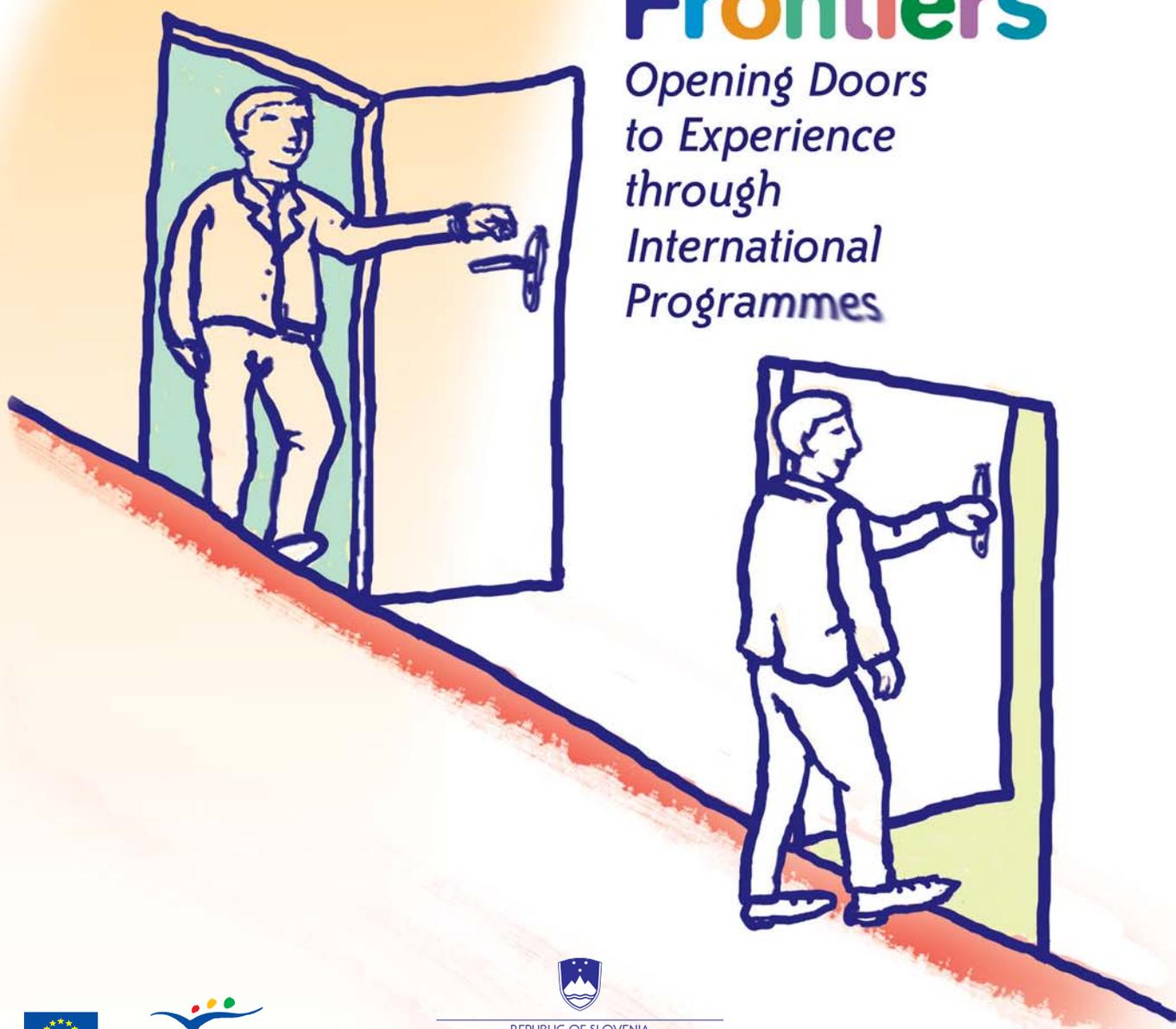


Mobility Opportunities for Young People

Ties without Frontiers

*Opening Doors
to Experience
through
International
Programmes*



CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	3
1.1	Origin and Development of European Programmes for Promotion of Activities in the Field of Education, Training and Culture	4
1.2.	Second Phase of Community Programmes in the Field of Education, Training and Youth (2000-2006)	6
1.3	Bilateral, Multilateral Programmes and National Fund for Mobility Support	7
1.4	Development of the European Research Area	8
1.5	European Mobility Instruments	8
2.	RESULTS	9
2.1	Mobility Progress	9
2.2	Slovenia in figures	10
3.	GOOD PRACTICES	15
4.	FUTURE OF MOBILITY	24
4.1	What is added value of mobility?	24
4.2	Future of Mobility in the Context of Further Development of EU and Slovenia	25

1. INTRODUCTION

History, Today, Purpose, Structure and Methodology

Today, mobility no longer constitutes merely a physical movement from one location to another, but it also encompasses a wide range of ideas and cooperation, as well as developing and actively supporting understanding of different cultures. Although we live in a relatively small area and in the immediate neighbourhood with other European nations and societies, certain differences between us developed in the past as the corollary of historical events, geographic diversity, distinctive features and different cultural heritage. Direct experience and creation of conditions for the establishment of harmonious mutual relations enable for these differences to be reconciled. In this way, we can demonstrate and explain our diversity in terms of cultures, languages, customs and habits, whereby we get to know the diversity of others. Equal co-existence allows us to maintain these differences, which make us special and enrich our world by way of gaining insight and acceptance.

Active participation in international cooperation or programmes creates added value for an individual, both personally and professionally. Living abroad is a demanding experience, which goes beyond holidays when a tourist agency makes all arrangements. An individual is exposed to an increased number of different situations and has to cope with an immense data quantity.

The Slovenes have always been renowned for an adventurous spirit and for our capacity to adapt to the new environment. Wherever the road takes us, we quickly find the locals who are of Slovene descent. Almost each of these individuals maintains contacts with their national and cultural heritage to some extent. All Slovenes living in the new and enlarged European Union as some sort of locals who have replaced their home town for a longer or shorter period are equally proud of their homeland abroad. Also, people from other cultures who temporarily stay in Slovenia for various reasons are positively surprised. They love to learn the Slovene language, are keen to get to know Slovene customs and habits, and respect Slovene culture.

The membership of the EU brought mobility in our everyday life. It does not primarily depend on the economic situation and it no longer represents a distant prospect and opportunity, which is reserved for rare individuals. Mobility equals experience, which is within easy reach to

almost everyone who would like to embark on this avenue. For the most part, mobility is accessible to the population group who is most attracted to such experience and has the easiest possibility to realise it as it is the freest, eager for knowledge and flexible, i.e. the youth.

Mobility in the field of education, training and youth in the EU has been gaining in importance from the mid 1980s. At that time, the EU created special programmes to support the exchange of good practice from various fields in education, training and youth, promoting innovativeness, providing for creation of networks, and above all supporting mobility of individuals participating in these activities. The programmes help to bring together educators and students at different levels, connect schools and other education institutions, develop innovative partnerships in vocational education and training (VET), link youth and volunteer groups, and endorse joint projects and research activities.

