

Long-term cross-country mobility in apprenticeships

Case Study Report

Cedefop project on Long-term cross-country mobility in apprenticeships
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Introduction

Apprenticeship training is a key element of Austria's IVET system, with about half of all IVET students in upper secondary education who follow this path.¹ There are about 250 different apprenticeship occupations on offer.² The apprentices themselves have to find a company offering such placements, although online databases such as the apprenticeship exchange platform of Austria's Public Employment Service (AMS) and Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ), provide support in that regard.³ The matching of apprentices to companies takes place as follows: companies offer training places and applicants (typically compulsory school leavers) apply for them. Applicants are usually rather young.⁴ Most of apprenticeships have a duration of three years. The overwhelming proportion (80%) of the apprenticeship period involves work-based learning in accredited training companies, while the rest (20%) is spent in compulsory part-time training in vocational schools.⁵ Apprentices have a special work-training contract (with the training company), have full social insurance coverage and get paid (apprenticeship remuneration). Successful completion (i.e. passing the apprenticeship leave exam) is signalled by a formal upper secondary degree/qualification (at NQF level 4).

¹ About 80% of all students in upper secondary education are in IVET (either full-time school based or dual mode).

² The amount of training at the workplace, the requirements in terms of equipment and the qualifications of the trainers are all regulated by law (BAG). An Austrian-wide training regulation (*Ausbildungsordnung*) exists for every apprenticeship. It includes the job profile (*Berufsbild*) – a type of curriculum for the company-based part of training, which lays down the minimum knowledge and skills to be taught to apprentices by companies. The competence profile (*Berufsprofil*), which is also part of the training regulation, formulates in a learning outcome-oriented manner the competences apprentices acquire by the end of their training in both learning sites.

³ Cedefop/ReferNet, (2016). *Vocational Education and Training – Austria*, https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2016/2016_CR_AT.pdf

⁴ About half of them are 15 to 16 years old, the rest is older (Dornmayr and Nowak 2018).

⁵ Alternance varies by occupation. It usually takes place weekly, but other organisational forms of teaching at part-time vocational schools also exist:

- all year round, i.e. at least on one full school-day or two half school days a week;
- by block, i.e. for at least eight weeks continuously; or
- seasonally, i.e. in block form at a particular time of the year.

Austria's economic structure is largely based on small⁶ and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), a lot of them export-focused.⁷ Indeed, the trading performance of Austrian SMEs, both on the export as well as on the import side, remains well above the EU average.⁸

As the European Commission's 2018 SBA Factsheet for Austria highlights, SMEs contribute substantially to Austria's 'non-financial business economy', generating 61.8% of total value added and 68.3% of total employment, exceeding the EU average.⁹

In general, the Austrian economy is heavily dependent on foreign trade, which accounted for 104.7% of GDP (World Bank, 2017). Its trade with the countries of the European Union accounts for almost 70% of its total trade.

According to the EU Skills Panorama, 67.6% of Austrian employers are reported to support the participation of employees in job-related non-formal adult education and training. Austria has a low outflow of labour within the EU and is not considered a major destination country for skilled workers, according to Eurostat data. The tradition of cross-border VET or labour mobility is relatively limited in Austria. Usually mobility in IVET is only short-term (3-6 weeks).¹⁰

Significantly for the purposes of this study, the **legal basis** for apprenticeships in Austria (Article § 27c (2) in BAG) **allows for the integration of mobility** into the apprenticeship programme: recognition of up to a maximum of 6 months per year abroad is possible, if the training delivered in the host country fits the occupational profile of the apprentices (Berufsbild/Berufsprofil – see footnote 2).

The ***Internationaler Fachkräfteaustausch (IFA – International Young Workers exchange)*** is the main body in Austria promoting mobility in apprenticeships, but these are short-term programmes, usually involving placements abroad for under 6 months.¹¹ There is no long-term mobility strategy for apprenticeships in Austria and no tradition and experience in long-term mobility for apprentices.

There are several **short-term schemes**. The IFA has provided short work placements abroad for more than 7,000 young people, mostly apprentices, since 1995. IFA issues a call for apprentices who wish to participate in a work placement

⁶ Roughly 66% of all companies are micro-enterprises.

⁷ Cedefop/ReferNet, (2016)

⁸ European Commission, (2016). *2016 SBA Fact Sheet – Austria*, https://www.advantageaustria.org/zentral/news/aktuell/Austria_-_2016_SBA_Fact_Sheet.pdf

⁹ European Commission, (2018). *2018 SBA Fact Sheet – Austria*, https://www.advantageaustria.org/zentral/news/aktuell/Austria_-_2016_SBA_Fact_Sheet.pdf

¹⁰ <https://ifa.or.at/>

¹¹ <https://ifa.or.at/en/working-abroad/> and Klimmer (2009).

abroad 2-3 times a year. It is currently running a scheme under Erasmus+ enabling young Austrians to undertake apprenticeships in a company for up to a year in an EU Member State of their choosing.¹²

The IFA coordinates the **'Foreign internships for apprentices' scheme** (*Auslandspraktikum für Lehrlinge*), which targets apprentices aged 16 or over who have completed their second year of training as well as apprentices who have completed their apprenticeship within one year of graduation. The maximum duration of these apprenticeships is 368 days. They include a minimum of two weeks occupational-specific internship in a company of an EU (or associated) country, language courses, and cover insurance, transport and accommodation costs. Training companies may get their apprenticeship remuneration reimbursed (as "normal" payment for the apprenticeship that continues during their internship in the foreign country). Foreign internships may be recognised as part of the apprenticeship training for up to six months a year. The programme is co-financed by Erasmus+ and Austrian ministries (for details see Annex 3).

The above discussion notwithstanding, it is also worth adding that sometimes VET/apprenticeship mobility – especially within affiliates of the company abroad – is also supported and funded exclusively by large employers (i.e. without any public funding). For example, this is the case of Austrian ÖMV apprenticeship scheme.¹³

The report is structured along the following lines:

Chapter 1 extensively presents the state of play as highlighted by the interviews and also incorporates background information on CB (LT)MA in Austria. In line with the Cedefop's analytical framework, three perspectives are highlighted: framework, system and implementation levels.

Chapter 2 focuses on presenting ideas on how to foster CB LTMA that have been put forward by the interview partners. In doing so, that section might stimulate discussion about new approaches, strategic developments or even national policies for CB LTMA, activities that so far do not exist in Austria.

The main findings of the report are presented in the Conclusions section

¹² In addition, a programme for gifted apprentices (*Begabtenförderung*) ran up to January 2019, offering four-week occupation-specific and company-based internships in another EU country to apprentices or recent graduates with high marks in their last year of VET.

¹³ European Commission, (2019), page 50.

