



YFJ Reaction to the Green Paper on Learning Mobility of Young People

1. Introduction

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) is an independent, democratic, youth-led platform, representing 99 National Youth Councils and International Youth Organisations from across Europe. The YFJ works to empower young people to participate actively in society to improve their own lives, by representing and advocating their needs and interests and those of their organisations towards the European Institutions, the Council of Europe and the United Nations.

The European Youth Forum welcomes the European Commission Green Paper on the Mobility of Young People. Despite the success of mobility programmes at European level such as Erasmus and Youth in Action, still only a small percentage of Europe's young people are mobile. The YFJ therefore supports this timely action to launch a wider and more thorough debate on how to ensure that mobility is possible for all young people, both for their own benefit and to build a true European society.

Bringing together youth organisations – the providers of mobility opportunities for tens of thousands of young people each year - and being a democratic platform for youth organisations from all over Europe, the YFJ has the responsibility to put forward the opinions of its members by contributing to this Green Paper.

The European Youth Forum consulted several experts on mobility, its own Working Group on Education and held an internal consultation between its Member Organisations. Several Member Organisations contributed to this process, with their own expertise and the European Youth Forum has synthesised their views to ensure that the voice of those for which the Green Paper is written - young people - will be heard.

2. YFJ vision on mobility

The concept of mobility should be understood from multiple angles. On one hand it stems from the European integration process, where free movement of people is one of the four freedoms upon which the Treaty Establishing the European Community is based.

On the other hand, the YFJ believes that the concept of mobility as a fundamental freedom cannot be applied only to EU citizens and that there is therefore the need to ensure mobility of persons between EU and non-EU Member States.

Mobility plays a crucial role for young people in the areas of employment, education, voluntary activities and other elements essential to reach an autonomous life. Labour mobility, to be understood as transition from one job to another, as occupational mobility from one career level to another, and/or as transition from one labour market status to another, is key to increasing competences, including both technical knowledge, personal skills and intercultural competences. Similarly, educational mobility, encompassing geographical mobility but also mobility from a particular educational strand to another and exchange programmes taking place within non-formal education, is of paramount importance for young people to develop key competences. These competences

will contribute to make them active and responsible citizens, facilitating their transition from education to the labour market and developing their critical thinking which is key in order to achieve autonomy¹.

Considering geographical mobility, obstacles to mobility within the European Union for EU citizens need to be addressed of course but a strong focus should also be put on removing the obstacles to mobility within the EU for non-EU nationals, including asylum-seekers and refugees, and removing the barriers to the mobility of non-EU nationals residing in third countries and moving to the EU.

In this context, the YFJ identifies visa policies as major obstacles to mobility², in particular to the learning mobility of non-EU nationals willing to spend short periods in the EU to take part in educational, cultural and sport initiatives, but who cannot do so due to visa problems.

3. General Comments on the Green Paper

The European Youth Forum believes that many of the crucial issues are tackled by the paper and correct questions are asked. Regrettably some other, no less important issues are not tackled or are only mentioned in passing. In this chapter the YFJ outlines its main comments on the paper, equal in importance as all are interlinked.

EC President Barroso correctly stated that mobility is a 'decisive contribution to the promotion of cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and multilingual learning.'³ Mobility is first and foremost an experience contributing to the personal development of young people.

This was confirmed by a large scale study among mobile students in Flanders⁴. Regrettably the Green Paper mentions personal development only in passing and focuses only on employability. Therefore, the follow up of the Green Paper should be based on a more thorough understanding of learning mobility.