Mobility opportunities in European programmes are extremely diverse: short and long exchanges, studies, study visits, on-the-job training, professional training and work placement. The duration of all mobility projects ranges from 1 week to 12 months. Various groups of final beneficiaries can participate: upper secondary students, students, young graduates, apprentices, unemployed, volunteers, young workers, educators, teachers, businesspeople etc.

When glancing through this extremely extensive offer, one should also bear in mind the fact that mobility is also possible through bilateral interstate agreements, regional programmes and various funds.

The first part of the present publication offers some general information on the development and possibilities for mobility in the framework of Community programmes.

The next section focuses on brief reports on the existing successful cooperation, which is illustrated with numbers and corroborated with comments for individual target groups. The central part of the publication gives a couple of concrete examples of mobility as participants describe their experience. The final section provides our reflections and looks into the future by identifying the challenges ahead and indicates the ultimate destination of the path we are taking.

1.1 Origin and Development of European Programmes for Promotion of Activities in the Field of Education, Training and Culture

Before setting out today's possibilities, it is appropriate to look back and highlight the reasons for the creation of different initiatives and programmes. Beginnings can be traced back to the time when the European Economic Community (EEC) was established. The Treaty of Rome (1957) already enshrined that common policy in vocational education and training (VET) contributes to the harmonization of national economies and the establishment of the common market of the Member States. However, the mechanisms for setting up the programmes in the field of education and training were not in place until the second half of 1980s. The best known programme from this group is the ERASMUS Programme, which still exists and supports student mobility during their studies.

At the time of signing the Maastricht Treaty (1993), the EEC had become a more closely integrated international organisation - the European Union (EU) consisting of 12 Member States. They agreed that its structure shall be based on three pillars. The first pillar covers common Community policies as it also includes VET. The EU competence is limited to the implementation of the commonly agreed objectives and measures (complementarity principle), while the Member States preserve responsibility for maintaining and developing their national education and training system. This period also saw the adoption of the Leonardo da Vinci I and Socrates I Programmes (1995 - 1999).



BOLOGNA DECLARATION (1999)

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/educ/bologna/bologna_en.html

European cooperation in higher education (encompassing all post secondary forms of education, including professional education) experienced an important milestone as representatives from 29 countries met in Bologna and confirmed their commitment to set up the European Higher Education Area. The Bologna process marks a joint endeavour to reach coordinated cooperation and to consolidate the views to resolve challenges and open issues regarding basic concepts and development of higher education policies in the context of European integration and globalization. The ministerial conferences, which biannually review the progress report and take decisions on further measures (this year's event was organised in Norway, while the next conference is scheduled to take place in the UK), are essential for the continuous implementation of the Bologna process. The mission of the Bologna process is to maintain European cultural richness and language diversity, which is founded on the heritage of diverse traditions, and to upgrade cooperation between higher education institutions in order to promote innovation potential, social and economic development.



LISBON PROCESS (2000)

http://www.europa.eu.int/growthandjobs/index_en.htm

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/et_2010_en.html

The year of 2000 represents a new milestone in the development of the EU. At that time, the EU already included 15 Member States, which expressed their commitment for Europe to become the most dynamic and competitive region in the world, which calls for well educated and adaptable labour force. In order to achieve this project, the heads of states adopted strategic objectives to be reached by 2010. They took measures for their implementation and decided to introduce a new work method - open method of coordination. The method gives more room to national initiatives and to the achievement of the objectives through various ways and in different timeframe.

COPENHAGEN DECLARATION (2002) and MAASTRICHT COMMUNIQUE (2004)

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/copenhagen/copenahagen_declaration_en.pdf

http://www.wetconference-maastricht2004.nl/pdf/Maastricht_Communique.pdf

The agreement reached at Brugge (2001) in the field of VET launched the equivalent process as it was started in Bologna for higher education. In November 2002, thirty states and the European Commission signed the Copenhagen Declaration on enhanced cooperation in VET in Europe. The relevant priorities for mobility are those aimed at an individual, citizen in order to “enhance transparency of vocational education in Europe by way of integration of different instruments, such as EUROPASS Mobility, European CV, Certificate Supplement, Diploma Supplement and Language Passport”.



The Maastricht Communiqué (2004) marks the continuation and formal conclusion of the process, which resulted in the adoption of the Decision on the introduction of the aforementioned instruments. The objective of EUROPASS (http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/europass/index_en.html), which is primarily intended for an individual, is to overcome barriers and facilitate mobility within the enlarged Union. It contains a vast array of documents, ranging from a standard CV form to the Diploma Supplement, and contains a list of other knowledge and qualifications which were reached or obtained by an individual.

Documents are available at:
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/back_gen_en.html



1.2 Second Phase of Community Programmes in the Field of Education, Training and Youth (2000-2006)

The EU adopted the Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth Programmes in 1994 in order to support the implementation, further quality development and spreading of the European dimension in the field of education and training. The programmes ran from 1995 to 1999, while in 2000 they entered their second phase, which covers the period 2000 - 2006. EFTA countries and candidate countries also participate in the programmes alongside EU Member States.

The **SOCRATES II** Programme promotes and provides financial support to European cooperation in all forms and at all levels of formal general education. Different levels and fields of education are targeted by differently named actions: the Comenius Action focuses on the first phase of education, from pre-school and primary to secondary school, higher education is covered by the Erasmus Action, lifelong learning is at the centre of attention of the Grundtvig Action, the Lingua Action is designed for language education, while the Minerva Action deals with open and distance learning.

Mobility of pupils, secondary school students, students, future teachers, teachers or educators replaces or usually complements education programmes in the home country. Mobility programmes predominantly proceed within the Comenius, Erasmus and Grundtvig Actions. The duration and purpose of mobility within individual action is adapted to the needs of individual target groups.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/socrates_en.html

The **LEONARDO DA VINCI II** Programme supports activities for the development of vocational and professional education and training. The programme provides for co-financing of mobility through projects, and is designed for individuals participating in elementary vocational education, students, young workers and persons who have recently completed their studies, as well as adults, employees or jobseekers. To take account of different target groups and training duration, mobility projects are divided in two categories: placements and exchanges.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/leonardo/leonardo_en.html

The objective of the **YOUTH** Programme is to get to know and understand different realities in Europe and to promote active international cooperation of the youth. It targets young people aged between 15 and 25 years. The programme supports group exchanges, voluntary work exchanges for a period up to 12 months, group youth initiatives, different types of training and seminars, with the content directly linked to youth and volunteer exchanges.

http://europa.eu.int/youth/index_en.html

1.3 Bilateral, Multilateral Programmes and National Fund for Mobility Support

Apart from extensive cooperation in the aforementioned Community programmes, Slovenia has been supporting mobility in other ways for decades.