CHAPTER 1. State of play

All subsequent statements are based on the interviews conducted. Generally, a broad and common understanding and assessment of the state of play with respect to enabling and disabling factors for CB LTMA in Austria emerged. Statements of interview partners differed somehow in estimating effect sizes of these factors as well as in promoting ideas of how to foster CB LTMA.

1.1. Framework level

1.1.1. Dimension “Overall Size and Training Capacity of Companies”

Company size and training capacity of companies are interlinked¹⁴ – yet, both are far from being seen as a mechanistic relationship. This is reflected on the size structure of Austrian companies engaged in apprenticeship training: about half (47%) of all training companies have only 1 apprentice; only 7% of all training companies have more than 10 apprentices.¹⁵

That said, company size is judged as a potential enabling factor for CB LTMA, especially in the case of large companies and those that have a lot of trade links with and business in other countries (i.e. “multinationals”).

Company size may matter as larger enterprises have more options to compensate for the loss of productive work of apprentices during their stay abroad by in-company rotation of employees. Besides, larger companies have greater potential to structurally incorporate CB LTMA in their overall training concept as they have more options to disentangle training from the inflow of incoming orders. Moreover, larger companies tend to employ full-time trainers and training managers who are in charge of apprenticeship training and can also co-ordinate related mobility.¹⁶

Yet, company size by itself is usually not enough: it is the general attitude and strategy of companies towards structured in-company training that plays a decisive role. It may make sense to conceptually distinguish between companies whose

¹⁴ Interview partners do not see any distinctive influence of the attitudes of employers in relation to participation of employees in job-related non-formal adult education and training in relation to creating a favourable environment or not for the intake of apprentices on long-term mobility.

¹⁵ Data based on current WKO statistics for apprenticeship training (WKO special tabulation for this report)

¹⁶ Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW), (2018). *Apprenticeship System - Dual Vocational Education and Training in Austria*, September

approach is situated learning that occurs on an ad hoc and informal way along its orders from customers/clients as opposed to those with a systematic, strategic and structured learning approach. In the latter case, one could systematically and more easily establish time windows/options for apprenticeship mobility.

That said, the size structure of Austrian training companies (as discussed above) has important implications for CB LTMA, usually acting as a potential disabler. Training culture as well as significant engagement in international (and regional and/or cross-border) trade and labour allocation (i.e. production sites in other countries) are potential enablers for cross border mobility in apprenticeships.

An idea forwarded especially for SMEs to engage in CB LTMA was that they might establish training alliances/networks with other SMEs/companies. In this case, the aim would be to rotate apprentices among them which, in turn, would allow for the incorporation of CB LTMA in their overall training design.

1.1.2. Dimension “Globalisation/Internationalisation” (Intra-EU Trade; Enterprise Foreign Affiliates; International Sourcing; Tradition regarding Cross-Border VET and/or Labour Mobility)

As briefly mentioned in section 1.1.1., international activities and engagement of companies (in trade, by having affiliates abroad) are deemed a potential enabler for CB LTMA.

One line of argument focuses on the demand for language skills (especially English as the lingua franca of international communication or in a specific occupation), intercultural learning and occupational experience in different work settings, production sites, etc. that fosters CB LTMA. It should be noted that some sectors may be more prone for CB (LT)MA, like tourism, construction or on-site assembling.

Secondly, especially for multinationals (who usually are larger companies) CB (LT)MA may be of special interest and these companies may use their facilities (and partners) based abroad to organise intra-company CB LTMA. That way the apprentice does not have to leave the company to go for CB (LT)MA. At the same time, coordination and harmonisation of training slots in Austria and in affiliate company site in another country is much easier to achieve. Trust in training quality and expertise abroad (in the affiliate company site) is also higher. Moreover, in this case many organisational issues will not apply or be of minor importance (like occupational safety, apprentice remuneration, social and health insurance coverage, etc.). Nevertheless, adequate framework settings still are relevant in order to promote CB LTMA.

Third, with respect to **cross-border VET and/or labour mobility**, unfortunately no empirical information exists, but most interview partners mentioned some

anecdotal evidence¹⁷ and valid considerations¹⁸ that would support that both cross-border VET as well as labour mobility are enablers.

Some see regional and/or cross-border mobility as the promising approach to foster CB LTMA.

One issue mentioned by most interviewees was **language**: Most outgoing CB LTMA are in German- and English-speaking countries. Obviously, apprentices prefer to go (and companies prefer to send them) to countries where they either can communicate in their mother tongue (German) or in English. Besides Germany and Switzerland, Austria's neighbouring countries are non-German speaking – therefore, experience of regional and/or cross-border mobility with these countries seems to be rather low. Foreign language skills are an issue as many apprentices have poor English skills compared to students of VET colleges. If poor English skills hinder CB MA or on the contrary are a motive to upgrade them during a CB MA is hard to gauge.

1.1.3. Dimension “Skills shortages and Migration Issues” (Intra-EU Labour Migration for Skilled Labour; Skills Shortages in Medium-Level Occupations; Immigration Policy)

The potential influence of skills shortages in Austria may differ between outgoing and incoming mobility.

With respect to **incoming mobility**, according to most of our interview partners skills shortages in Austria are basically an enabling factor (independently of sector or external trade or production links with companies abroad) due to the potential productive work contribution as well as future employment options of incoming apprentices.

Yet, the actual impact is low as Austrian companies usually do not have an explicit recruitment strategy for either skilled workers or apprentices from abroad. Exceptions may be true for larger and industrial production-based companies. Nevertheless, more and more companies try to recruit skilled workers from abroad. CB LTMA might be an option to provide a kind of pre-vocational qualification (at least from a mid-term company perspective).

In the same vein, it is unlikely that apprentices from abroad would return from their CB LTMA in Austria to finish their education/training at home and then consider going back to Austria to start a professional career: the time span between the completion of CB LTMA (in Austria) and potential recruitment seems

¹⁷ Examples mentioned are companies close to national borders as well as those with higher shares of employees working temporarily abroad or cross-border.

¹⁸ Results of Leonardo mobility initiatives among full-time (VET) students point to the same direction.

to be too long to be a realistic option (both for Austrian companies as well as for applicants from abroad). Some interview partners mentioned the likelihood that Austria seems to be less attractive for inward mobility – e.g. compared to English-speaking countries – except maybe for sectors like tourism and hospitality.

Looking at the **outgoing dimension**, skills shortages in Austria might be a hindering factor as CB LTMA of Austrian apprentices will result in a loss of their productive work contribution at home. Austrian companies may, therefore, be reluctant to send their apprentices abroad. Besides, Austrian companies may fear to lose apprentices in the long run due to poaching from abroad. Therefore, the more severe the skills shortages in Austria, the stronger the effect of foregone productive work due to CB LTMA may be.

All in all, skills shortages in Austria have potential enabling (especially for incoming CB LTM) as well as disabling (especially for outgoing CB LTM) effects – with the net macro effect being hard to gauge.