Quality should come first

Not all mobility experiences lead to equally strong personal development, nor do they enhance employability. A bad mobility experience may lead to the young person becoming weary of the host culture and create aversion to job mobility or weariness towards future intercultural experiences. Any mobility experience needs to be framed within a global pedagogical approach and provide sufficient pre departure training and a close mentoring system with good debriefing and post mobility follow up. Programmes that rely on insufficiently-trained staff and educational institutions often fail at this, thereby not giving the student nor society a good return on their investment, by which we mean both the financial

¹ „Autonomy signifies young people having the necessary support, resources and opportunities to choose to live independently; to run their own lives; enjoying the possibility of full social and political participation in all sectors of everyday life; and being able to take independent decisions“
0590-07 A YFJ approach to youth policy

² See resolution 0373-07 'Europe is our Home, No visas!' and resolution 0944-07 'Visa, a little less conversation, a little more action in the field.'

³ Political guidelines for the next Commission, *José Manuel Barroso*

⁴ A.M. Van den Dries; Y. Beernaert; J. Geentjens, Brussels, 2009; <http://www.educonsult.be/>

investment of the learner and society and the time investment by the learner. A first step in the direction of ensuring quality for all mobility, would be the ensuring of quality of EU programmes by having them fully compliant with the European Quality Charter on Mobility.

The **territorial scope** of the Green Paper is too focussed on the EU while mobility of young people is not and should not be limited to the EU. This is also recognised in programmes such as the EC's Youth in Action which provide mobility opportunities to and from the Caucasus, Balkan and Mediterranean countries.

For the YFJ all young Europeans should have the same rights and opportunities to mobility whether (already) part of the EU or not. It is also in the interest of the EU to support the EU enlargement process and its neighbourhood policy by ensuring sufficient mobility opportunities for young Europeans that are not in the European Union. A good example for this is the Bologna process which covers mobility in the field of higher education in 46 countries.

To reach the aims stated in the Green Paper, EU programmes and formal education mobility will not suffice. It is imperative that **non-formal mobility providers** are taken into account and supported. Youth organisations provide a lot of non-formal mobility schemes and mobility schemes for students in formal education.

For example, one of the YFJ's Member organisation (EFIL European Federation for Intercultural Learning which is part of AFS) provides itself alone each year twice as much international mobility opportunities as the European Volunteer Service and as much as the Erasmus programme.⁵

The Green Paper correctly states that 'there is a need to reach out to **disadvantaged groups** who tend to be excluded from mobility opportunities'. The European Youth Forum believes that mobility is a right for all young people and that the EU should not allow some young people to have more right to mobility than others. As disadvantaged groups are very diverse, there can be no one-size-fits-all solution and to be efficient, most of the work will need to be done at local level. In this sense, the duty of the EU should be to guarantee the right to mobility and to ensure that all Member States implement the necessary measures.

4. Questions

Question 1.1

There is not one ideal solution to the challenge of informing all young people. It requires both passive information provision and active information spreading by people close to young people.

The first step in the information process is knowing that mobility possibilities exist. Young people need to be informed and reached in their natural environment through guidance in school, in youth organisations, on social networking sites. These actors are the first line of information and need to be prioritised.

Regarding the information provision, there is at the moment a huge variety of websites often catering to a specific audience. A good example is the Flemish website Wegwijzer⁶ ('signpost') which is run by young people for young people. To

⁵Www.afs.org

⁶<http://wegwijzer.be/>

make these websites possible and useful, it should be easy for them to link to other information sources. An easy-to-use central mobility website with as much information as possible and with links to local information would be needed. This site should include a Users part where students and young people can give tips about destinations, tips and which could serve as contact making tool. Giving young people the ownership over spreading information will increase the provision of useful and honest information.

Good examples are:

* *“Go abroad“ information markets / fairs organised by the local ESN sections in cooperation with the university (or alone).The exchange students at the university provide information about their country and university to the local students who thus get first-hand information from their peers, information they are interested in. The students present the country in a creative way – through traditional food, dances, pictures and songs etc.*

* *AFS Germany takes part in annual student exchange fairs where organisation providers present their service to students, parents, schools and the wider public to raise awareness about mobility and promote the benefits of spending a school year abroad. Such comprehensive events are highly successful and useful since interested young people can meet also returnees and learn about the exchange experience from them. An example for an upcoming Student Exchange Fair can be found here:*