Bilateral agreements concluded between the Republic of Slovenia and not less than 45 other states provide a basis for annual short-term mobility of students or young researchers from and to these countries. Bilateral agreements are not uniform; therefore their content cannot be described in general terms. Each contract stipulates conditions and scope of exchanges, and outlines cooperation methods between signatories. The recipient country usually publishes public calls for financial support of mobility every year. The Republic of Slovenia signed the agreements with the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, Italy, Bulgaria, China, Japan, Russia, Mexico and others. The list is not complete as the agreements are extended, corrected, renewed, cancelled and/or concluded in a different manner.

http://www.cmepius.si/DRUGO/Bilateralne_stipendije

The **CEEPUS** (Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies) exchanges take the form of thematic networks. Each network consists of a minimum of three higher education institutions from at least two different countries, while it is often the case that the networks consist of even six members or more. The themes considered by cooperating faculties range from biochemistry, chemical technology, regional economic development, cultural studies, pedagogy, linguistics, design and development of environment friendly technologies to the convergence of legal systems. The students participating in the CEEPUS exchanges are exempt from paying tuition fees, while they are also provided with accommodation and health insurance in the host country. The provisions were made for recognition of periods of study undertaken abroad at the student's home institution. Apart from student exchanges, CEEPUS gives a possibility of professor exchanges through short lecturer cycles abroad, which adds variety and complements the curriculum at hosting faculties. In the 2005/06 academic year, approximately 110 students and 33 professors from abroad will visit

Slovene higher education institutions in the framework of CEEPUS. It is foreseen that 92 students and 35 professors from Slovene faculties will participate in foreign exchange projects in the same time.

<http://ceepus.scholarships.at/>

The Republic of Slovenia lends special financial and information support to young postgraduate students and researchers for international cooperation and mobility, thereby contributing to Slovenia's integration into the global education and research areas. To serve this purpose, the government set up a special public fund **Ad futura**. Ad futura publishes public calls for applications and offers grants or co-financing of full time studies and scientific research to Slovenes abroad and foreigners in Slovenia. The fund also provides for co-financing for the return of Slovene researchers who have been working abroad for years.

<http://www.ad-futura.si>

Alongside the enumerated mobility opportunities, there are also other, individual opportunities for mobility co-financing. More information is available at the websites of the Student Resource Centre SRCE <http://www.ljudmila.org/srce/> and other relevant internet sites.

1.4 Development of the European Research Area

The Bologna Declaration triggered the creation of the European Higher Education Area, while the Lisbon Strategy gave rise to the establishment of the European Research Area with the purpose to accelerate and promote the mobility of researchers. In this framework, the project for setting up of the European Network of Mobility Centres - ERA MORE has been in progress since May 2004. The primary objective of the mobility centres for researchers is to render assistance to researchers and their families who come to the EU countries, candidate countries, as well as Turkey, Switzerland and Israel. It is practically impossible to give a uniform “European response” to the questions on visas, taxes, social insurance, national grants etc., therefore the centres primarily operate at national or even local level. The ERA MORE Centre in Slovenia is placed within the CMEPIUS (Centre for Mobility and European Educational and Training Programmes). Apart from offering personal assistance, ERA MORE also delivers most important information to in-coming and out-going researchers. The information is available at the portal www.era-careers.si.

1.5 European Mobility Instruments

The Lisbon Strategy was soon supplemented by the Mobility Action Plan which serves as an auxiliary implementation tool as it includes 42 measures envisaged for the promotion of mobility and for overcoming all barriers standing in the way of its implementation. The Member States started to implement the concept in 2002.

July 2001 saw the adoption of the recommendation entitled “Mobility within the Community for Students, Persons Undergoing Training, Young Volunteers, Teachers and Trainers”. The recommendation sets out the benefits of mobility which are significant for personal development, promotion of flexible and adaptable labour force, as well as for social inclusion and active citizenship. The recommendation also specifies the activities for their implementation and constitutes substantive upgrading of the Action Plan. The Lisbon Strategy also deals with development policies in the field of education and training. Therefore, the Work Programme for future goals in education and training, which was entitled “Education and Training 2010”, was adopted in February 2002. The Work Programme highlights three strategic goals for mobility in Europe: quality, accessibility and openness to the world, which should be achieved in this period.

The White Paper published by the European Commission in 2002 “New Impetus for European Youth” represents the framework for European cooperation in the youth field. It highlights the necessity for closer strategic integration between all Member States, at the same time acknowledging the importance

of further, independent and local focus in order to provide for indispensable assistance to special groups. http://europa.eu.int/smartapi/cgi/sga_doc?smartapi!celexplus!prod!DocNumber&lg=en&type_doc=COMfinal&an_doc=2001&nu_doc=681

European networks, such as Euroguidance (<http://www.euroguidance.org.uk/english/main.htm>, <http://www.ess.gov.si/eng/Nrcvg/nrcvg.htm>) or NARIC (<http://www.enic-naric.net/>, <http://www.mvzt.gov.si/index.php?id=345>), contribute to mobility in the field of education and training by providing for high-quality information and guidance to potentially mobile individuals. A good example of such network is the **PLOTEUS** portal (<http://www.ploteus.net>), which is in the realm of responsibility of the Employment Service of Slovenia. The purpose of the portal is to enable online access to detailed information on education and training in 30 European states. **The European Job Mobility Portal - EURES** (<http://europa.eu.int/eures>) offering simple search of information on employment and education prospects in Europe followed in November 2003. May 2004 saw the official presentation of the **European Youth Portal** (<http://europa.eu.int/youth>), which enables quick and easy access to relevant European information which are of interest and importance for the youth. Its ultimate objective is to encourage the youth to actively participate in public society and thereby contributes to their active citizenship.

The setting up of the ERA MORE network complemented the European network of portals by

the online portal for mobility of researchers, **ERACAREERS** (<http://eracareers.si>), which is a part of the transeuropean portal for mobility of researchers (http://europa.eu.int/eracareers/index_en.cfm). The portal offers practical information pertaining to mobility of researchers, grants, invitations to tender for vacancies and other topical news.

Evaluation of Education and Training of an Individual

The Bologna process attaches overriding importance to mobility in higher education, with the focus being on the themes, such as transferability of grants, transparency tools, improved quality and criteria for recognition of education within the EU. The European Credit Transfer System and earning of credit points (ECTS/ECAS http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/ects/index_en.html) for assessment of periods of study undertaken abroad and the Diploma Supplement are being used increasingly. The students who obtained credit points for completing periods of study in another country have the possibility to have them recognised in their own state. The implementation of the Diploma Supplement should also promote the system of transparent and comparable diplomas within the Community and consequently facilitate employment procedures.

The activities pursued at undergraduate level in order to implement the Copenhagen Declaration gave rise to the creation of the Certificate Supplement in line with the jointly agreed model. The supplement clarifies the meaning of individual occupational qualifications in terms of competencies, and contains the reference.