Immigration policies are also relevant in that regard as they set the scene for cross-border mobility. This is especially true for third country CB (LT)MA. Currently, strict criteria exist in Austria for third countries that in effect makes it impossible to organise and achieve inward mobility to Austria.

Immigration policies and their media coverage have a social and cultural dimension too as they influence the mindset of youngsters. Current (rather restrictive) migration policies often counteract the positive image and perception of mobility advocated by EU that underpins the drive to CB LTMA.

1.1.4. Dimension “Influence of SEOs” (Sectoral employers’ organisations (SEOs) in the national, international and European context)

Generally, interview partners did not consider SEOs to have any influence on CB LTMA as their involvement in such activities is mostly non-existent. Some report individual approaches to advertising CB LTMA (e.g. in the Economic Chambers of Lower Austria or in the trade sector department in the Viennese Chamber for the mobility of in-company instructors for apprentices) or possible cooperation between SEOs and Advantage Austria (which is the official foreign trade promotion organisation of the Austrian economy and involves a network of foreign trade offices).¹⁹

The low or non-existing engagement of SEOs may reflect the fact that IFA (see Section **Error! Bookmark not defined.**) is the institution that supports and organises CB (LT)MA of apprentices in Austria. Nevertheless, some interview partners advocate a more prominent role of SEOs in fostering CB LTMA, e.g.

¹⁹ <https://www.advantageaustria.org/international/index.en.html>

Advantage Austria could provide contacts among companies and/or engage experts to actively disseminate information about CB LTMA among Austrian companies that have affiliates abroad. SEOs could form co-operations or conclude agreements to first initiate and then sustain mutual exchange of apprentices. Some sectors like tourism or construction or those with a third place of training (like supra-company training providers in the construction sector²⁰) might be more inclined to such exchange.

1.2. System level

1.2.1. Dimension Apprenticeship Type, Apprenticeship Function, Curriculum Training Standard; Use of Validation and Share of VET-Students in Apprenticeship Schemes

The specific Austrian apprenticeship type²¹ (i.e. very high component of work-based learning - about 80% of total training duration takes place in the company; apprenticeship-related occupational concept; etc.) frames the setting for CB LTMA.

The **occupational concept** that forms the backbone of the apprenticeship system may be assessed as an enabler as it clarifies the expected learning outcomes but leaves scope of how to teach/train for and achieve them. Therefore, it is basically open to different learning settings especially with respect to in-company training (which makes up for about 80% of total training duration). As long as the content of in-company training in another country broadly follows the Austrian occupational profile of a specific apprenticeship, recognition of learning abroad is possible.

Yet in reality, disabling factors may play a negative decisive role:

As most other countries have full-time school based IVET, it may be challenging for Austrians to find suitable in-company training offers abroad and companies that have experience in providing suitable learning settings for apprenticeships (which require a quite structured approach to training) and not merely a context for gaining work experience (e.g. in the form of traineeships).²²

²⁰ Usually apprenticeships take place in the two learning places training company and part-time vocational school. In some sectors (like in construction) that setting is amended by a third so called supra-company training provider.

²¹ Type A according to Cedefop cross-nation overview on apprenticeships (2018).

²² i.e. work-based learning within the context of the Austrian apprenticeship design is a much elaborated und demanding learning approach compared to – for example – internships which focus on providing a work setting to gain experience for skills and competences learned in VET-schools.

The longer CB LTMA, the more skills and competences have to be acquired in the IVET-setting abroad. Therefore, the **degree of similarity of the two apprenticeship systems** – in both the sending and host country – is an important enabler for CB LTMA. Due to its duration, CB LTMA has to fit into the timing sequences (alternance scheme) of the training company as well as that of the part-time vocational school.²³ Skills and competences acquired abroad have to match the Austrian content of the specific occupational profile and the school curriculum for that particular apprenticeship. Learning outcomes and a competency-based approach to curriculum design help improve the apprenticeship system's flexibility and therefore have an enabling effect. Nevertheless, problems relating to the recognition of learning outcomes achieved abroad may arise especially as recognition of learning in the host country is not (and may not be) guaranteed beforehand.²⁴ In reality, IFA tries to check if occupational and training standards of the host country are in line with those of Austria. That way, Austria is trying to minimise potential uncertainties.

The main challenging aspect is what can be trained for and learned during the CB LTMA in a way that it will be recognised in Austria?

About half of all IVET in Austria is provided in an apprenticeship setting. Some interviewees argue that as apprenticeship training has some problems in terms of its attractiveness, it may attract youngsters that might not be as interested in CB (LT)MA as their peers are in full-time school based IVET. Additionally, apprentices often have comparatively poor foreign language skills, which can further hinder mobility to non-German-speaking countries. This is reflected on the fact that participation in CB (LT)MA is much lower in apprenticeship training compared to full-time school based IVET. In addition, there are more young people and teachers involved in school-based VET whose testimonials about their own experiences in CB (LT)M can champion such mobility.

1.2.2. Dimension Legal Basis for Apprenticeships and Integration of Mobility

According to Austria's VET law (*Berufsausbildungsgesetz, BAG*), apprentices are not legally entitled to go on CB (LT)MA, i.e. they need the approval of the training company (and the part-time vocational school, if CB LTMA will also cover schooldays). CB LTMA is a topic that usually involves two parties: both,

²³ For CB LTMA the approval of the part-time vocational school is usually needed too (due to obligatory schooling laws).

²⁴ This is a specific challenge for apprenticeship training and especially for its in-company training component. Modularisation may help but would imply that similar modules must be applied meaningfully in both the host and the home/sending country

apprentices and training company have to be interested in and agree upon CB (LT)MA. The part-time vocational school is also often involved, i.e. its permission is needed. To this end, the longer the duration of CB LTMA, the higher the probability that permission of part-time vocational school will be needed too.

Due to legal regulations, CB LTMA is feasible only within the total training time foreseen for an apprenticeship. Recognition of up to a maximum of 6 months per year abroad is possible, if the training delivered in the host country fits the occupational profile of the apprentice. That said, the basic concept for CB (LT)MA is its inclusion into the general framework and time-setting of the Austrian apprenticeship training.

There is a high degree of consensus among the interview partners that this basic design of CB (LT)MA and the legal setting in Austria are appropriate and meaningful. Moreover, as not all apprentices are interested and have the capability to go on CB LTMA, there is no need to legally include CB LTMA into the training regulation or make it an obligatory component. Consequently, there shall be neither a general obligation for nor a right to CB LTMA.

As underlined by the interview partners, as CB LTMA is a topic of company-driven human resource management policy it should be left to companies to arrange them. That line of reasoning begs this fundamental question: should CB LTMA really be a policy priority? Some stakeholders advanced the idea of offering CB LTMA immediately after the end of regular apprenticeship training, i.e. for apprenticeship graduates. However, none argued for generally extending the duration of regular apprenticeship training due to CB (LT)MA.

