# Free movement of persons: mobility for students, persons undergoing training, young volunteers, teachers, trainers

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The European Commission was asked to prepare this document as a follow up to the Recommendations of the European Parliament and the Council on EU student mobility as well as the mobility of persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers. The aim is to examine how the Recommendation's "Action Plan for Mobility" is being implemented and what, if any, improvements need to be made. In preparing this Report the Commission has taken into account national studies as well as Reports submitted to it by Norway, Iceland, Poland and Hungary. Enhanced and improved European mobility for students and teacher's is recognised as a vital component for the fulfilment of the EU's pledge to make Europe the most competitive knowledge-based economy by 2010.Cross-border academic and vocational training undoubtedly adds to a greater understanding and appreciation of European training potential. In many respects and in recent years progress has been made. Funding for the Erasmus programme, for example, has increased from EUR 70 million in 1995 to EUR 102 in 2002, whilst Leonardo da Vinci funding has increased from EUR 44 million in 1995 to EUR 65 million in 2002. This increase in funding has meant that over one million students have benefited from the Erasmus programme. Nevertheless, these figures, disguise the fact that EU approved targets for increased mobility are not being met. For instance, the Erasmus programme in 2002 supported the mobility of some 115 000 students - about 1% of the total yearly population of higher education students in Europe. Over a five-year period this rate means that approximately 5% of students benefited from a trans-national mobility period. However, in order to reach the rate of 10% participation as specified in the Socrates decision, Erasmus mobility would have to more than double. Similarly, the Leonardo da Vinci programme in 2002 supported the mobility of some 45 000 trainees, which falls well short of 1% of persons participating in vocational education and training in Europe. Further, a remarkably low number of school teachers (40 000 in 2003) and university teachers (16 000 in 2002) have undertaken any mobility activity. Where mobility does occur it is typically for a very short duration only with the great majority of mobile school teachers taking part in meetings at a partner school for a few days only. Thus, nurturing further mobility, (although improving), is yet to reach the targets set by both the EU institutions and the EU Member States. This leads the Commission to conclude that comprehensive strategies to facilitate and actively promote mobility are the exception rather than the norm and results in many fields, including the removal of administrative and legal obstacles falling short of what is actually needed. It therefore proposes much stronger and co-ordinated efforts in order to contribute to the objectives set for education and training systems. To address the shortcomings in European mobility the Commission suggests the following improvements could be made: - Member States should set ambitious targets for outgoing and incoming mobility. Where appropriate, quantitive targets could be set expressed as a percentage. - Member States and the Commission could co-operate in the development of compatible statistical information on mobility including data on flows and trends. - Member States should review systematically overall andsector-wise national legislation to eliminate any obstacles to mobility. - "Volunteers" should be given a clearer status. - The creation of an operational European framework for qualifications in order to improve their visibility abroad. - Offering more financing for mobility policies. And, - Offering mobile students and/or teachers linguistic preparation.