

The Impact of VET Placements on Education Systems

Transnational research report

Julita Pieńkosz



FRSE
Publications



FRSE RESEARCH
REPORTS

The Impact of VET Placements on Education Systems

Transnational research report

Julita Pieńkosz



FRSE
Publications



FRSE RESEARCH
REPORTS

The Impact of VET Placements on Education Systems

Transnational research report

Author: **Julita Pieńkosz, PhD**

Research team: **Monika Mokrzycka, Michał Pachocki, Julita Pieńkosz, Karol Sobestjański**

Proofreading: **Artur Cholewiński**

Graphic design and typesetting: **Grzegorz Dębowski, Artur Ładno**

Printing: **Top Druk Łomża**

Publisher: **Foundation for the Development of the Education System**

Polish National Agency for the Erasmus+ Programme

and the European Solidarity Corps

Al. Jerozolimskie 142a, 02-305 Warsaw

 www.frse.org.pl | kontakt@frse.org.pl

 www.erasmusplus.org.pl

© Foundation for the Development of the Education System, Warsaw 2026

ISBN 978-83-67587-80-8

DOI 10.47050/67587808

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Printed entirely on FSC® certified paper from well-managed forests

The electronic version of the publication is fully accessible for screen readers. Images include alternative text. The text uses a heading structure. The table of contents enables navigation.

Contrast meets WCAG 2.1 requirement

Free copy

Citation: Julita Pieńkosz. (2026). *The Impact of VET Placements on Education Systems*.

Transnational research report. Warsaw: FRSE Publishing

More publications from FRSE Publishing:  www.czytelnia.frse.org.pl

FRSE Publishing periodicals and portals:

[języki: obce]
w szkole

europa
DLA AKTYWNYCH

eurodesk
Polska

EUROPEJSKI
PORTAL MŁODZIEŻOWY

4	Introduction
8	Key findings
14	Research concept and context
15	Chapter 1. Project approach
19	Chapter 2. General overview of the vocational education and training field in selected Central and Eastern European Countries
27	Chapter 3. Erasmus+ mobility in vocational education and training
30	Findings of the research study
31	Chapter 4. Planning, coordination, and student selection in Erasmus+ VET mobilities
52	Chapter 5. Mobility individual impact
117	Chapter 6. Impact of Erasmus+ mobility on schools
142	Chapter 7. Impact on school in local environment
163	Chapter 8. Systemic changes
174	Conclusions and recommendations
175	Chapter 9. Challenges and policy pointers
194	Conclusions
200	References
204	Annexes
205	Annex A: Additional statistical data
208	Annex B Questionnaire: English version

Introduction



The impact of international placements organised under the Erasmus+ programme (Key Action 1) is a multidimensional phenomenon, the effects of which can be analysed from macro-, meso-, and micro-structural perspectives. At the systemic level, issues considered include the integration of international mobility into legislation (e.g., provisions allowing recognition of skills acquired by students and teachers during foreign placements), the flexibility of curricula, and the inclusion of internationalisation-related issues in strategic national documents. At the meso level – both regional and local – conditions relate to the influence of international mobility on schools across multiple dimensions: organisation of teaching processes, quality of instruction, changes in curricula, effects on school infrastructure, as well as collaboration with school authorities and local businesses. Analysis at the individual level focuses on the impact of mobility on competences, attitudes, motivation, and educational and career pathways of different groups – both students participating in mobility and the accompanying teachers.

The study conducted within the project *Impact of VET placements on national education in Central and Eastern Europe*, coordinated by the Polish National Agency of the Erasmus+ programme in partnership with Latvia, Hungary, Czechia, Romania, and Slovenia, addresses the topic of mobility comprehensively, considering all three perspectives. The study covers the 2014-2020 financial perspective. Its primary aim was to provide an in-depth characterisation of the impact of students' mobility and to identify the factors shaping it. This report presents the main findings, focusing on the effects of mobility on students, teachers, schools, and their environment, as well as systemic issues in six Central and Eastern European countries: Czechia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia.

The first part (Chapters 1-3) presents the research concept, including objectives, research questions, and the adopted methodology. This section also describes the sample selection and its structure. Based on desk research, it further highlights similarities and differences in national solutions regarding initial vocational education and training (IVET) across the six countries. It also presents key indicators of vocational education, including student participation in IVET, vocational education funding, learning outcomes, and employment indicators.

The second part (Chapters 4-8) presents findings from quantitative and qualitative interviews conducted with representatives of schools that participated in Erasmus+ KA1 projects between 2014 and 2020.

Chapter 4 focuses on the organisation of mobility in schools, student recruitment methods, and selection criteria, and identifies the main challenges and barriers faced by schools both during the application process and in the implementation of mobility projects. Chapter 5

presents quantitative and qualitative findings on the impact of mobility on participating students, including their vocational skills, intercultural and transversal competences, learning motivation, foreign language competencies, and school relationships. It also discusses the mechanisms of mobility impact throughout the entire process (before, during, and after the placement) and its transformative role. Furthermore, the chapter addresses the broader impact of VET placements, including on students who do not participate directly. Finally, it examines the impact of mobility on teachers, including participation, acquired knowledge and experience, influence on attitudes, international contacts, professional development, and language competencies. Chapters 6 and 7 go beyond the individual level, focusing on the impact of mobility on schools as organisations. They address teaching processes, knowledge sharing among teachers, changes in curricula and school infrastructure, as well as cooperation with local authorities and businesses. Factors correlated with positive outcomes, such as school size, the scale of organised mobilities, fields in which mobilities are conducted, and the size of the locality, are also analysed. Chapter 8 discusses systemic solutions for the organisation of mobility, including legislative mechanisms for recognising the outcomes of mobility for students and teachers, and the flexibility of curricula in supporting mobility.