Current regulations for validation and recognition of competencies acquired abroad are assessed as adequately designed. Some interview partners mentioned that specification (like defining assessment methods) might be helpful, yet there is the trade-off of losing flexibility due to more detailed regulation (see Section 1.3.5).

1.2.3. Dimension Apprenticeship Governance; Funding of In-Company Training; Duration of the Whole Apprenticeship Period; Duration of In-Company Placements and Alternance

One of the most important aspects with respect to CB LTMA is the **interlinkage between apprenticeship systems design and implementation logic**. To incorporate CB LTMA in a usually 3-year apprenticeship training setting – as is the case in Austria – is a challenge. Since Austrian apprentices are comparably young (i.e. 15/16-years old when starting the training), CB LTMA would usually take place in the third year of training.

Yet apprentices in their third year of training already generate productivity gains, and CB LTMA therefore represents a cost factor for sending companies.

Moreover, in the third training year, apprentices will prepare themselves for the final apprenticeship exam and may not, therefore, have time for and interest in engaging in CB LTMA.

The conceptual design of Austria's apprenticeship training with about 20% of total training time devoted to obligatory part-time vocational schooling may also be a disabling factor for CB LTMA, as it leaves almost no space and scope for conducting CB LTMA during school-based sessions. That holds certainly true for the daily/weekly **alternance** model (i.e. the apprentice is four days per week in training company / one day per week in school). For some sectors with a high degree of seasonality (like tourism or construction), school-based training is blocked, which might be the only way to allow for CB LTMA. In other words, in these cases all of CB LTMA will take place during time devoted for company training).²⁵

With respect to **governance**, interview partners see no major shortcomings in the laws that refer to cross-border mobility of apprentices, i.e. the legislative setting for CB (LT)MA is adequate. Some proposed extending the organisational support for CB (LT)MA, a topic that will be addressed in chapter 1.3.2.

The basic structure of the Austrian **funding** regime in apprenticeship training essentially rests on three pillars: (i) compulsory part-time schooling is financed out of public budgets; (ii) in-company training is financed by companies; and (iii) apprentices receive an apprenticeship wage that is roughly in line with their productive work (and therefore lower than a skilled-worker's wage).

However, as the apprentices' productive work increases over time as a result of their becoming more skilled, the apprenticeship wage also increases accordingly.²⁶ Training companies get a basic subsidy for each of their apprentices and may also receive reimbursements (up to certain limits) for investing in additional activities that foster training quality. These subsidies are financed out of a training fund (with compulsory financing contributions from all companies having at least one employee).

²⁵ Besides the systemic dimension, an emerging trend is that mobility can take place during summer holidays which might pose a problem as in a lot of target/host countries this is the time when most employees are on leave and production is down.

One school that was interviewed, asked industrial companies in their region about the preference of the school model. Most of them wanted to keep the blocked release model and answered that they would prefer this type, because it would rather allow them to implement mobility for apprentices within their training time in the companies.

²⁶ Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW), (2018). *Apprenticeship System - Dual Vocational Education and Training in Austria*, September

One component of Austria's subsidisation scheme is a provision that **recoups the wage for apprentices** (that companies will have to pay) during the time they are abroad – i.e. for CB (LT)MA. All interview partners support that approach. Yet, some criticism and considerations have also been mentioned: The subsidisation (i.e. recouping the apprenticeship wage) does not cover the total expenses companies will face during CB LTMA as they still will lose the contribution of the apprentice's productive work when the latter is abroad. For larger companies that might not be of great relevance as they may have the financial means and/or sufficient pool of workers or can temporarily reorganise work. For smaller one it may be more relevant, especially if CB LTMA will have to be undertaken at times with typically high workload (e.g. in seasonal sectors like tourism). Yet, to design the subsidy in a more differentiated way might lead to the introduction of administrative criteria that may result in information loss and/or red tape which would have negative effects on companies' interest in engaging in CB LTMA.

Apprentices in CB (LT)M also receive some financial support through subsidies. Critics point to the fact that these subsidies are usually too low to keep up with the cost of living abroad (and the additional expenses for meeting fixed costs at home e.g. for housing, an aspect especially relevant for (older) apprentices who do not live with their parents).

For both companies and apprentices, the financial support covers some, but not all their expenses during CB LTM. Therefore, subsidies provided are a way to partially refund expenses, but that does not amount to providing financial incentives for CB LTMA.

1.2.4. Dimension Type of Contract; Status of Apprentices; Remuneration; Occupational Health & Safety Standards and Social Insurance

In the Austrian setting, the apprenticeship contract defines the status of the apprentice as an employee. At the same time, it also defines the training content that has to be delivered. It clearly defines the basic rights and responsibilities of the actors involved as well as the occupational focus of the training. This transparency may be seen as an enabling factor for CB LTMA.

The employee status might pose a problem in other countries as training settings in companies might only be accessible in formats like internships or working/employment may be allowed exclusively for age cohorts above the typical age of an Austrian apprentice. The same logic applies to regulations for safety and health as well as for overtime/shift work (especially for minors). Additionally, social security regulations may differ between countries and that might pose problems for CB LTMA. It will always be essential to clarify employer liabilities beforehand in case of work-related accidents.

The issue of remuneration was already addressed in chapter 1.2.3. According to Austrian law, remuneration for apprentices will also have to be paid during their stay abroad. Therefore, this has essentially to do with companies weighing up the costs and the benefits of whether to engage in CB LTMA. As usual, mobility will take place in the third year of training, a time in the apprentice's life when remuneration is already rather high. Therefore, this has an enabling effect for the apprentice (i.e. staying abroad becomes easier to finance for him/her) and would probably have a disabling effect for companies (i.e. the apprentice is already "costly" and the company will lose out on the productivity they generate) – yet, the effect for the company is (at least partly) surpassed by the financial subsidisation that recoups the company's expenses for apprenticeship wage/remuneration.

All in all, most interview partners see no or only minor enabling as well as disabling effects with respect to aspects discussed in this chapter. Effects will also vary significantly depending on specific countries and/or specific occupations (e.g. for regulations on safety, health or social insurance coverage).

1.3. Implementation level

1.3.1. Dimension National Strategy/Initiatives and Pilot Projects for CB LTMA; Governance of Apprenticeship Implementation

No national strategy for CB LTMA exists in Austria. None of the stakeholders interviewed have heard about any piloting regarding CB LTMA. Some ideas with respect to cross-border mobility may be derived from rather new and innovative IVET-programmes like "*Lehre mit Matura*" (apprenticeship with maturity) or "dual academy" that include options for CB MA; yet up to now this applies only to short-term apprenticeships abroad.