<http://www.schueleraustausch-messe.de/messe-am-14112009.html>

<http://www.schueleraustausch-messe.de/messe-am-14112009/beteiligte-organisationen.html>

* *Another good practice from Germany are the market overviews regularly published (von Gundlach/Schill) where students get detailed informations on existing options and ideas how to organise their mobility period abroad. Such 'vakboeken' or 'course books' are quite popular among German high school students and their parents when making choices about their educational ways.*

* *www.afs.no which has a special section for teachers where they can get all the information on mobility and are encouraged to act as motivators.*

* *The Mobility Training School of AEGEE aims to raise the quality of the work of students who work together with their universities to promote students` mobility. Participants gain knowledge on the impacts of European higher education policies and national education system and standards and get an insight of the impact and significance of being a student multiplier on both societal and personal dimensions. The MTS concept goes beyond the concept of simulation. The elaborated best practices, recommendations and project ideas were presented to official university representatives during a final session with the aim to use the potential of a real dialogue between institutions and students.*

* *The 'Let's Go' Campaign of the European Student Union which encouraged students to become mobile.⁷*

⁷<http://www.lets gocampaign.net/>

Question 1.2

The main reason for lack of **Motivation** is the lack of knowledge on mobility and its benefits. Promotion should focus on the benefits adapted to each target group with personal stories and using new media. Mobility should start as early as possible in education through exchanges in youth organisations or schools organising intra-country exchanges. In Belgium every year more than 100 primary schools organise pupil exchanges between Wallonia and Flanders. Here, as with all mobility, the quality is crucial. If at this early stage, young people have a disappointing experience, they will be less inclined to participate in longer mobility programmes later.

Good example is the video and song that the Erasmus Student Network made about the Erasmus Programme http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hq4Y3C_VWuM

There are numerous *barriers* that young people must overcome, with some being structural barriers, some specific problems and some being perceived barriers. The barriers range from not feeling confident enough to dare to go abroad to visa issues or non-recognition by an educational institution. As they differ within different local realities or specific cultures, to make an exhaustive list is not possible.

The main ones identified by all organisations and experts consulted are the following:

- Financial barriers: Some young people cannot afford the mobility experience or do not find support funds.
- No formal recognition of the mobility experience in the frame of formal education: Due to lack of recognition the student or pupil sometimes has to repeat the year or courses. This makes the mobility experience more expensive in time and costs and is a strong demotivating factor.
- Social recognition and appreciation: Schools and parents, especially when they have not had first hand experience of mobility, often do not understand the value of mobility. The Non-Formal type of mobility especially is too often seen as a 'holiday' and can be discouraged or prevented.
- Bureaucracy: some mobility programmes are very bureaucratic, demanding the candidate to undergo long procedures before being able to experience the programme itself; unfortunately these are often the European Union programmes. For example the YIA programme has more than twenty different sets of funding rules, which often give different amounts and rules for exactly the same cost.

Question 1.3

Linguistic obstacles can only be tackled through a good preparation. This needs to be provided by the home institution and include free language courses.

During the stay, interaction with local students is the ideal way to learn the language. Furthermore, there needs to be support during the stay by a mentor who is a native speaker. Organising part of the course in English and the possibility to do exams in English makes it easier to be fully integrated into the host

institution. A mix of English courses and courses in the local language is recommended.

Good example: Erasmus Student Network: Tandem language module:

The local student is paired with an international student to „exchange“ their language knowledge (the local student teaches his language, the foreign student his native language). In this way, they both profit and increase their language skills. Or quite often, the international students agree with the local section to run language classes for both the local and other exchange students for the semester. They make the class for free for the others.

Many organisers of mobility programmes are not fully aware of the theory nor practice of intercultural learning. For example, the concept of the second culture shock (the one when returning) is not often understood and many programmes do not foresee mentoring for that. It is essential for many young people returning to have a proper debriefing which allows them to give the experience a place and prepares them for re-entering their home study programme and society. Intercultural learning therefore needs to be much better understood by all programme organisers and adequate training and mentoring programmes foreseen.

