

# A CHARTER ON QUALITY FOR LEARNING MOBILITY IN THE YOUTH FIELD



## Youth Partnership

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Partnership between the European Commission  
and the Council of Europe in the field of youth



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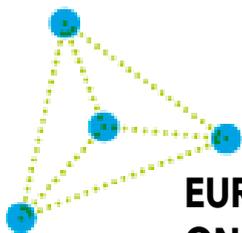
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## EUROPEAN PLATFORM ON LEARNING MOBILITY in the youth field

# Introduction for Users

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- ▶ Want to challenge how you organise international mobility projects?
- ▶ Time to re-think what makes your youth project really great?
- ▶ Need some fresh food for thought?

**H**ere are 22 principles that help you deliver high quality mobility projects. This framework is aimed at those who implement transnational mobility projects in the youth field.

It's written for 'project organisers' with a focus on non-formal education activities. Project organisers can be many different people in a variety of roles and positions. They can be (youth) leaders, people who implement the practicalities of a project, staff (voluntary or paid) of organisations, group facilitators etc. Young people can also be project organisers, if they have a specific role in the planning and implementation of the mobility project. When we write 'actor', we refer to anyone involved in the mobility project (project organiser, logistic support, young person etc.).

This quality charter was developed in the youth field and focuses on projects for and with young people, and for youth workers/leaders who work with them. But it can also be used in related fields (e.g. cross-sectoral educational projects) and other sectors with some adaptation. These principles go beyond the Erasmus+ projects and are also relevant for other networks and programmes that deliver transnational mobility for the benefit and learning of young people.

We took into account a wide variety of international youth mobility projects, ranging from youth exchanges, to volunteering, school exchanges, youth worker mobility, vocational apprenticeships etc. Because of this broad scope, some principles will be more relevant in some contexts, and less relevant in others. You'll have to think it through and see how the principles relate to your own international mobility project. The order of the principles will fit certain project types better than others. The charter is a practical hands-on guideline, a tool for

reflection, and definitely not a set of binding rules that you must stick to. It is not a legal document. It's a set of ideal principles to support the best possible quality in transnational learning mobility. You will need to take into account all your conditions, resources etc., and adapt the principles accordingly.

■ We all know that the actual mobility activity (the international bit) is only one part of the whole project. The months and months of preparation, support and follow-up are equally important as the international part. However, this quality framework focuses specifically on the international dimension of the project.

■ A mobility project is a learning experience for the participants. The focus is on the learners, and their individual (and group) learning curves. But this charter also aims to support learning for the project organisers. We hope that it makes you aware of your progress, of your own strengths and weaknesses, and that these principles encourage (self-)reflection for the areas needed to make your projects (even) better.

■ There are many resources, frameworks, sets of quality standards available in print and e-copy that support the use of this Charter. They will be available, if they aren't already while you are reading this, on the webpage of the European Platform for Learning Mobility (EPLM).\*

■ This charter comes with indicators and a handbook on Quality in Learning Mobility (publication expected in 2018). Good practice examples give you more context and ideas. The three tools together (Charter, Indicators, Handbook) help you organise quality learning mobility projects.

■ Many experts and experienced practitioners contributed to this charter. We've tried to include as many points as we can, so that you, project organisers from all over Europe, can benefit from their expertise. There may be areas you don't agree with, or approaches that you don't value as much, but we hope this quality framework will stimulate critical reflection by everyone who has experience in transnational mobility projects in the youth field.

Take your time, grab a nice cup of coffee, and have a read.

We hope you find it useful. And we hope the young people you work with will benefit from it too.

Best wishes,

*The European Platform for Learning Mobility*

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\* EPLM – What's that?

The European Platform for Learning Mobility (EPLM) is a space for exchange and cooperation between researchers, policy makers and practitioners. Our mission is to study, improve, promote and recognise learning mobility in the youth field. See our webpage for more information: <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/european-platform-on-learning-mobility>. The team of the EU-CoE youth partnership supports the EPLM as its technical secretariat.



# The 22 Principles of the Charter

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## **1. The project has clear learning objectives and these are known to all actors including participants.**

The intended learning has been identified and broken down into concrete objectives. These objectives are negotiated and developed together with participants and all other actors in the hosting and sending environments, based on their needs. The objectives are clearly communicated in a youth-friendly way to all actors well in advance.

## **2. The mobility project fits to the needs of the organisations.**

The project is compatible with the objectives of all the partners' organisations. Different stakeholders of the organisations, including management and staff, support the mobility project. It is an opportunity for professional and strategic development and provides added value for the organisations.