The national policy focus in Austria for CB MA is on encouraging short-term mobility (see discussion on IFA below). Moreover, priority is on outward mobility (i.e. number of youngsters going abroad). From a public subsidisation point of view, short-term CB mobility is logically cheaper than long-term mobility.

To assess the relevance of the role of labour market representatives (especially **social partners**, i.e. employer organisations, trade unions), one has to distinguish between their involvement in the governance of apprenticeship training and their activities with respect to CB LTMA. In general, social partners have an important role as they are the main stakeholders governing apprenticeship training in Austria: it is them who basically decide on the **general concept and design of apprenticeships** (which occupations to include, defining the occupational profiles, the duration of training, alternance arrangements, apprenticeship wages, etc.).

With respect to CB LTMA, the social partners also set **the rules for CB mobility** (e.g. that it has to be undertaken within the total training time, its maximum duration, the general provision for the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad, the possibility to subsidise companies by recouping apprenticeship wages up to a certain limit during the stay abroad of the apprentice, etc.).

With respect to concrete support for outward mobility, the social partners do not have an active role. That is essentially provided by IFA. Moreover, social partners carry out some promotion of CB MA, but not so (or only occasionally) for long-term CB MA. All in all, with respect to promoting CB LTMA as well as actively supporting it, social partners play a minor role. It is open to discussion – and an area where our interview partners have different views – if and how social partners could increase their actual engagement with respect to CB LTMA.

1.3.2. Dimension Methodologies and Guidelines; Authorities Promoting CB LTMA; Involvement of Intermediary Organisations and Structures

According to our interview partners, no **guidelines or special methodologies exist for CB LTMA**. Some refer to IFA as the relevant institution that provides guidance, information material and organisational support for CB MA.

As there is no national strategy for CB LTMA in place, no authority is promoting it and no intermediary organisation is involved.

The existing **intermediary IFA**²⁷ (*Internationaler Fachkräfteaustausch*, International Young Workers exchange) is the main body in Austria promoting mobility in apprenticeships, but these are short-term programmes, usually involving placements abroad for under 6 months. Its work and influence on promoting, supporting and organising CB MA was highly appreciated by the interview partners. These responses prove that companies need organisational support (like that provided by IFA) as they usually do not apply by themselves for CB MA.

According to some of them, IFA is missing a clear and sustainable policy commitment and financing mode.²⁸ No common position emerged from the interviews with respect to questions whether IFA's scope could and should be extended also for CB LTMA: Some do not favour promoting CB LTMA at all (at least not

²⁷ <https://ifa.or.at/en/working-abroad/>

²⁸ One interview partner shed light to the fact that funding regulations and the institutional setting are somehow discriminatory for apprentices as IFA is the only agency dealing with CB (LT)MA. Full-time school-based VET-students have more institutional options. Besides, a kind of a bottleneck exists, especially if demand for CB LTMA surpasses IFA's capacity. IFA already had to stop actively promoting CB (LT)MA as available funding (and subsidies) have remained constant – i.e. have not increased – for some time [this includes both Erasmus+ as well as national support].

during the regular apprenticeship training); some advocate an enlarged and, with additional funding, backed role of IFA for CB LTMA; and some favour a broader approach involving more stakeholders (like Chambers).²⁹

Based on its experience with CB MA, IFA itself argued that especially long-term CB MA will need specific supporting structures, combining and extending specific logistical arrangements with concrete organisational support. Additionally, mechanisms and instruments have to be put in place guaranteeing that skills acquired abroad will be recognised at home. And micro-level information (i.e. about host company and apprentice going abroad) is needed to support adequate matching to meet expectations for all the partners involved (see Section 1.3.7).

Moreover, political responsibility for cross-country mobility in apprenticeship goes beyond the (still relevant) aspects of how to organise and finance the sustainability of institutions like IFA. Bringing in all relevant institutional stakeholders to a national policy dialogue on the topic and continuously promoting the idea of mobility as well as its positive outcomes for all participants is beyond the possibilities of an intermediary organisation like IFA.

1.3.3. Dimension Funding of Long-Term Mobility

There is no special funding with respect to CB LTMA in Austria. The existing system of subsidies for CB MA (for both companies and apprentices; for details see Section 1.2.3 as well as Annex 3) may also be used for long-term mobility.

The current system of financial subsidies favours short-term (as opposed to long-term) mobility because it does not cover all expenses of the parties involved:³⁰ The longer the duration of the stay abroad, the more relevant these cost “disadvantages” will be.

The stakeholders interviewed disagreed that changes in the current apprenticeship-related subsidy regime should be made. Some held the view that financial subsidies for mobile apprenticeships are appropriate. Some advocate additional financial help to companies but warn against companies profiteering from this. Others suggest providing increased funding but earmarking it for activities which enhance support structures for or promote CB MA. Most share the view that special funding for CB LTMA would not make sense, as one should not

²⁹ A set of sectoral agencies might probably be more effective than a single institution/agency. Alternatively, sectoral exchange platforms could be established that would probably imply an involvement of Chambers of Commerce and/or Crafts at operational levels.

³⁰ For companies, they do not cover the loss of productive work during the stay abroad of apprentices – for apprentices, they do not fully cover their living costs abroad as well as the fixed costs at home.

distinguish between short- and long-term CB MA, at least as regards CB MA undertaken within the regular apprenticeship programme.

Ideas put forward by interview partners include the following:

(i) providing subsidies for mobility placements designed along sectoral supply chains;

(ii) linking CB LTMA and its subsidies to mobility taking place immediately after the end of training time;³¹ or

(iii) linking CB LTMA to civil/military service.³²

1.3.4. Dimension Age of Apprentices (at Enrolment)

All interview partners emphasised the young age of Austrian apprentices; yet they are somehow ambiguous if that is really is an important / decisive factor for CB LTMA. Counter arguments mentioned are that (i) young apprentices may have other aims and interests and do not value CB LTMA as an important option for their future career; (ii) their parents may be hesitant to let them go abroad for a rather long time, while apprentices themselves are also hesitant to go abroad for a rather long time (due to peer group staying at home, homesickness, etc.); and (iii) especially if they are minors, safety and protection rules may hinder CB LTMA, while there might also be regulatory barriers for travelling and being allowed to live temporarily abroad. At least, apprentices will need support on site, i.e. in the host company (see Section 1.3.2 on IFA).

Experience from IFA points to the fact that there might be no such thing as an appropriate age for mobility as there is considerable heterogeneity with respect to apprentices' personal development needs and life circumstances. In other words, being too young or too old may both hinder mobility: being too young is relevant as minors have restricted possibilities to act (see (iii) above), while being too old often conflicts with family and/or career planning. Moreover, as suggested by other interviewees, the socio-economic background of apprentices influences their interest and their self-confidence for CB (LT)MA. In addition, different working and leisure time arrangement in an unknown setting (i.e. foreign country) may be important influencing factors too.