2. RESULTS

2.1 Mobility Progress

Europe

When publishing its recommendations and policies, the European Commission primarily focuses on the fields where the objectives set have not yet been met. The barriers have been abolishing slowly, the reasons can be primarily attributed to complex procedures and legal consequences in every state. The promotion of benefits is stepping up, at least partial financial support is provided and the organisation of mobility has been improving. Financial support for mobility from the Community funds has been increasing every year. The number of states which allocate additional national funds to co-finance mobility alongside these measures is on the increase. Mobility is predominantly promoted in cases when it proceeds within the Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci or Youth Programmes.

Slovenia

2003 represented the fourth year of Slovenia's participation in EU programmes, such as Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth, while 2004 was the first year of membership when the activities in terms of the extent of funds almost tripled.

Cooperation exceeded all expectations as only the Erasmus Action within the Community programme Socrates supporting mobility of students saw the participation of 422 students in the 2003/03 academic year, which marks an increase by 30% in comparison with the past academic year (close to 800 students were involved in 2004/05), 110 upper secondary students participated in Leonardo da Vinci Programme, marking an increase by 34%, and 235 teachers, accounting for 12% more than in 2002. One should also mention the mobility of pupils, upper secondary students, students and teachers within the framework of Community projects under both programmes and

the Youth Programme. Mobility also proceeds through CEEPUS, a regional multilateral programme, bilateral and other multilateral agreements.

All these programmes at the same time provide a basis for foreign citizens to study or work in Slovenia. Over 200 young Slovenes went abroad for a one-month to one-year period in 2003 and 2004, while over 650 young people from other countries came to Slovenia for study purposes.

With Slovenia's accession to the EU, the mobility of upper secondary students, students and teachers doubled as compared to 2003, and we are approaching the figure of 1% of students in

undergraduate studies, while this percentage has already been exceeded as regards post-graduate studies. What is more, Slovenia was able to capitalise for the third time on the special and additional funds provided in 2003 within the EU Phare Programme, which also contributed to the increase of students and teachers participating in mobility.

Slovenia also allocates additional funds to support mobility, which has already been presented in previous sections. Bilateral and multilateral initiatives as well as financial support for studies abroad (not only in EU Member States) are in the forefront of these efforts.

2.2 Slovenia in figures

Erasmus

Contract year*	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Undergraduate students	214	344	399	468	713
Postgraduate and Phd students	16	20	23	78	29
Total	230	364	422	546	742

* The contract year pertains to the year when the contract was concluded between the national agency and higher education institution, while the contract includes the activities in the academic year which starts in the contract year.

The number of students participating in mobility within the Erasmus Action has been increasing annually. The fact is that the students' decisions also greatly depend on the financial support available in the framework of the action. However, the annual budget does not expand proportionally to the number of students. Consequently, the rise in the state co-financing rate could exert a positive impact on the number of students participating in mobility programmes.

Destination Countries

The majority of students decide to study in Germany, Austria, Italy and Spain. There are many reasons for this trend: Slovene higher education institutions have concluded the greatest number of agreements with institutions in these countries (easier and better comparability of higher education systems, a long tradition of cooperation), language of teaching is more familiar to Slovene students (German and Italian are often taught as second foreign languages in schools), way and

standard of living are similar to Slovenia, and we probably exhibit greater cultural similarities as compared to other nations. The lowest percentage of students travels to Ireland, Greece and Denmark. Slovene institutions have less partners in these countries, Greece is also problematic because of the language (programmes are only offered in Greek), while Scandinavian countries fall within the group of countries (together with Ireland and Great Britain) which are most expensive in relative terms.

Study Areas

When comparing mobility scope by study areas, Slovenia's statistics is very similar to statistical data collected in the whole Europe. The most mobile students come from business fields (economy, entrepreneurship, management), followed by language students (this area experienced a great increase in mobility in the past 3 years), law and social sciences (substantial increase

above all in the last 2 years). The students in these areas are probably more active in the international context due to their studies content and focus. Also, the percentage of students participating in mobility programmes is a lot higher when compared to the areas with smaller mobility scope. The lowest percentage of Erasmus students comes from natural sciences, geography, geology and humanities.

CEEPUS

To Slovenia from

Contract year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Austria	11	7	8	6	2
Bulgaria	8	6	7	5	14
Czech Republic	49	37	33	25	28
Hungary	33	34	28	14	13
Croatia	23	26	18	13	9
Poland	20	25	37	32	24
Romania	14	22	16	18	18
Slovakia	28	29	15	18	21
TOTAL	186	186	162	131	129

From Slovenia to

Contract year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Austria	18	29	16	17	16
Bulgaria	4	4	7	3	5
Czech Republic	36	35	34	20	9
Hungary	26	35	15	18	10
Croatia	12	25	14	13	9
Poland	18	19	9	22	15
Romania	7	6	7	4	12
Slovakia	25	25	14	13	10
TOTAL	146	178	116	110	86

The CEEPUS programme is similar to the Erasmus Action in terms of content, however, it allows for greater flexibility (above all shorter exchanges, one month or two months in case of students). Consequently, the percentage of postgraduate students participating in this programme is higher (35%). Having looked at the percentages of the participating group of countries, a trend can be observed: increased mobility from Eastern (poorer) states to the West (primarily to Austria and Slovenia), whereas the mobility percentages in the direction from Austria and Slovenia to the Eastern states are lower. On the whole, mobility scope is considerably lower in comparison with the Erasmus Action, although it is open to participation in all areas. The programme has not been subject to vigorous promotion campaigns as the host county provides for funds and accommodation for foreign students, however, presents accommodation capacities in Slovenia do not allow for the accommodation of a high number of foreign students in our country.

Bilateral exchanges

From Slovenia to

Contract year	2003	2004
Slovakia	5	3
Bulgaria	4	0
Croatia	7	8
China	2	1
Czech Republic	9	8
Italy	4	4
Poland	10	10
Serbia & Montenegro	4	5
Japan	0	1
Netherlands	0	1
Israel	0	1
Russia	0	2
Spain	0	3
USA	7	7
TOTAL	45	54

The Ministry of Higher Education publishes a public call for applications for foreign students every year on the basis of bilateral agreements signed by the Republic of Slovenia. The number of these agreements exceeds 45, and they are of different content and

scope. The public call for foreign students is primarily targeted at postgraduate students; therefore the Centre is only in the possession of statistical data on foreign grant holders from 2003 onwards when the activities were taken over from the Ministry.

