



Mobility of School Teachers in the European Union

Presentation to European Parliament
Committee on Culture and Education (CULT)
by
London Economics

Aims and objectives



- ❑ Identify and describe the forms and types of EU mobility programs for primary and secondary school teachers

- ❑ Quantitatively analyse mobility flows
 - Across the EU 27 due to national mobility programs, and
 - Comenius program, by teaching discipline, position (e.g. head teacher) and duration of stay

- ❑ Qualitatively evaluate national measures aimed at promoting mobility;
 - Actions undertaken by the Comenius national agencies to promote mobility;
 - Analyse practical organisation of mobility at school level;
 - main obstacles and difficulties encountered by the schools;
 - advantages and disadvantages of mobility for the teacher; and,
 - experience, motivations and expectations of teachers in mobility schemes.

- ❑ Assessment: How mobility of school teachers is being implemented in the different Member States and examples of best practice

- ❑ Conclusions and recommendations: How to improve the quality of national and European policies in this field.

Observations from quantitative analysis



- ❑ National Mobility Programs concentrated in largest Member States
 - DE, AT, ES, FR, UK (generally managed/administered by national public body)
 - Generally, national mobility programs relatively short term (except Austria)
 - National mobility programs both EU orientated and international (especially UK)

- ❑ Largest users of Comenius programs are New Member States given the large fixed costs associated with the provision of national mobility programs
 - School Partnership Program (EE, CY, FI, MT, LV,..... ES,.....UK, FR)
 - In Service Training Program (EE, SL, LV, LU, SK..... BE,.....NL,MT)
 - Assistantship Program (AT, MT, ES, SE, LU,..... LT, HU)

Case Studies



□ Selection of case study Member States

- Austria: relatively high number of long-term mobility programs;
- United Kingdom: high number of destinations offered and common destination;
- Spain: high number of national mobility programs;
- Finland: Extensive use of Comenius programs; and
- Czech Republic: new Member State successful in promoting mobility.

□ In-depth interviews using semi-structured questionnaire

- Representatives from the Member State agencies administering Comenius and national mobility programs
- School representatives, head teachers and teachers currently participating in mobility
- 28 interviews completed across the 5 Member States
- Interviews with school workforce covered primary, secondary and special schools, as well as teacher across a range of disciplines – all with experience of mobility programmes

Qualitative information from in-depth interviews



□ Primary benefits identified

- Increasing teachers motivation to teach
- Improved pedagogical skills
- Improved linguistic skills
- Availability of programs to all teachers (e.g. including science teachers and special needs)
- Benchmarking/ quality assuring current teaching activity
- Understanding of common challenges across countries
- Openness to Europe (teacher and student) is particularly strong for repeat relationship programmes e.g. Comenius School Partnership 3 year projects
- Encouraging continuing professional development post-completion
- Innovation in methods of communication and information sharing improving not only linguistic skills, but also skills in Information Technology and Art
- Flexibility in terms of evaluation of participation

Qualitative information from in-depth interviews



□ Main areas for possible improvement identified include

- Targeting head teachers (in the first instance) to improve their understanding of the aims, objectives, benefits and processes of mobility
- Substitute and cover replacement is a cost for schools
- Provision of better (consistent) information to visiting teachers
- Evaluation of Comenius School Partnership program sometimes considered opaque
- Administrative burdens are considered excessive given the size of the grants involved
- Timing of applications, length of time between application and project start-up, and high burden at beginning of school year
- Timing of grant payments can pose difficulties for participants

Conclusions/ Recommendations



□ European Level

- There appears to be strong demand for teacher mobility programs. Given the perceived benefits associated with the programs (for teachers and students), there may be a rationale for increasing the availability of resources to further encourage participation.
- There could be a role for a pan European agency to facilitate better linkages between national and pan-European programs. For instance, there may be advantages in better matching inflows and outflows of teachers to minimise the costs perceived by schools (associated with replacement cover)

□ National Level

- The inconsistencies associated with the management of teacher mobility programs need to be removed. For instance, the information available to teachers is not always centrally available (reducing the effectiveness of the programs) and there are long delays between application and participation (making school planning difficult)

□ School Level

- It would make sense to identify and disseminate the benefits associated with teacher mobility programs (quantitative and qualitative) – especially to head-teachers – currently the costs are known and arise in the short term while the benefits are unknown and generally longer term