³¹ That approach may entail consequences for the wage setting level ("somewhere in-between apprenticeship remuneration and a skilled worker's wage").

³² For those engaged in CB LTMA the time they have to spend in civil/military service will be reduced. As there is no service obligation for females, that would imply issues of gender-(in)equality.

1.3.5. Dimension Flexibility of Curriculum to Include Learning from Mobility

As already mentioned (see Section 1.2.1), the Austrian learning outcomes and competency-based approach to curriculum design together with its flexibility is generally deemed to have an enabling effect as regards CB LTMA. This is because training regulations are designed in a way as to match the skills and qualification needs of companies³³. Consequently, such regulations should and usually are flexible enough to reflect the variation of work-based learning realities and possibilities in companies. Nevertheless, problems relating to the recognition of learning outcomes achieved abroad may arise especially as recognition of learning acquired in the receiving country is not (and may not be) guaranteed beforehand in the Austrian context.

It might, therefore, be helpful to design training packages/modules of what has to be done and taught during CB LTMA (i.e. in the host company). In that respect, examples of good practise would be helpful. The hitherto approach of assessing learning outcomes abroad based on individual assessments is sub-optimal. Designing und applying generally accepted assessment instruments would be preferable (they will minimize the workload of recognition procedures as well as reduce insecurity with respect to assessment methods applied).

1.3.6. Dimension Role and Capacity of VET Providers in Implementing Mobility

As learning/training time in part-time vocational school comprises 20% of the total training time, there is almost no space and scope for CB LTMA during the (blocked) school-based sessions. For schools to engage, experience is important due to complex regulatory procedures. Moreover, benefits for schools are limited as positive outcomes of CB LTMA primarily accrue to better foreign (i.e. English) skills and advancements in personnel development of apprentices – probably these apprentices are more motivated which might be favourable for instruction time at schools too.

VET schools have the additional problem that they also lack time and resources (e.g. staff) for dealing with the administrative requirements of mobility programmes. To this end, they would appreciate guidelines and organisational help regarding the organisation of mobility programmes.

³³ In Austria, employer organisations (together with the social partner for the employees) have extensive influence on designing the whole systemic setting of apprenticeship training as well as the specific occupational profiles and their training regulations. That way, qualification needs of companies are the backbone of occupational profiles in apprenticeship training.

All in all, VET schools are usually hesitant and not actively promoting CB LTMA, let alone being very engaged in organising such mobility.³⁴ They are, however, more open to it, if cross-country mobility and especially CB LTMA can be undertaken during school holidays or during the company-based training time.

Ideas put forward by interview partners as to how VET schools might benefit from CB LTMA include establishing distance learning units and complementing CB LTMA of apprentices with CB LTMA of company instructors and VET school teachers. However, it is open to question how to finance such developments.

1.3.7. Dimension Employers' Perspective (Employers' Attitude Towards Apprenticeship; Employers' Interest in Inward and Outgoing CB LTMA) and Apprentices and their Families' Interest in CB LTMA

There is generally a positive relationship between companies' attitudes towards apprenticeship and CB LTMA. However, much more relevant are general attitudes and strategies of training companies towards structured in-company training. On top of that, the fundamental factors influencing the interest of companies (as well as those of apprentices and their parents) in CB LTMA have already been discussed earlier (see Section 1.2.3).

Currently, the main challenge for many companies is rather how to recruit (suitable) apprentices and not so much where to send them for CB LTMA. An important trigger for CB LTMA is the interest of companies in the development of intercultural competences. Therefore, companies with high exposure to international trade and production and/or occupations with a high degree of tasks in such occupational fields are more prone to offer and actively engage in CB LTMA.³⁵ A second trigger is a company's interest in supporting skills development, enhancing motivation and contributing to the personal development of their young apprentices – basically by helping them gain life experience during CB (LT)MA. Such experience proves its value through its high pay-off of even short-term CB MA.³⁶ A third trigger is a company's interest in present itself as an attractive

³⁴ Very few schools organise mobility programmes for apprentices during the school-based training time. One school interviewed recommends that remuneration for teachers would be an enabling factor for CB LTMA. That would motivate the teaching staff to organise mobility programmes in schools and they would inspire more apprentices to participate in CB LTMA.

³⁵ If the host company is a supplier, additional skills are acquired about products and processes (as part of the value-added chain). Apprentices on CB (LT)M generally gain a broader perspective of production processes and technological adaptations.

³⁶ According to companies interviewed, the interest of employers, especially among large and international companies, in running mobility programmes has increased in recent years. Nowadays, companies more often see the benefit of mobility for them as well as for the apprentices. For some companies, especially SMEs, to be beneficial for them, mobility programmes have to include the acquisition of professional or technical skills and competences.

employer so as to raise its comparative advantage in recruiting highly motivated and suitable applicants for apprenticeship training.³⁷

In general, training companies might still miss essential information about options for CB (LT)MA; especially that shows how they can recoup the apprenticeship-related costs for the stay abroad. Consequently, the provision of adequate and targeted information may be an important enabler or disabler for CB (LT)MA.

The discussion relating to CB LTMA usually focusses on the pros and cons of the “sending” training company. Probably a much more important barrier to CB LTMA might be the unclear (and, in reality, often unpredictable) benefits for “host” companies. Host companies’ benefits depend a lot on how quickly and well the “host apprentice” will fit into the work process and work teams of the company. That, in turn, depends a lot on the level of skills and competences he/she has already acquired at home. Additionally, the tasks that the apprentices have to perform should be similar to those at home to minimize induction time. The provision of extensive information by both parties prior to departure is essential for an adequate match of apprentices to host companies.³⁸

CB LTMA offers an option with respect to skills development and gaining a broader perspective of production processes and technological adaptation. Yet, the main advantage usually is gaining life experience during CB (LT)MA – advancements with respect to vocational skills are limited.

Companies will often have to **actively raise the interest of apprentices for CB (LT)MA**; favourable framework conditions are important but may not suffice to increase their interest in that regard. This is reflected on the fact that only few of Austrian apprentices seem to be really interested in CB (LT)MA. Interviewees put forward some reasons for such lack of interest:

(i) Young age matters a lot (for apprentices as well as for parents), e.g. parents might have reservations to send their kids abroad at such young age – entry-level apprentices in Austria are typically 15 years old;

(ii) apprentices’ peer groups impose specific priorities that do not necessarily include mobility;

(iii) puberty has generally great influence on interest in and (perceived) benefits of CB LTMA which might not be obvious for youngsters. That said, short-term CB mobility may have the additional advantage of minimizing fears of failure among apprentices.

³⁷ Although it is not empirically proven if mobility options are a relevant aspect for youngsters in choosing a training company.

³⁸ Again, sectoral exchange platforms and/or information collected at company level and provided by intermediate agencies is essential to support this kind of matching.