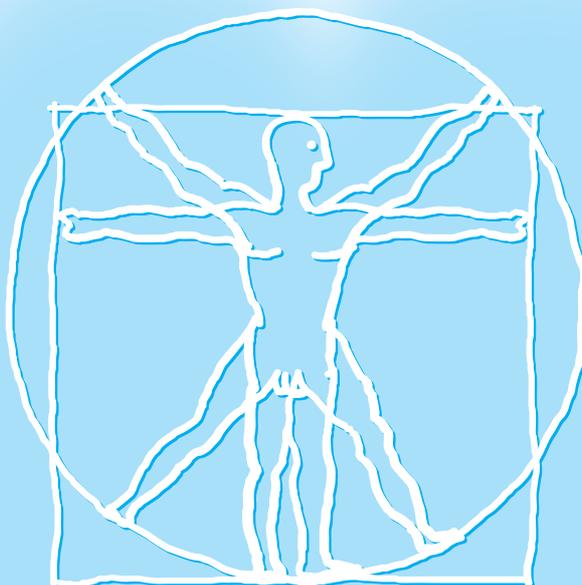
Leonardo da Vinci

Contract year	2000	2001	2002	2003*	2004**
Secondary school students	68	70	95	110	235
Students	29	37	71	67	76
Young workers and graduates	21	22	24	40	36

* Some projects in the 2003 contract year for students and young workers have not yet been completed. Thus, the numbers represent participants to date and they will most probably rise substantially.

** The projects in the 2004 contract year for students and young workers are still in progress in the majority of cases. Consequently, the numbers are merely indicative or they represent the sum of minimal number of participants in mobility projects as defined in the contracts concluded with project operators.

The table clearly shows an increase in the number of participants every year. The striking difference in all categories can be observed between the years 2003 and 2004. The increase can be attributed to Slovenia's accession to the EU and to the fact that available funds for mobility almost doubled (from 440 800 in 2003 to 802 893 in the 2004 contract year).



Secondary School Students

The percentage of secondary school students participating in the programmes has been steadily rising throughout the years. The number of new secondary vocational and professional schools which participate in mobility projects has been increasing constantly. The training fields of secondary school students, apprentices and individuals involved in elementary vocational education demonstrate a great variety. Health care, car mechanics, mechanical engineering, forestry, woodworking, catering, tourism, pharmacy and cosmetics, agriculture, horticulture, construction engineering, geodesy, economy... Secondary school students mostly undergo a 3-week practical training abroad, while only a small number of individuals stay abroad longer. The projects for this target group are prepared by school teachers. Minors and special needs individuals travelling abroad are always accompanied by teachers or mentors. In majority of cases, home establishments recognise practical training which secondary school students completed abroad.

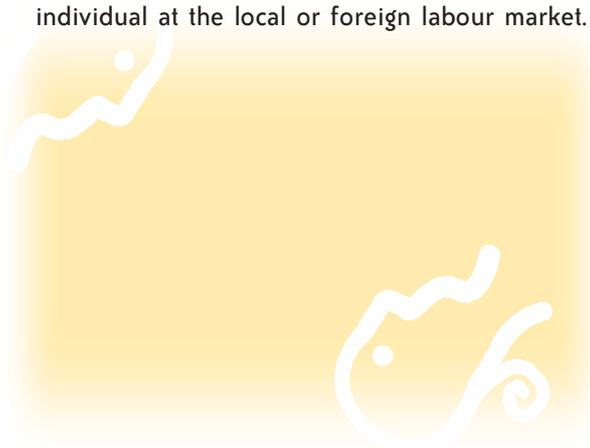
Students

This target group did not have enough participants in mobility projects in view of the available funds until 2002. Active promotion and incentives for cooperation of students in mobility projects have given results. This target group has demonstrated a greater interest for practical training in European countries since 2002 and we are currently confronted with a completely opposite trend. We do not have enough funds available to adequately cater to the great interest. A project application for students is mainly submitted by international offices at universities, individual faculties and in some cases by societies or other public institutions. Students from different faculties and colleges (catering, tourism, management, humanities, social sciences, law,

medicine, economy...) undergo training in numerous European states. The students express the greatest interest for Great Britain, Italy and Germany; however, the trend has been changing throughout years and students now go to almost all countries which participate in the programme¹.

Young Workers and Graduates

The target group consisting of young workers, graduates and young unemployed also exhibits some specific features. Firstly, this target group represents priority in the programme and consequently receives more funds as the group in question includes first-time job seekers. Unfortunately, no national institution which would be responsible for project application has been appointed, therefore project leaders are different. Following the initiative of participants, various companies, institutions, international offices or societies usually apply for the project support. The interest among young workers and first-time job seekers has been increasing every year despite administrative and status problems since practical training abroad represents an extraordinary opportunity for gaining new work experience, improving competitiveness and employability of an individual at the local or foreign labour market.



¹ The following states participate in the programme: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway, Bulgaria, Rumania and Turkey.

3. GOOD PRACTICES



Socrates Erasmus

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STUDENT MOBILITY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA

It is probably no longer necessary to represent the Erasmus Programme, one of the actions within the SOCRATES Programme, which renders support to universities in the development of the European dimension of higher education.

The University of Ljubljana started to participate in the programme in 1999/2000 when 67 bilateral agreements with foreign partners from different EU Member States were concluded at faculty and university levels. They paved the way for 85 out-going students in the 1999/2000 academic year, while 2 students from abroad came to Slovenia. The interest expressed among students intensified every year; hence the faculties were looking for new partners, always signing new bilateral agreements and sending more students abroad every year. The number of signed agreements in the 2004/05 academic year already amounted to 400, with 550 out-going and 300 in-coming students. The projections for the 2005/06 academic year are even more optimistic as 750 students from the University of Ljubljana will study abroad, while we expect approximately 450 foreign students.

Let us stop talking about numbers. The statements of the happy students who made use of this opportunity speak volumes.



Jerneja, Liverpool Hope University College, Liverpool, Great Britain

We did not sleep in Slovenia until late,
we travelled through the whole state,
all barriers were cleared,
we smiled and listened open-eared,
hundred languages spoken from all ends,
we made a bunch of friends,
we developed thousands of photos,
love was also our motto 😊,
all exams were passed!
THIS EXPERIENCE IS UNSURPASSED!!!

The exchange was one of the best experiences during my studies. The faculty was so big that I would need a map to find the way :). People were extremely kind and helpful.

Meta, Universiteit van Amsterdam

The Erasmus experience: Wild! New adventures, new knowledge, new experience, new friends... I enjoyed every day, every hour, every minute...

Bojana, University of Warsaw



I was fascinated with Finland's natural beauty and cordial people. The experience of studying and living in the society of people from all over the world is priceless. The months I spent in the land of a thousand lakes were simply wonderful, filled with experiences, travel, new people and pleasant moments - truly unforgettable!

Zorana, University of Turku

As an Erasmus student, I had a unique opportunity last year to attend lectures and participate in parallel study activities at Europa-Universität Viadrina - Frankfurt an der Oder. The study system is slightly more liberal as compared to Slovenia. Apart from leading a modest life, the one-year Erasmus exchange provided me with an opportunity to get to know new society and people who helped me to jointly gain new expertise, language skills and the culture of the state we decided to visit. One should also not overlook added value from studying abroad: independence in the completely new environment, which is an inconceivable concept for many people, especially for those who have never experienced it.

