences et métiers d'avenir*, CMA), which celebrates the success of nearly 200 initiatives supported under the first call for expressions of interest within the CMA scheme, the Mona project, *Mon apprentissage en Europe*, was selected to receive the Jury's Youth Award. The national Education and Training Erasmus + Agency organised in November 2024 the second meeting on the 'TCA Transnational Cooperation Activity Erasmus Mobility for Apprentices' (150 attendees from 20 countries).

In 2024, France solidifies its position as the leading country for mobility under the Erasmus+ programme. Currently, 48% of French educational institutions maintain at least one active school partnership with a foreign institution.

To facilitate student mobility across borders, treaties were signed with Germany, Spain, and Italy to promote partnerships, especially within the 'Abibac' (FR-DE), 'Bachibac'(FR-ES), and 'Esabac' (FR-IT) sections; these are specialised in offering bilingual education programmes in French upper-secondary schools to allow students to obtain a double diploma, recognised both in France and in the partner country.

International openness is an integral part of each upper secondary school's project (each upper secondary school has an institutional project which outlines the school's specific educational objectives, priorities and initiatives, tailored to the needs of its students and the local context).

European sections (*sections européennes*) and oriental language (*section de langue orientale*) programmes are available from grade 10 to 12 in general, technological, and vocational upper secondary programmes. Enhanced linguistic instruction is offered in the section's language, tailored to each institution's methods. Diplomas for general, technological, or vocational baccalaureate indicate 'European section' or 'oriental language section' for those who participate.

In collaboration with the Franco-German Youth Office and ProTandem agency (the agency dedicated to exchanges between France and Germany in vocational education), 190 000 youth mobilities have been implemented in 2024.

The Third Forum of Vocational Excellence, held from 10 to 12 September 2024 in Lyon focused on promoting excellence and adapting skills to the demands of the business world and European mobility in vocational training. The forum facilitated interactions among Europe's best vocational training practitioners to exchange best practices, generating new synergies, collaborations, and partnerships that foster innovation in vocational training. Representatives from all Centers of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) funded by the Erasmus+ programme and vocational training campuses participated, with particular emphasis on strengthening ties with Italy through its higher technological institutes (ITS), Spain through the integrated training centres (CIFP), and Ireland via the Education and Training Boards (ETBI).

The Discover the World! (Découvrir le monde!, www.decouvriremonde.jeunes.gouv.fr) was launched in September as a key source of information on mobility opportunities for pupils and their families, including vocational pupils. It offers a reference guide on mobility programmes abroad, outlining regulatory frameworks and pedagogical and financial annexes.

In terms of staff mobility, the eTwinning initiative, financed by the Erasmus+ programme, allows teachers working in the education sector (primary and secondary levels, including VET teachers) across 46 countries to engage in collaborative projects with their students, facilitating partnerships for Erasmus+ projects. Various mobility programmes are offered to teachers through France Éducation International, the ministry's key operator for educational cooperation. These include:

- (a) two-week language, pedagogical, and cultural courses in German, English, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, or Portuguese;
- (b) the Codofil programme, allowing teachers to work for one to two years in Louisiana;
- (c) professional exchanges of fifteen days, to share best pedagogical practices and establish inter-institutional partnerships.

Additionally, the Jules Verne programme offers international mobility for teachers to participate in bilateral educational cooperation projects while enhancing their language skills. Multiple programmes also facilitate exchanges between French and German teachers, including Élysée Prim and specific study programmes for history and geography educators. The dedicated agency 'Pro Tandem' supports the mobility of students and teachers in vocational training between France and Germany.

The Inspectorate-General for Education, Sport and Research (IGESR) published the mid-term evaluation of the Erasmus+ 2021–2027 programme. The report confirms the programme’s relevance and alignment with EU priorities, notably inclusion and mobility for those furthest from opportunities. With a budget over 80% higher than in 2014–2020, Erasmus+ aims to reach 10 million beneficiaries over the period. The introduction of accreditation broadened participation to new institutions, supporting democratisation of mobility. The report nevertheless recommended strengthening resources for school education and improving outreach to young people from priority neighbourhoods.

2025 Implementation

Law No. 2025-140 of 17 February 2025 authorised approval of the agreement between the Government of the French Republic and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany on cross-border apprenticeship. The agreement entered into force on 1 March 2025, providing a secure legal framework for alternance training between metropolitan France and neighbouring Länder from the start of the September 2025 school year.

The decree of 28 March 2025 set implementation arrangements, in particular contract and training duration, rules for determining remuneration, contract management by the skills operator in charge of cross-border apprenticeship (*Opco-EP*) and inspections (a decree of 4 December 2024, effective 6 December, also updated international mobility conditions -inside or outside the EU- for apprentices and employees on professionalisation contracts).

In this context, in July 2025 the Ministry in charge of Labour and DGEFP published two practical guides:

- one for apprenticeship training centres and training organisations detailing mobility agreements, funding conditions, recognition of learning outcomes and social protection;
- one for employers detailing administrative procedures, contractual arrangements and available financial support.