To make a long story short: The image and concepts of adults and policy stakeholders with respect to CB LTMA does not probably match the perception of youngsters/apprentices in that regard. One might argue about the meaningfulness and benefits of CB LTMA; yet it is basically impossible to convey the positive experience of mobility to (young) people (and their parents). Increasing young people's (and their parents') interest in CB (LT)MA has, therefore, to effectively address aspects that go beyond "good reasoning".

CHAPTER 2. Latest and future developments

As there are no major policy developments (see Section 2.1), this chapter will concentrate on forwarding ideas of how to foster CB LTMA mentioned by the interview partners (see Section 2.2).

2.1. National policies

With respect to all three levels (i.e. framework, system and implementation levels) of the analytical framework analysed and assessed so far, **no overall new approaches, strategic developments or national policy related activities** are to be observed.

That said, two stakeholders mentioned that there seems to be some discussion of CB LTMA within the context of a national strategy on internationalisation of education in general and VET in particular. Yet, no distinctive results with respect to CB LTMA exist up to now. Another stakeholder reported that within the new educational strategy of the Austrian Economic Chambers, there is some scope for fostering CB (LT)MA as this is seen as one way of meeting the demand for skilled workers in Austria. Yet, the focus here is more on numbers compared to duration of CB MA. Again, up to now, no further ideas have been elaborated.

Looking at conceptual developments for **short-/medium-term CB MA**, all interview partners essentially share the view that the current legislative regulations in place are adequate. Some have argued for additional funding (e.g. for IFA and/or higher subsidies for companies as well as apprentices). Other ideas will be presented in the next chapter as they may apply not only for short-term, but also for long-term CB MA.

All in all, interview partners might agree to the simple formula that obviously underpins the Austrian approach to CB MA: apprentices shall as much as possible undertake short-term cross-country mobility – while those who are interested in CB LTM, should have the possibility to do so.

2.2. Ideas how to foster CB LTMA

Ideas that came up during the interviews may be clustered into the following nine options:

Option: CB LTMA after finishing apprenticeship training

An idea advocated by some of the interview partners was that CB LTMA will be more appropriate once the 'regular' apprenticeship training is completed; i.e. as an option / additional qualification module for apprenticeship training graduates and young skilled workers. In this case, time and learning pressures for apprentices will be reduced (especially for those close to the final apprenticeship exam), the complexity of organising CB LTMA will decrease (no obligatory schooling, no/low personnel support in host country needed), and potential participants will be older and, therefore, probably more inclined to see the benefits of undertaking CB LTMA.

Option: training alliance

An idea suggested by interviewees especially as regards increasing the involvement of SMEs in CB LTMA was that they might establish training alliances/networks with other SMEs/companies in that regard. The aim would be to have a rotation of apprentices within a network of companies. This in turn would allow for the incorporation of CB LTMA in their overall training design. A portfolio approach would support that option to both document the sequencing of training tasks (i.e. what was the content of training, what were the learning outcomes, where and when was training provided) and facilitate the recognition of learning outcomes.

Option: regional cross-border mobility

Some interview partners see regional cross-border mobility as a promising approach in fostering CB LTMA. Promoting regional CB mobility (internationalisation on a "small scale") probably on a daily (or weekly) basis would have the additional advantage that the apprentice would reside at home and not miss peers/friends. A regional approach might result in a "snowball effect" reaching a critical mass: i.e. the more companies and apprentices participate in CB LTMA, the more potential actors are informed about it and its positive outcomes – hence the more will probably participate.

That approach will have to be accompanied by the establishment of regional support structures.

Option: sectoral approach

There is some scope to foster sectoral approaches too. One way would be to consider sectors characterised by a high degree of seasonal work, e.g. in the tourism or construction sector. During the "low season", apprentices can participate in CB

LTMA provided there is no conflict with the vocational schooling schedule. Another idea was to use SEOs (or similar institutional networks) to foster CB LTMA at sectoral level. Again, this would require establishing supporting agencies at sectoral level.

Option: institutional backing

To foster CB LTMA, extended institutional backing will be preferable in at least three fields: for promotion, for information and for support. Basically, training companies and apprentices will have to be addressed primarily – but of course activities like PR and information should aim a wider audience (like schools, parents, etc.).

It has been suggested that the way of approaching apprentices has to “modernise”, probably by enforcing hands-on information given by peers who have already taken part in CB (LT)MA (with media like Instagram, travel journals, blogs of influencers).

As already mentioned, (see Section 1.3.2) CB LTMA will probably need specific support, combining logistical structures with concrete organisational support.

Some interview partners advocate a more prominent role for SEOs to foster CB LTMA, e.g. Advantage Austria could provide contacts among companies and/or by engaging experts. SEOs would actively participate in setting up the structures in the host countries to welcome apprentices. SEOs could form co-operations / agreements / invitation activities to initiate a trend to mutual exchange of apprentices.

All in all, companies will have to be addressed actively to engage in CB LTMA. One way proposed was to use EQUAMOB³⁹: a partnership project to set up bilateral and multilateral meetings between interested parties with a view to initiating cooperation processes, exchanges of ideas and good practices relative to mobility projects for people at the initial vocational training stage,

Some interviewees see a more prominent role for the European Union in promoting CB LTMA. Up to know, they argue IVET – particularly apprenticeship training – is still is the “poor cousin” of higher education.

Option: finance / subsidisation

Options of how to support and incentivize CB (LT)MA have already been discussed in Section 1.2.3.

³⁹ <https://www.esmovia.es/portfolio-posts/equamob-practices-for-the-organisation-and-management-of-mobility-projects-in-vocational-education-and-training/>

Option: recognising learning outcomes from abroad

An important precondition for CB LTMA to make sense and to work is the recognition of learning outcomes achieved abroad. Some options (like modularisation, assessment tools, portfolio approaches) have already been discussed (e.g. in Section 1.3.5). Additionally, comparative research on learning outcomes in different countries / apprenticeship settings should be undertaken. Better information about other countries' approaches, educational goals and programmes will help to raise the credibility of and trust in the quality of these systems, which is essential to foster CB LTMA.

Options at school level

Part-time vocational schools may play a more pronounced role by promoting the idea as well as the benefits of CB LTMA to their students (i.e. apprentices). Schools themselves might benefit if distance learning units and tools will be designed and applied. Probably more important will be the availability of open source tools for assessing the learning outcomes achieved abroad as it might minimize workload at school level. CB LTMA of apprentices should probably be complemented with CB LTMA possibilities for company instructors and teachers.

Option: LT CB Mobility Award

Establishing a special award would help showcase the CB LTMA activities of companies, raising their attractiveness and promote the benefits of CB LTMA to a broader public.