Tschüs und viel Spass, Andrej - Europa-Universität Viadrina - Frankfurt an der Oder

I could describe four months of the Erasmus studies in Gdansk as pure adrenalin. I met so many new people, experienced a new culture, and gained new knowledge and experience. Europe, the world and people have a whole new meaning to me now :))



Marko, Gdansk University of Technology, Faculty for Hydro and Environmental Engineering, Gdansk, Poland



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci

Mobility

EUROSKILLS PROJECT, ACQUIRING SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE THROUGH PLACEMENT AND TRAINING IN EUROPE

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The Euroskills project focuses on young workers/graduates who would like to acquire professional and language skills abroad. The University of Maribor launched the project with the purpose to provide for high-quality training abroad to its graduates and other young job-seekers from the region in order for them to get to know new working methods and approaches. Living in the new environment helps to achieve a greater breadth in European, cultural and personal respect.

Having obtained new skills and experience, the participants will have increased employment prospects at the local labour market and they will transfer their international and intercultural experience, and newly acquired professional and linguistic skills to the working environment. Consequently, they will contribute to sustainable and harmonious development of the region, their surroundings and institutions in which they will perform their work.

The project has a wide base as it principally includes all professions and work fields.

OUR PARTNERS:

United Nations Information Service, Vienna, Austria; Kompas Touristik Espana, Barcelona, Spain; ONECO - Global Training, Sevilla, Spain; TELECONSULT - Telecommunication & broadcasting, Castelvetto, Italy; SAC - Land Economy Research, Edinburgh, Great Britain; Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique, Domaine de Vilvert, France; Technische Universität Bergakademie Freiberg - Institut für Archäometrie, Freiberg, Germany; Musei Capitolini, Rome, Italy; National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, Bilthoven, Netherlands...

The idea of the Euroskills project also continues through the new projects (Euroskills 2 and Euroskills 3), which have expanded in terms of the number of participants and a more varied choice of partner organisations. The project and the Leonardo da Vinci Programme have gained great visibility and popularity among students and graduates. Good experience of the participants represents the best advertisement. An increase in the number of participants from other Slovene regions reflects the transregional visibility of the programme. The Euroskills project targeting graduates and young workers has been upgraded with the Euroskills project for students, which is also becoming increasingly popular.



Education and Culture

Socrates Erasmus

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The University of Maribor has been involved in the Socrates Erasmus Programme since 1999. The number of participating students is increasing by the year, and compared to initial 86 out-going and 18 in-coming students in the 1999/00 academic year, 160 out-going and 96 in-coming students have joined in the programme in the 2004/05 academic year.

Similarly, professors mobility is also on the rise, with as many as 60 professors visiting partner universities on an annual basis.

The University of Maribor has expanded its cooperation in the framework of the Socrates Erasmus Programme. For instance, it reached 272 bilateral agreements in 2004/05.

What is more, the University is also conducting language courses for Socrates Erasmus students as well as publishing a brochure that contains all necessary information.

The University is rigorously gearing up for a new package of EU programmes, not least for the new integrated programme to be implemented between 2007 and 2013, which will in part combine mobility as pursued within the current Socrates Erasmus and Leonardo da Vinci Programmes.

Students' impressions



Aleksandra Nestorovič at the Roman portrait of Antinoos in the Capitol Museum in Rome, where she pursued specialisation in antique portrait.



Miha Karner at BMW Motorrad - Werk, Berlin at the paintwork shop.



Nataša Počkaj at the United Nations in Vienna with trainees from all over the world during the break.

Nataša Počkaj: “During my studies at the Faculty of Law in Maribor, I applied to participate in the Socrates Erasmus Programme in Nijmegen, Holland. I took advantage of my time in the Netherlands by drafting my dissertation under the mentorship of my foreign professor, and collecting lots of literature which was not available in Slovenia. My experience has been very positive and invaluable, therefore I would suggest to all students to capitalise on it. I find all friendships and acquaintances, which I have forged with other students and professors, priceless, as are the new cultures that I have encountered. Valuable lessons can be drawn from studying at a foreign university, for instance, we can better ourselves, grow more understanding to different people and are more open to improvements in any area. And my tip to all students: courage pays off!

Having completed my studies at the University of Maribor, I wanted to do practical training abroad. The University of Maribor informed me of its cooperation with the United Nations Information Service in Vienna, which receives young graduates to do practical training. I decided to apply for this programme as well, and before long I was provided with an opportunity to do a 4-month practical training in a Vienna-based institution employing as many as 4000 staff hailing from all countries.

Working for the United Nations, I experienced authority and triumph, not least because I, an insignificant law graduate from the University of Maribor, could enter a strictly secured system leading to the international environment, and because I could immerse myself in all cultures brought together into one place, the United Nations. I will never forget encountering new cultures, customs, habits, fashion, languages, which people bring from their diverse backgrounds.”



Tomaz Žvižej in the secretariat of the Faculty of Catering and Tourism in Santiago de Compostela.



Nataša Majcen in the laboratory of the Natural Resources Institute in Kent with her counterparts.



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci

Mobility

PROJECT: Transnational Enterprise Skills in Eurobusiness - UNDERGOING MANDATORY PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE ABROAD

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The following partner institutions, having established networking through participation in other European projects like Fementre, Solocom, Eurobusiness 2 (EB 2), have been involved in Leonardo da Vinci mobility project **The Transnational enterprise skills in Eurobusiness:**

Dundee College, Old Glamis Road, Dundee, DD3 8LF, Great Britain; Niels Brock Business College, Julius Thomsens Plads 6, 1925 Frederiksberg C, Denmark; IRECOOP Veneto, Padua, Italy and GEA College of Entrepreneurship, Kidričevo nabrežje 2, 6330 Piran, Slovenia.

The project has been significant in that it not only provided for mere mutual student exchange, but it also guaranteed access to the EU labour market as well as work with experienced partners in a network which had been created through a number of other European projects. Furthermore, by performing their work in foreign countries, students have been given new added value (progress made in their command of foreign languages, personal growth, professional development, involvement in a specific project) and assessment of learning priorities.



6 GEA College students, project coordinators Marina Letonja, Msc, and Tanja Boštjančič at the reception in the Dundee City Hall.



Together with students at the meeting with enterprises at the Dundee College reception.



Socrates

Erasmus



GEA College

Visoka šola za podjetništvo

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GEA College of Entrepreneurship applied a number of activities in the framework of the SOCRATES Erasmus Programme for the very first time in 2002. In doing so, it resumed its initial organisation of mobility both for its students and professors (Tempus) launched in 1997. Since then, GEA College students may pursue as much as 35% of their full-time study at one of its partner institutions abroad. What is more, in 2003, GEA College was a pioneer in implementing Leonardo da Vinci - Student Mobility.

In the framework of Erasmus and Leonardo da Vinci Programmes, GEA College of Entrepreneurship is working together with more than 18 institutions from various European countries. Cooperation in practical training abroad is mutual. What is more, GEA College of Entrepreneurship has been conducting studies in English since 2004/05, providing for a more active Erasmus students exchange, and not least paving the way for accepting more foreign students into the Slovene environment.