Good example: Social Erasmus ESN

Social Erasmus is a project which involves the exchange students in the local community and offers them the possibility to get to know better the local culture, and to help young people with fewer opportunities. There are different activities for the exchange students – e.g. visits to orphanages to teach the children foreign languages / show them a foreign culture; football matches between the students and children to raise awareness against racism; St. Nicolas evenings for the children etc.

Question 1.4

One of the major obstacles to short-term mobility (less than 3 months) of non-EU citizens to the EU is represented by the EU visa policies and includes a high level of bureaucracy and financial burden for nationals of countries on the EU negative visa list.

Some progress will be introduced by the European Code of Visa (CCV), once it enters into force. In particular, Member States have the obligation to waive visa costs for certain categories of young people taking part in activities within the EU territory (representatives of not-for-profit organisations). However, for other categories of young people, such as participants to cultural and educational initiatives, Member States may waive costs but do not have the obligation to do so. It is therefore important to monitor the implementation of the CCV at the national level; in this context national provisions increasing the administrative burden for visa applicants and stemming from unclear definitions included in the directive, such as the difference between representatives of not-for-profit organisations and participants, should be avoided⁸.

⁸For further details see 0392-09 Briefing on the European Parliament Report on the Community Code of Visa

As regards third-country nationals coming to the EU for studying, unremunerated training, school exchange or voluntary activities for a period longer than 3 months, Directive 2004/114 sets out specific conditions easing the visa procedure for them. The criteria identified in the Directive and related specific groups could actually be a barrier to mobility. For example, the Directive requires students from third countries to have minimum financial means to cover their living costs. Some Member States introduced national provisions setting up a specific minimum amount (for instance 773 euros in Sweden) or requiring an amount equal to the minimum monthly national salary (for example in Romania)⁹. This provision is also at odds with the restrictions to the labour market for students and transposed differently into national legislations (most of the Member States introduced a national threshold of hours, and Cyprus fully restricts the access to the labour market for students from third countries). Similar specific conditions are also required for unremunerated trainers. In some Member States additional requirements have been introduced by the national legislation such as in the Netherlands, where for vocational training the trainee has to justify why the Netherlands is the best destination for such training.

Furthermore, Directive 2004/58 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States includes provisions which might hamper learning mobility. They include the possibility for Member States to grant residence upon the requirement of a comprehensive illness-insurance for students and sufficient resources in order not to become a burden for the social security of the host State (article 7). In particular the Directive does not set up a specific threshold to define the concept of sufficient resources so that the transposition of this provision at the national level is not homogenous and leads to different treatments of EU citizens depending on the host Member States. In France for example “sufficient resources” for students should be assessed against the minimum revenue criterion, considering also the personal situation of the student. In some other cases, additional requirements were introduced at the national level, such as the one introduced by the Italian law regarding the need to provide evidence on the legality of the origin of economic resources.

Limits to the principle of equal treatment under art.24.2 of the Directive as regards to the granting of aids for studies, including student grants or student loans, might also hamper mobility. Indeed, Member States are allowed to restrict the access to these aids upon the acquisition of the permanent residence. For example, third country nationals and other EU nationals should have stayed or worked two years in Sweden before having the opportunity to access financial aids for students. In the UK a non-national must have resided in the EEA for a continuous period of three years prior to the start of the academic year in order to benefit from the same level of tuition as nationals. Furthermore students need to get enrolled in a course or studies involving at least 12 weeks of study in order to have free access to the National Health System¹⁰.

⁹Further information could be found in the joint European Parliament/International Organisation for Migration „Comparative studies of the law in the 27 EU Member States for Legal Migration“.