Conclusions

International mobility in Austrian apprenticeship training is systemically and legally based in the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsausbildungsgesetz, BAG*). Both, financial support programmes and institutional support facilities (in the form of IFA) have been set up for this purpose. In principle, the legal basis also allows longer-term mobility of up to 6 months (per year). In practice, however, CB LTMA has so far not played a role, i.e. mobility is almost exclusively limited to stays abroad of up to 6 weeks.

No national strategy for CB LTMA exists for Austria and no efforts to develop a coherent one seems to be on the horizon.

Based on the reflections of the interview partners, the general setting as well as economic and social framework conditions in Austria might be assessed as being adequate for international mobility in apprenticeships. The same goes for the basic design of apprenticeship training with respect to curriculum design and flexibility.

Yet, to incorporate CB LTMA in apprenticeship training – usually lasting three years – is a challenge. As Austrian apprentices are comparably young (i.e. 15/16-years old when starting the training), CB LTMA will usually take place at the end of 2nd or in the 3rd training year. Yet, at that time the apprentice is already productive and CB LTMA, therefore, staying abroad represents a relevant cost factor for companies. Although financial subsidies are in place that allow the training company to recoup apprenticeship wage obligations during the stay abroad, the company still loses the productive work contribution of its apprentices while they are away.

The conceptual design of Austria's apprenticeship training with about 20% of total training time devoted to obligatory part-time vocational school-based training may also be a hindering factor for CB LTMA as it leaves almost no space and scope for conducting CB LTMA during school-based sessions. In reality, time windows for CB LTMA will then be either during school holidays or as part of the blocked (release) alternance model; i.e. essentially at times scheduled for in-company training.

From the point of view of apprentices, factors that hinder CB LTMA are: proximity of CB LTMA period to final exam; parents being hesitant to let them go abroad for a longer time period at such young age; apprentices' own low interest in CB LTMA due to their age (puberty, homesickness, peer group's lack of interest in such mobility, etc.); and, if they are still minors, special regulations for travelling as well as safety and health protection rules. Additionally, financial subsidies available to them might be too low to maintain acceptable living standards (i.e. fixed costs at home).

Another hindering factor as regards CB LTMA is the fact that financial subsidies currently provided are not sufficient to fully recoup the costs of such mobility incurred by the parties involved, i.e. companies and apprentices.

Last but not least, the longer CB MA, the more skills and competences have to be acquired abroad. Therefore, it would be more likely that learning outcomes acquired abroad would be recognised at home. Yet, there is no simple and transparent system in place for recognising competences acquired abroad nor are there cross-border agreements on the competences to be acquired in the context of CB LTMA

Austria has a well-known and highly respected intermediary body (IFA) that promotes, informs and supports CB MA. Yet, effectively fostering CB LTMA is probably beyond its current capacity due to limited financial resources and weak institutional support in that regard.

This report provides ideas and options of how to foster CB LTMA. Regional and sectoral approaches as well as stronger institutional backing (e.g. social partners as promoters, information providers and as supporters in organising CB LTMA) are all interesting options. Similarly, efforts and instruments to better guarantee the recognition of learning outcomes achieved abroad will also be essential drivers for CB LTMA. A systemic integration of CB LTMA as an option immediately after the completion of apprenticeship training (i.e. for graduates and/or young skilled workers) might be the appropriate way of fostering participation in long-term international mobility in Austria.

Annex 1. Interview partners

| Name of organisation | Type of organisation (e.g. public authority etc.) | Contact person |
|--|---|---|
| IFA | non-profit association; organisation that supports international mobility of apprentices | Susanne Klimmer (COE of IFA) |
| WKO Austrian Economic Chambers | Social Partner | Alfred Freundlinger (head of dept. for apprenticeship training) |
| Federation of Austrian Industries (IV) | voluntary representative of Austrian industry | Viktor Fleischer (division for education & society) |
| Chamber of Labour | Social Partner | Alexander Prischl (head of dept for apprenticeship. training) |
| Chamber of Labour of Upper Austria | social partner & competent body for apprenticeship training | De Zuani Roland |
| Economic Chamber of Upper Austria | social partner & competent body for apprenticeship training | Fritz Dallamassl (head of apprenticeship office) |
| bfi of Upper Austria | VET institute of the Chamber of Labour Upper Austria | Leonhard Niederwimmer |
| Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs | federal ministry | Alexander Hölbl (head of dept. for voc. education) |
| Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research | federal ministry | Karoline Meschnigg (head of dept. for part-time voc. schools) |
| University of Klagenfurt | research | Peter Schlögl (university professor) |
| training companies | | Bernhard Eicher (Palfinger), Anita Gradl (KTM) |
| part-time vocational schools | | Michael Vierlinger (Berufsschule Linz 6) Horst Oberhaidinger (Berufsschule Linz 5) |

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Annex 3. Detailed information on mobility programmes in Austria

Overview of the main Austrian national (or nationally recognised) mobility schemes and projects

At the moment, no projects or nationally recognised long-term mobility schemes for apprentices exist in Austria.

What do exist are programmes that foster international mobility for typically shorter-term periods: Since it was established in 1995, IFA (*Internationaler Fachkräfteaustausch*, International Young Workers exchange) has organized work placements abroad for more than 7,000 people, overwhelmingly for apprentices and for short- and mid-term duration (<https://ifa.or.at/en/about-us/>). These rather low numbers reflect the reluctance in Austria for long-term mobility of apprentices despite a high interest in international mobility of shorter duration. Currently, one mobility programme is on offer (a second one finished 2018):

Foreign internships for apprentices:

target group: apprentices (aged 16+ who have already finished the second year of their training) as well as graduates within one year of graduation

sponsorship / criteria:

- minimum 2 weeks occupational-specific internship in a company of an EU- (or associated) country
- maximum duration is 368 days
- a complementary language course may be sponsored too
- covered are insurance, transport and accommodation (in guest families, apartments or boarding houses)
- apprentices may be sponsored only once in their career

flat-rate subsidies are given for transport (depending on distance) as well as for the stay in the foreign country (depending on country and duration of the stay)

performance fee: apprentices may get 15 Euros per day (for internship as well as foreign language course)

Training companies may get their apprenticeship remuneration reimbursed (as “normal” payment for apprenticeship continues during their internship in the foreign country).

Foreign internships may be recognised as part of the apprenticeship training for up to 6 months per year.

The programme is basically financed by the European Union Erasmus+ (and by Austrian ministries)

Special programme for gifted apprentices (finished in 2018):

target group: apprentices (or graduates within one year of graduation) with excellent average marks in their last year of vocational part-time school

sponsorship:

- 4-weeks occupational-specific internship in small groups in a company of an European country;
- a complementary language course may be sponsored too
- covered are insurance, transport and accommodation (in guest families, apartments or boarding houses)

performance fee: apprentices may get EUR 15 per day (for internship as well as foreign language course)

retention for the apprentices: EUR 200 (UK and Ireland: EUR 400)

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