## **3. The type of learning mobility is adapted to the profile of the participants and the learning objectives.**

Organisers choose from the variety of mobility opportunities according to the profile and the needs of the target group. They make this choice on the basis of their available resources. The chosen type of learning mobility helps the participants to reach the learning objectives. The organisations manage participants' expectations.

#### **4. The organisers formulate indicators for assessing outcomes collaboratively with participants.**

Before the activity, the organisers and participants define together how they will assess whether the project is successful. Monitoring the success indicators from the beginning leads to current and future project improvements.

#### **5. Information about the project and conditions for involvement are clear before participants decide to participate.**

The organisers inform candidates and participants well in advance about the project. Information is communicated through channels appropriate to the nature and needs of the specific target groups. As demands on participants are clear, they can make an informed choice. Participation is voluntary.

#### **6. If there is selection, the criteria and procedures are transparent.**

The selection procedures are adapted to the type of mobility. The selection criteria are precise and clear to all involved in the selection, including those applying. The criteria are used objectively to select the most suitable participants for the project. Unsuccessful applicants receive clear feedback on why they were not selected.

#### **7. The organisers collect the needs of participants to create an inclusive environment.**

Participants have an opportunity to express their needs. The organisers take these into account to secure suitable conditions and appropriate environments for all participants. The relevant actors know in advance how to adapt arrangements accordingly. This is especially important to enable all young people to fully participate regardless of their additional needs.

#### **8. The organisers make sure that the resources are adequate to reach the objectives and cater for the needs of participants.**

There is a realistic match between the human, physical and financial resources, the timeframe available, the activities, the needs of participants and the objectives. The organisers manage these resources responsibly. Organisers must be properly prepared and trained.

#### **9. The learning environment helps to achieve the learning objectives.**

The different learning environments are chosen and tailored so the participants are able to acquire the competences set in the learning objectives of the mobility project.

#### **10. The programme is prepared well in advance together with all actors.**

The programme of the activity fits to what the hosting environment can offer. All actors share expectations and agree well in advance how they will implement the project. Roles and responsibilities are clear.

**11. Participants interact with the diverse cultures involved in the project, and in the hosting environments.**

The programme gives enough opportunity for authentic encounters with the cultures involved in the project and of the host communities. The project stimulates the intercultural learning process and allows participants to challenge stereotypes and prejudices. The duration and intensity of interaction is adapted to the target group.

**12. Actors in the project co-operate in a positive partnership.**

Both the sending and the hosting partners are committed to a collaborative approach to ensure participants' learning. They communicate transparently, share responsibilities, agree on a process on how to change things. They are willing to compromise in the interest of the participants.

**13. The organisers arrange practicalities well in advance and inform participants about them in a timely manner.**

The organisers take care of practicalities, such as travel, accommodation, social security and insurance, and inform participants well before departure. The practicalities cater for additional needs of the participants involved.

**14. Participants receive adequate preparation.**

Before departure, the organisers prepare participants appropriately. The staff involved in the project also go through a preparation process.

**15. The methodology and methods used are appropriate for the participants to reach the learning objectives.**

The activities for participants are tailored to their capacities and skills. The organisers put in place a process for participants to share feedback. The organisers review the learning objectives and methods and adapt them to the changing needs of participants and to any changes in the circumstances.

**16. The organisers ensure adequate support during the project.**

The organisers provide adequate guidance throughout the learning process and qualified support to defuse problems. Participants are aware of these available support structures and how to access them. The support participants receive enables them to learn from the difficult situations encountered.

**17. Organisers provide space and support for structured reflection on the experience.**

This reflection is structured both individually and collectively, and takes place before, during and after the activity. Recognition tools and processes can be used to support the reflection. Organisers help participants put experiences and interpretations into perspective. This enables participants to form and challenge their own views in order to develop critical thinking.

**18. The learning outcomes are evaluated at project and individual level, and in a short-term and long-term perspective.**

Learning outcomes are evaluated both for the project as a whole and for individual participants. Such evaluation compares the participant's starting point and the impact of the project on the individual. The evaluation also encompasses a longer-term perspective.

**19. The evaluation also includes non-intended outcomes.**

In the evaluation, organisers cover both explicit objectives and other outcomes, positive or negative, that resulted from the project.

**20. Organisers support participants to document their achievements and help those to be recognised.**

Participants receive proof of participation. The organisers assist participants to document the learning outcomes and achievements from the project. In the early stages of the project, the organisers together with the participants decide how they want to do this. Organisers help participants to gain recognition of their achievements.