The European Youth Forum believes that resolving the compatibility of the national systems through bilateral agreements will be too complicated and will not be efficient. The YFJ therefore proposes to introduce **a European Student Statute and European Intern Statute which would encompass:**

- access to health care and social service
- portability of grants and financial study support
- recognition of learning according to ECTS or other European system
- Living permit and work permit for duration of the study

Such a statute will encourage young people to be mobile as they will have a clearer idea of their rights and it will form a good framework for all the Member States to tackle the barriers hindering mobility.

Good practice example:

Intercultura (AFS Italy) has worked out an agreement with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to facilitate entry-visas to foreign pupils.

Question 1.5

Unfortunately there are few good examples regarding portability of the grants with the notable exception that it allows full portability of government grants.

To address the problem of Member States not adhering to community law as stated in the Green Paper, the European Youth Forum believes that the European Commission should either fine these Member States or initiate cases at the European Court of Justice.

A more structural solution would be the European Student and Intern Statute that would clarify the rights of the mobile young person.

Question 1.6

The European Youth Forum believes that mobility does not stop at the border of the EU. Young people in neighbouring countries need to have the same mobility opportunities to ensure that they and their societies can further develop and join the European integration process.

The Youth in Action programme is a good example of this as it includes neighbouring countries and other countries of the world in its Action 3. This action sees the highest number of applications, which shows that there is a clear need among young people in and outside the EU to co-operate and be mobile.

While this clearly requires an increased budget for this action, further actions are needed such as easier visa procedures, more support for arriving learners and easier access to local health care and social services.

Question 1.7

The European Union has already a good tool to ensure the quality of Mobility, namely the Charter on the Quality of Mobility. This should be both implemented in the Member States but also in all the European Union programmes.

¹⁰See chapter 5.2 of the European Parliament Comparative Study on the application of Directive 2004/38/EC.

A first measure in all programmes should be the full participation of young people as the target group in the decision making on mobility programmes. All too often programmes are designed for young people but not by young people, leading to programmes not being effective and wasting valuable resources. Active involvement of young people coming back from mobility programmes and of youth organisations working on youth mobility is needed.

Good example: AFS Customer Service Evaluation (CSE) is a good method practised to ensure that the quality criteria of the exchange period have been met. It is a survey filled in yearly by all returnees (students who went on AFS year), sending parents (their parents) and host schools (teachers & staff where the student was placed) who are part of the mobility experience and its direct beneficiaries. After a thorough analysis of the surveys and comments, the responsible department in the AFS network identifies the areas most needing improvement and provides feedback to the local organisation to adjust their service and make quality improvements. This is a strictly observed process, accompanied by yearly statistical evaluations and studies (Network and Partner Health) which are a demanding benchmark for all AFS partners.

Question 1.8

Young people with fewer opportunities face even more barriers to be mobile. The challenges are different according to specific groups of disadvantaged youths. Young people with disability still often experience physical obstacles to fully enjoy learning mobility. Young LGBT might for example refrain from enjoying mobility opportunities in countries not-perceived as LGBT-friendly or where the oppression of sexual minorities has not been overcome yet, including for example in rural or remote areas. Young people with less financial means are not always able to fully pay the costs encountered in the host country even when they receive grants. Besides concrete obstacles, the challenge related to the participation of disadvantaged youths into mobility programmes is linked with their overall low level of participation into the social and political life. Therefore, ensuring that the information related to mobility opportunities reaches these groups could be more challenging. Similarly, motivating these groups to fully enjoy existing mobility opportunities might be more difficult due to the different patterns of exclusion they already experience.

*A good example is the **ExchangeAbility** project of ESN that works to make ESN a fully accessible organisation and to make all higher education institutions fully accessible for disadvantaged young people. The idea behind the project is local ESN sections involving disabled students in their activities (both in the organisational part, as well as having them participate in the activities). In this way, they learn to deal with disabilities in their environment, and thus are better prepared to welcome disabled exchange students. At the same time, the exchange students would know that these sections (and therefore the university) is prepared for them and has the know-how for full inclusion of the disabled students. In the long term this opens up the educational structures to disabled students and making mobility more accessible.*

Question 2.1 on mentoring and integration

The key to good mentoring and integration is peer-support and activities organised by young people for young people. This mentoring should be complemented by the host organisation/company with a mentor that follows up the educational process and helps with all bureaucratic issues.