Study at JIBS

Studies abroad provide you with an abundance of experiences, help you hone your foreign language skills, give you an opportunity to make new friends and gain independence. As for me personally, just changing my living environment was a challenge in itself, let alone a number of other challenges I had to confront. Way of life at JIBS completely differs from that in Slovenia; there are people with different customs and cultures. JIBS is just one of schools combined in one university consisting of all together 7000 students. According to unofficial data, there are 2500 students attending JIBS, out of which there have been around 500 international students from all over the world this year. JIBS' learning programme differs from that in Slovenia. On average, students have approximately 2 subjects on a weekly basis, depending on the number of projects they have selected for a quarter of a semester. At JIBS, 4 subjects are covered within one semester. A lecture usually lasts 2 hours. In addition to attending lectures, students need to fulfil other subject-related duties: team work is obligatory; students need to carry out research and other studies. However, all subjects are regrettably largely based on theory, practical examples are almost nonexistent. As for professors, most of them are would-be Ph.D.s - on average 25-year-old students

carrying out research in the framework of the school. There were many extracurricular activities organised to keep us busy. ENTRE, a student association, is in charge of extracurricular activities, such as excursions to nearby cities, the year book, various parties and get-togethers, business meetings, to name few. ENTRE bears resemblance to AES, however, the former is more active and international students oriented. ENTRE consists of few ambitious members; therefore it was in search of international students to join its ranks. They were looking for international students with special skills, such as a website operator, party organiser etc. What is more, ENTRE also made an effort to attract students by inviting them into their local bar, with free of charge food and "chat". More information on ENTRE is available at: <http://www.entre-international.com/default.asp>. The second organisation is called Junited (Jibs student association) and is largely responsible for publishing a school newspaper, and related activities. More information on Junited is available at: <http://www.ihh.hj.se/studentsidan>. What is more, Junited is also in charge of sports activities, and it has also provided us with an opportunity to work with the local radio. There is also a possibility of taking excursions, but students usually do it under their own

steam. The international office does a good job in maintaining sound relationship between the school and its international students, supplying them almost on a daily basis with what is going on at school and in town. The policy concerning the promotion of studies abroad is highly interesting. Students who would like to study abroad need to obtain specific points by working together with international students in terms of a contact person for an international student, or as a “pickup driver”. The contact person is intended to be a sort of a universal friend for an international student coming to his assistance when necessary, while the pickup driver is in charge of transferring students from the airport to their accommodation facilities. Alongside the contact person, there is also a contact family who applies on a list run by Jibs to establish contacts with international students. Contact families are predominantly families who would like to speak a foreign language, meet new people or families who themselves used to live in a country from which their international students come. I had an opportunity to meet a couple of Slovene families. We got together on long winter evenings to have dinner, savour Slovene cuisine and wine, and to go to the cinema.
 Author: Sebastjan Kokalj

Study at the University of Foggia

Peter Gojak and Matej Peroša at the University of Foggia.



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci
 Mobility



SREDNJA LESARSKA ŠOLA
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Project: Practical Training at Sawmill

Project Coordinator: Irena Leban
 Contact: irena.leban@guest.arnes.si
 Contact website: <http://www2.arnes.si/~sskrles1s>

The Škofja Loka Secondary Timber School has been involved in mobility projects since 2000. It has sent as many as 28 students to do practical training in Spain and Finland in recent years. The project PRACTICAL TRAINING AT SAWMILL has been planned and launched in cooperation with the Lahti College of Arts and Crafts and the Škofja Loka Secondary Timber School.



Keijo Makonen, Director of Lahti College of Arts and Crafts (first from the left) and Jorma Noponen, head teacher of the Department for Carpenters (third from the left) awarded a certificate to Klemen Marolt (second from the left) and Luka Černe (first from the right).

CARPENTERS IN FINLAND

First, let us introduce ourselves. We are Klemen Marolt from Dvorska vas and Luka Černe from Blejska Dobrava, students of the Škofja Loka Secondary Timber School. We are attending 2nd year of vocational and technical education programme.

We had an opportunity this summer to attend practical training at the time when preparations were under way to present our school at the get-together of carpenters in Split. There was a lot of information exchange, with mentors attracting designers to get involved as well, while we were entrusted to elaborate the presentation of an object - which is almost used as a mascot for our school, i.e. "a chair". Following some coordination meetings, we constructed the chair and did utmost to deliver a successful presentation of our object. The "Split" episode was unforgettable.

Thus, the ice has been broken. Before long, a new opportunity presented itself. Professor Irena Leban, our mentor, suggested that we do a part of our mandatory practical training in Finland. We acted on her proposal to familiarize ourselves with the possibilities and technologies in other countries. On 16 August, we flew to Helsinki and then to Lahti.

The project, which we got involved in, focused on working practice. We did practical training in timber factories manufacturing composite panels. Finland boasts state-of-the-art technology in this area. It is interesting to note that such factories employ more staff in offices than in production itself. Despite the fact that performance is extremely high, it seems that nobody is under strain to speed up their work. It is timber industry which is most developed in Finland. The birch tree is characteristic of Finland, and it accounts for the basic raw material in timber industry. Interestingly, 50% of all students attending the timber school are girls.

Finland is renowned as the land of a thousand lakes dotted with summer cottages. According to statistics, every second Finn owns such a cottage. What is more, lakes are also attractive in terms of fishing. In the winter time, with nights lasting longer than days and with temperatures plummeting to -45, the lakes freeze up to 1 metre in depth; therefore the car traffic runs on the frozen lakes. Finland is characterised by small wooden houses and old American automobiles. In this respect, Finland is known as the most American country in Europe. As for its food, it is both diverse and tasty.

Lahti is known as a winter sports town, with a lot of sports facilities (ski jump stadiums) within the residential area and in its immediate vicinity.

Lahti does not boast its own university, but it provides students from all over the world with different forms of education. Thus, we were able to meet people coming from other countries than Finland. Chang, a Chinese from Beijing, has left an indelible imprint on us. Chang studied polytechnic and was our roommate for a couple of days, during which time we introduced him to European cuisine and cutlery. Chang, on his part, translated our names into Chinese symbols, thus creating a great deal of amusement. Once we were walking through Lahti conversing in Slovene and thinking nobody could understand us. But all of a sudden, we were taken by surprise by Andreja from Kranj who, upon hearing us, exclaimed: "You two are Slovenes!" Thus, you see how small the world is.

Finns are very hospitable and kind to guests. We felt at ease in their company; we even forged some friendships we are intending to maintain until our next visit to the land of the Father Frost. This project is primarily intended for exchange of students to familiarise themselves with new working methods, customs and habits prevalent in other countries, and not least to gain lots of new experience. We are already looking forward to meeting two Finnish students who are coming to Slovenia in November.

Luka and Klemen

4. FUTURE OF MOBILITY

4.1 What is added value of mobility?

The participants (individuals and organisations) repeatedly report on valuable and important mobility experience at all levels: personal, professional or institutional, national or even European. The participants newly acquire or improve basic life skills, self-confidence, and enthusiasm, make new friends etc. In this way, mobility helps to create active citizens and changes perceptions of education and training. Mobility experience supports the participants to improve their employment prospects, promotes their integration into the labour market, raises motivation and upgrades specific knowledge. Last but not least, it has a positive impact on language skills, understanding of different cultures and broadening of general culture.