**21. Organisers guide participants to capitalise on the outcomes of the experience.**

This is done at various phases. In the preparation phase organisers help manage participants' expectations towards the project. During the implementation phase, participants are stimulated to connect the experience to their own reality. After the activity, organisers support participants to transfer their learning to other contexts and exploit the outcomes in their personal and professional future development.

**22. Organisers capitalise on the outcomes of the project for it to have a wider impact.**

Organisers plan ahead how to optimise the impact of the project. During the implementation, organisers and participants take measures to increase the visibility of the project. Organisers and participants consciously capture the results that can be exploited. Good practice is documented and shared. The organisers reflect on how the mobility project fits the wider strategic development of the organisation.



# The EPLM's definition of terms used in the Charter

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## Learning Mobility

Learning mobility is meant as transnational mobility undertaken for a period of time, consciously organised for educational purposes or to acquire new competences<sup>2</sup>. It covers a wide variety of projects and activities and can be implemented in formal or non-formal settings.

The EPLM focuses on the learning mobility of young people and of practitioners in the youth field, and particularly in various forms of youth work, which, in the view of the EPLM, should be supported by European youth policy. The EPLM focuses on non-formal learning with links to informal learning and formal education.

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2 Competences are to be understood as an overall system of values, attitudes and beliefs as well as skills and knowledge, which can be put into practice to manage diverse complex situations and tasks successfully. Self-confidence, motivation and well-being are important pre-requisites for a person to be able to act out his/her developed competences'. SALTO T&C RC (2013) Competence framework for trainers.

■ Learning mobility in this framework aims to increase participation, active citizenship, intercultural learning and dialogue, individual competency development and employability of young people.

■ Mobility is also to be understood as a possible source of genuine and diverse learning experiences, and it therefore becomes important to critically investigate links between learning mobility (settings and contexts) and identity building.

■ The EPLM, in its work, not only considers European youth mobility policies and programmes, but is also more generally interested in learning mobility as a set of complex social processes transforming the conditions of growing up in Europe. Moreover, the EPLM focuses on physical and organised learning mobility but does not overlook the virtual mobility that facilitates and supports physical mobility experiences.

## Types of projects

■ Here are some examples of learning mobility that this Charter can support. It is not an exhaustive list (we are sure there are more).

### European Voluntary Service

■ Young people can express their personal commitment through unpaid and full-time voluntary service in another country. Young volunteers are given the opportunity to contribute to the daily work of organisations dealing with community issues. They are not replacing paid staff – rather given support to develop their own competences and contribute to activities for the benefit of others in communities around Europe.

### Youth Exchange

■ Youth Exchanges allow groups of young people from at least two different countries to meet and live together for up to 21 days. During a Youth Exchange, participants, supported by group leaders, jointly carry out a work programme (a mix of workshops, exercises, debates, role-plays, simulations, outdoor activities, etc.) designed and prepared by them before the Exchange.

### Study Abroad

■ Live with a new family in another country. Enjoy different traditions. Take time to appreciate, value and deepen your insights about other perspectives, cultures, religions and important world issues. Go to a new school, learn a new language and find ways to connect with people from other cultures and backgrounds—skills that you'll take back home and use for a lifetime.

## Workcamps

■ A work camp is a group of 8 to 20 international volunteers from five or so different countries who work together to help a local community with a project for 2-4 weeks. The camps are hosted by local communities, peace organisations, environmental groups, solidarity groups, community action groups, non-profit associations, and others who are interested in the impact that an international group can have on their community. In a work camp, volunteers are expected to work around 30 hours a week on activities that should serve the local community or benefit the environment. This usually involves cooperative labour in rural or urban areas, that doesn't require any particular skills.

## Youth Worker Seminars/Training

■ This activity supports the professional development of youth workers, through the implementation of activities such as transnational/international seminars, training courses, contact-making events, study visits, etc. or job shadowing/observation periods abroad in an organisation active in the youth field. All these activities are arranged by the organisations participating in the project. The participation of youth workers in such activities contributes to capacity building of their organisation and should have a clear impact on youth workers' daily work with young people. The learning outcomes should be further disseminated in the youth field.

## Vocational Apprenticeships

■ Apprenticeship-type schemes are understood as those forms of Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) that formally combine and alternate company based training (periods of practical work experience at a workplace) with school based education (periods of theoretical/practical education followed in a school or training centre), and whose successful completion leads to nationally recognised IVET qualifications.



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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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The European Union is a unique economic and political partnership between 28 democratic European countries. Its aims are peace, prosperity and freedom for its 500 million citizens – in a fairer, safer world. To make things happen, EU countries set up bodies to run the EU and adopt its legislation. The main ones are the European Parliament (representing the people of Europe), the Council of the European Union (representing national governments) and the European Commission (representing the common EU interest).

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