Euroguidance France published a series of data sheets to support the organisation of apprentice mobilities to other European countries. Each fiche sets out the conditions for hosting a French apprentice abroad with regard to the host country’s law. These data sheets are intended in particular for mobility coordinators in CFAs and were distributed in partnership with *Euro App Mobility*.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research
- Ministry of Labour, Full Employment and Inclusion
- Delegate Minister for VET under the education and labour ministers
- Erasmus+ National Agency (Erasmus+ France Education and training)
- Ministry of Labour, Employment and Professional Integration (until 2022)
- Ministry of National Education and Youth (until 2024)
- Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports (from 2020 till 2022)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices
Young people (15-29 years old)

Entities providing VET

Companies

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Financial and non-financial incentives to learners, providers and companies

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

European and international dimensions of VET

VET internationalisation strategies

Mobility of learners and staff

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET agile in adapting to labour market challenges

VET as an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training and skills

VET promoting equality of opportunities

Osnabrück Declaration

Establishing a new lifelong learning culture - relevance of continuing VET and digitalisation

European Education and Training Area and international VET

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[The Law No 2018-771 of 5 September 2018 for the freedom to choose one's professional future](#)

[Labour Code - Section 7: International and European mobility of apprentices, Article L6222-42 created by Law No 2018-217](#)

[Guide on Skills of mobility referents in apprentice training centres](#)

Ministry of Labour, European or international mobility of apprentices and the young in professionalisation contracts kits

Order of 30 August 2019 on the creation of an optional mobility unit and the MobilityPro certificate in the certificate of professional competence (Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle, CAP)

Order of 30 August 2019 on the creation of an optional mobility unit and the MobilityPro certificate in the vocational baccalaureate, vocational certificate and arts and crafts certificate diplomas

Promoting mobility for young people undergoing vocational training (under school or apprenticeship status)

Brochure: Vocational path: go abroad for training!

Ministry of National Education, Vademecum International and European mobilities

France: MobilitePro - boosting international and European mobility in upper secondary VET (in English)

A Territorial Atlas of European and International Mobility [Atlas territorial de la mobilite europeenne et internationale]

Centre Inffo (2020). International mobility in apprenticeships: focus on long-term mobility: France. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.

Euro App Mobility - Manifesto for a Europe of apprentices

IGESR (2021). The impact of the health crisis on the European and international mobility of young people. Report to the Minister for National Education, Youth and Sports and the Minister for Higher Education, Research and Innovation

Guide elaborated jointly by the Ministry of National Education and Youth and the Erasmus + Education and Training Agency - Vade-mecum: Implementation of mobility abroad for certification purposes in the professional diplomas of the Ministry of Education

Ministry of National Education and Youth - Modern languages, European sections and mobility in vocational high schools

National Agency Erasmus + Education and Training France - Guide for the promotion of mobility in initial vocational training

Law 2022-217 of 21 February 2022 on regional differentiation, decentralisation, and devolution

EuroApp Mobility Association - presentation of the MONA project

Euroguidance France - Poster on the mobility opportunities of the Erasmus+ programme

Euroguidance France - Guide "Internships in Europe"

"Territorial Observatory of International Students and Researchers Mobility" - Second report

Franco-German Council of Ministers of January 2023: Communique of the French and German Labour Ministers

Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research. (n.d.) Completing a training period abroad

Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Inclusion - Developing Erasmus for apprentices: a challenge for the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union: <https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/developper-lerasmus-des-apprentis-un-enjeu-pour-la-preside>

Inspection generale de l'education, du sport et de la recherche (IGESR). (2024, April; published 2025, June 4). Mid-term evaluation of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme [Evaluation a mi-parcours du programme Erasmus+ 2021-2027].

Ministere du Travail, de la Sante, des Solidarites et de la Souverainete sociale; Delegation generale a l'emploi et a la formation professionnelle (DGEFP). (2025, July). European and international mobility of apprentices - CFA/training provid

Ministere du Travail, de la Sante, des Solidarites et de la Souverainete sociale; Delegation generale a l'emploi et a la formation professionnelle (DGEFP). (2025, July). European and international mobility of apprentices - Employer guide

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Reinforcing access for all to lifelong learning (the 2018 law)

The 2018 Law for the freedom to choose one's professional future provides for:

 FRANCE

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

CVET

2016 Completed

French-German apprentice mobility pilot

A French-German pilot project to support the mobility of young apprentices was launched in November 2015 and involved 50 young apprentices working in 11 participating large enterprises (Allianz, Michelin, Danone, Bosch, BASF, L'Oréal, Siemens, BNP Paribas, ENGIE, Airbus and Safran).

 FRANCE

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Developing apprenticeship

Social partners have been involved in the design of the reform, along with regional authorities, chambers of commerce, and experts. Stakeholder consultation lasted from November 2017 to January 2018.

 FRANCE

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” **Cite as**

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28216>