A good example is the **Mentor / buddy / tutor system of ESN.*

Each incoming international student is paired with one local student who helps him/her settle down – pick up at the arrival, help to find accommodation, tour in the city, introduction to the university (and its system) etc. The buddy also connects the international student to the local community (e.g. introduces them to his / her other local friends, explains traditions and habits, etc.) A practical example is the cooperation between the university of Gent and ESN. A powerpoint explaining this cooperation is attached in annex 1.

EFIL/AFS offers constant **educational support for its volunteers who are in charge of the young people undergoing an exchange programme. They receive **skills and training** on a number of topics relevant to a mobility experience and are being prepared to deal with a wide range of issues that might come up during the exchange. The European umbrella of AFS – EFIL – is instrumental in this regard by providing a different, international dimension to the work of AFS volunteers who can exchange their best practices, inspire and improve their work by meeting their peers from 21 member countries.*

Question 2.2

The PRIME study done by ESN shows that one third of the students has problems regarding the recognition of their study abroad. This number shows that higher education institutions and governments still have a long way to go. The YFJ recommends that all Member States should immediately recognise, ratify and implement correctly the Lisbon convention on recognition.

To recognise the non-formal learning during the mobility experience the European Council for Youth decided on the development of a youth-element in europass as decided by the European Council in the resolution (2006/C 168/01) on the recognition of the value of non-formal and informal learning within the European Youth field. Three years later this element is still not developed.

Best practice examples:

***Italian schools have the authority to assess and validate the periods of study that a pupil spends abroad.** In the case of Intercultura pupils who apply for an exchange programme, they must have got satisfactory marks in all subjects in the previous two years. Upon their return they have an interview with their teachers and may have to take some additional courses in subjects that they had not studied abroad; none have to repeat the school year in Italy again and all can continue their courses in the same class from where they had left.*

*• **AFS Portugal** has become the main point of reference for the Portuguese Ministry of Education in general matters of recognition and validation of student experiences*

abroad. They consult students, parents and teachers on how achievements abroad can be recognised by the Portuguese school curricula. AFS being an expert in mobility and intercultural exchange issues is an example of good practice of a partnership between governmental actors and non-governmental exchange providers.

3. For a new partnership

The European Youth Forum has taken note of the wish of President Barroso that 'By 2020 all young people in Europe must have the possibility to spend a part of their educational pathway in other Member States.' While applauding the vision, the YFJ does doubt the value of big promises. Promises that are not kept will cause disillusion with the European Union among young Europeans. And currently, the European Union does not have the resources to significantly enlarge the provision of mobility programmes nor does it seem likely that Member States will approve of such an enlargement especially as many are cutting their education budgets.

If the Member States and the European Union are serious about increasing mobility, a new partnership is indeed needed. Behind the partnership question are the implicit questions of who the partners will be and who will pay for this mobility.

The European Youth Forum does not believe that students should pay directly for their studies nor their mobility as they are in a weak economic stage of their life. They can pay later through taxation when they reap the economic benefits of their education and mobility. The student loan scheme proposed in the Green Paper tries to address the right issue (the need for additional financial support) in the wrong way. The economic return of education is different for every individual, depending on his or her life choices. The economic return for the individual changes depending whether s/he chooses for example to stay at home to take care of children, work in social and ngo sector or choose lucrative prospects in the private sector. Furthermore the social return of these choices is also different and could be taken into account.

They should therefore be paying according to their income and to their service to society. A progressive taxation system is a better and fairer system than a loan system.

All other actors benefiting from mobility should contribute in equal measure to financing mobility either directly or indirectly through taxation. The YFJ believes that companies and businesses have to step up their efforts to support mobility as increased mobility leads to higher skilled workers and increased competitiveness.