Positive personal, educational and professional mobility experience also influences the participants' organisations. The promotion of European dimension and lifelong learning in the field of education and training helps to overcome numerous barriers, thereby increasing the competitiveness of ourselves and our institutions.

Mobility programmes complement national initiatives in numerous respects, especially at the horizontal level (supporting national policies for foreign language learning, lifelong learning, professional counselling in education etc.).

Mobility supported by Community programmes, such as Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, Youth, is well structured and it consequently produces positive effects on Europe as a whole. It provides for the integration of certain target groups thereby establishing networks or associations (pre-school teachers, mentors, workers, fields...).

ESIB (The National Unions of Students in Europe, <http://www.esib.org/>) is extremely efficient as it is an active interlocutor of the European Commission and also one of the participants in the Bologna process. These networks and unions promote cooperation in policy making, give the opportunity for the exchange of good practice and have an impact on the quality of education and training system. Mobility also increasingly contributes to the development of transparency, the single European Higher Education Area and the single qualifications framework.

Consequently, mobility brings about better understanding in the enlarged Europe and helps us to become aware of the value of cultural diversity within Europe. It supports us to find common grounds, improves communication and opens our markets. In conclusion, mobility fully subscribes to the basic objectives of Europe.

The European programmes offer many possibilities; however, there are many potential participants who lack appropriate information. The present publication was created to cater for the needs of these individuals.

4.2 Future of Mobility in the Context of Further Development of EU and Slovenia

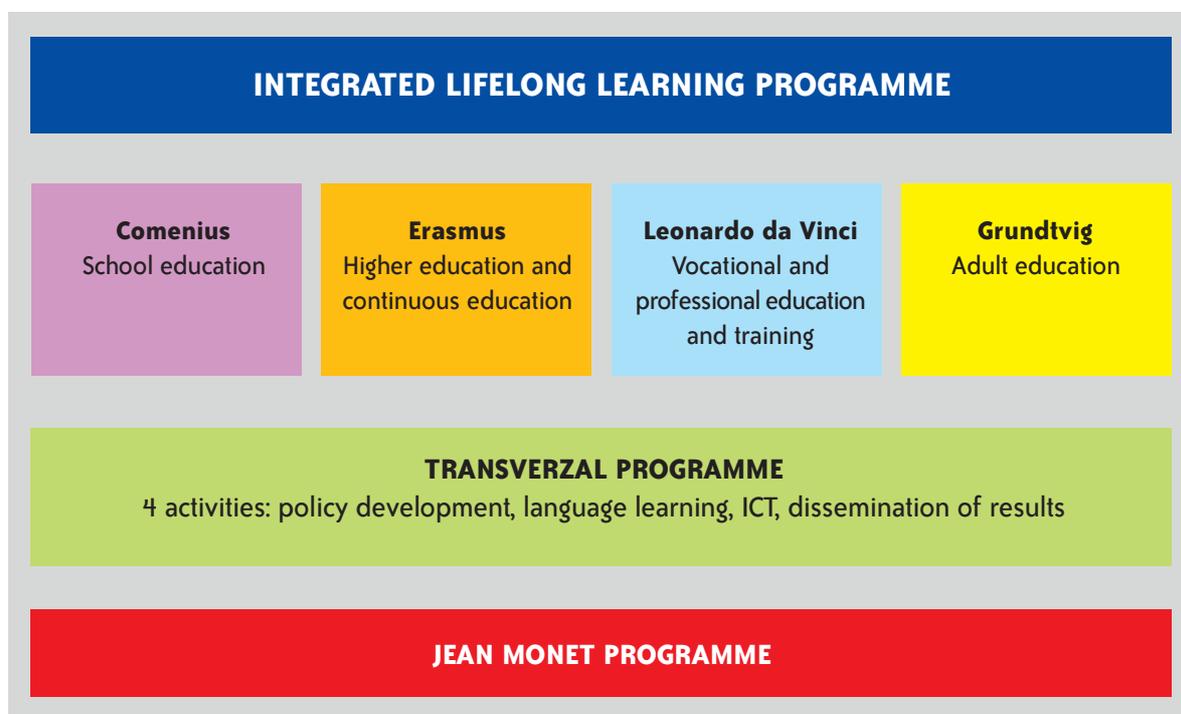
Europe agreed on the objective to become the most dynamic, knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010, which was followed by the subsequent signing of the Lisbon Strategy (2000). The development of high-quality VET from cradle to grave represent a decisive and constituent part of the strategy, especially in terms of promotion of social inclusion, mutual interaction, mobility, employability and competitiveness. The strategic goals enshrined in the “Education and Training 2010” programme were agreed to endorse this endeavour, followed by the detailed Work Programme for its practical implementation in 2002. The “Education and Training 2010” programme highlights mobility as one of the most important tools for reaching the milestones set and defined by the Education Council in May 2003.

This is the purpose behind the creation of a new generation of programmes “Integrated Action Programme for Lifelong Learning” covering the period from 2007 to 2013, whereby mobility represents the central mechanism alongside project activities.

The programme is also followed by the objectives set, out of which we put forward the important ones:

- 3 million Erasmus students by 2011,
- 150,000 placements for the youth (students, secondary school students and young workers) within the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme by 2013 and
- 25.000 adults in mobility projects every year by 2013.

The structure of the new integrated programme endorses the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy or the “Education and Training 2010” programme.



Slovenia promotes mobility in various ways.

The most important tools include:

- administrative endeavours as the legislation removed the main barriers pertaining to the acquisition or issuing of residence and work permits for Slovenia, and insurance (simplified procedures for visa acquisition);
- changes adopted in the field of general, vocational and professional education and training which are in line with the basic EU guidelines and have already been supported by appropriate legislation;
- the Diploma Supplement was introduced by law and the legislative basis for the Certificate Supplement was provided;
- unfortunately, there are still some problems with regard to opening the bank accounts, health insurance (for nationals of some states), accommodation and accompanying services (kindergartens, education of children...).

The participation of students, including future teachers, in study exchanges or in gaining of practical experience during studies through mobility programmes is governed by law and internal regulations of individual institutions. The periods of study undertaken abroad are subject to previous agreements between both institutions. As a rule, these periods are recognised and recorded in appropriate documents. It would be reasonable to connect numerous initiatives existing in Slovenia and also within the EU as much as possible in the following years and consequently provide for greater transparency and more efficient use of funds for beneficiaries. The second priority refers to the gathering of appropriate official information or instructions and access to the information, which is one of the prerequisites for mobility. CMEPIUS (primarily with setting up and launch of the ERA MORE portal) has already been collecting and transferring necessary information, and providing for the exchange of experience.

“So?
Be brave and just go!”



CMEPIUS

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