The European Union can increase funding for mobility by developing mobility actions within the European Social Fund and the Research & Development framework programme.

***Good example from AFS Germany** is working under an agreement with corporations who sponsor the learning mobility of their children through scholarships. This kind of partnership has proved very successful for both AFS Germany and the companies since 1) the employees' identification with and loyalty to the company improves and 2) the AFS exchange students of today are the interculturally qualified employees and team*

members of tomorrow. A good example of such public-private partnership is the already 20 year long scholarship programme between the Deutsche Bank AG and AFS Germany.

Another good example is the **Intercultura Foundation** which supports mobility for Italian young people by 4 million Euros a year. The fund is working more and more with the private sector in the frame of corporate social responsibility.

Question 3.3

The European Youth Forum believes that ICT is the way to enhance mobility by offering possibilities for promotion, preparation, follow up and further validation of the experience.

This however cannot replace real mobility and therefore should not be counted in mobility statistics.

A good example is the Galaxy project of ESN.

ESN Galaxy is a web platform based on the new Web 2.0 technologies. It brings together all the ESN sections, allowing them to communicate and share information in real time. News from local sections are automatically collected from their websites and displayed on the central one. In this way, exchange students can immediately have an overview of what is going on in the network. This special system allows international students and ESN members to look for accommodation or to get information on their host country. ESN Galaxy also supports local sections by provision of web-based services.

Question 3.4

This question is very similar to question 1.1 and 1.2 as information and motivation depend on the role of multipliers.

Young people can become multipliers after their mobility experience if it has been successful and if the programme foresees a concrete way of doing so. Follow up and multiplying could become part of the programme flow in the EU programmes. Crucial multipliers will be schools and teachers. Only if they are convinced of the value of mobility, they will support and motivate young people. Further development of mobility schemes for teachers and educators is therefore needed. Youth organisations often act as multipliers and work on basis of volunteers. A strong recognition of their role by society and the European Union would encourage youth organisations to keep on doing and further developing this role.

Question 3.5

Setting targets and benchmarks has a clear effect on the commitment of authorities to engage in reforms as shown in the Education and Training 2010 programme. The European Youth Forum however warns that there is the danger of focussing solely on numbers and not on the quality of the mobility experience. It would be detrimental for all to have an increase in the quantity of mobility but a decrease in the quality, leading to young people being dissatisfied with the experience.

Targets therefore should have a quality component. The benchmarks set for formal education should only count the mobility activities that comply with the European

Quality Charter on Mobility.

The European Youth Forum proposed the following benchmarks in its reaction to the Communication of the European Commission: 'An updated strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training'¹¹

By 2020, 1% of secondary school pupils will take part in a formal educational mobility experience each year.

By 2020, 20 % of students in higher education will take part in a formal educational mobility experience each year.

By 2020, the number of young people a year taking part in a non-formal educational mobility experience will increase by 30% in comparison to 2010.¹²

5. Conclusion and Follow up

The Green Paper has been a good initiative and the European Youth Forum is looking forward to see the proposals for follow up.

The European Youth Forum believes that while the political will has been amply communicated both by the European Commission as by the Member States, the reality shows that education budgets are diminishing and that educational mobility might be threatened as well. The main outcome of this process should be ambitious benchmarks for youth mobility, a strong political process to further develop mobility and a clear financial commitment to reach the targets set.

„By 2020 all young people in Europe must have the possibility to spend a part of their educational pathway in other Member States“¹³. The European Youth Forum believes that this vision of President Barroso is not only possible but crucial for leading Europe into the 21st Century.

¹¹0004-09: European Youth Forum reaction to the Communication of the European Commission: 'An updated strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training'

¹² The concept of a non-formal educational mobility event has not been formalised but should contain criteria on the length of the event, quality of NFE, and the intercultural learning component. This would enable reliable data to be obtained.

¹³ Political guidelines for the next Commission, *José Manuel Barroso, 2009*