The final part (Chapter 9) summarises the report and outlines key challenges, proposed solutions, and directions for change.

Key findings



Main characteristics

- According to Cedefop data, between 2015 and 2020 the share of vocational school students among all upper-secondary students increased or remained stable in most of the countries studied, with the largest growth observed in Czechia and Slovenia. All countries have also seen an increasing employment rate among VET graduates (between 2015-2023).
- Most of the surveyed vocational schools participating in KA1 projects in the years 2014-2020 report organising mobility opportunities for all or most of the vocational programmes they offer. Only 14% of schools organise mobility for a minority of the VET sectors they teach.
- Among the surveyed schools, international placements are most frequently organised in the tourism and ICT/IT sectors.
- In the surveyed schools, most students were accompanied during their placements by vocational instructors (84%) and language teachers (74%). Other subject teachers joined in 47% of cases, and non-teaching staff in 8%. Sending students abroad without supervision is rare (4%).
- According to qualitative interviews, performance is not fully aligned with the programme's inclusive objectives, which emphasise equal access to mobility opportunities and the educational value of participation beyond academic achievement.
- The main challenges in organising school mobility, especially for schools without prior experience, include the complex and constantly changing application processes, the need to cooperate with the governing authorities (both during applications and project reporting), difficulties in finding and maintaining reliable partners in specific vocational sectors, staff shortages and lack of competencies, as well as high costs of teacher substitutes (especially in Czechia).
- Schools with more experience in organising mobilities have a clear advantage in terms of know-how and are better able to leverage the outcomes.

The effects of mobility on students and teachers

- Mobility fulfils its primary function and purpose – according to the surveyed school representatives, it mainly enhances students' vocational skills, transversal and intercultural competences, as well as language competencies. To a slightly lesser extent, it supports learning motivation and interschool relationships. Improvement in ICT skills received the lowest ratings, although its impact was more noticeable in larger schools.

- The mobility experience can be transformative for students. It begins as early as the recruitment process and does not end with the completion of the placement. Students often undergo a shift in perspective – they start to appreciate their school, their role in the school community, and their chosen profession more. They also become more aware of their career path and reflect more frequently on their future.
- 88% of the surveyed school representatives believe mobility experiences positively affect students' educational and career paths. Teachers from smaller towns (15,000 inhabitants or less) are slightly more likely to report a strong positive impact.
- Mobility experiences also indirectly benefit students who do not participate in international placements. The most notable effect is an increase in their motivation to learn. The larger the scale of mobilities organised by a school, the stronger the impact on the motivation of non-mobile students.
- Teachers accompanying students also benefit from mobility experiences, with the strongest impact observed in their attitudes towards internationalisation and in their ability to build international contacts.
- In the category of teachers' professional development, mobility was found to have the strongest impact on enhancing proactiveness, innovativeness, and overall motivation to work. It had a weaker effect on reducing professional burnout. The improvement in teachers' professional development was rated highest in schools that organise mobility for all vocational fields, as well as among teachers from larger schools. The smaller the town where the school is located, the more positively teachers assessed the impact of mobility on their professional development.
- Assessments of improvements in teachers' language competencies are higher in schools located in smaller towns. Qualitative data suggest that mobility serves primarily as a motivational factor, enhancing language awareness, communication confidence, and commitment to further learning, rather than directly improving proficiency.
- Perceived effects of mobility on students and teachers vary considerably across countries, with the strongest impact observed in Romania, Poland and Slovenia, and less positive assessments reported in Hungary, Latvia and Czechia.

The effects of mobility on school

- Mobility also affects the school as an organisation and its teaching processes. Most notably, it contributes to enhancing the school's prestige in the local community – 88% of respondents stated that mobility increased the school's prestige and positive image in the town or region. This effect is particularly noticeable for schools located in smaller towns.

- Schools view mobility as a promotional tool to attract applicants, thereby increasing their competitiveness in the region. Nearly two-thirds of respondents confirmed that mobility led to an increase in the number of applicants. The larger the scale of organised mobility, the higher this effect is rated. Larger schools also more frequently attract candidates as a result of mobility.
- 89% of respondents confirmed that teachers accompanying students during mobility transfer the knowledge they gain to their colleagues.
- 71% of respondents confirmed that mobility improves teaching quality, especially in practical training.
- Curriculum changes resulting from mobility are more noticeable in larger schools. Their implementation is gradual and context-dependent, often relying on school autonomy and the motivation of the principal and teachers. Major changes remain limited due to rigid national curricula and institutional constraints.
- The impact of mobility on school infrastructure received the lowest rating – 44% of respondents stated that mobility affected the quality of equipment and other facilities at the school. The effect is more noticeable in schools located in smaller towns.
- Significant crosscountry differences were observed in the perceived impact of mobility on school infrastructure, with exceptionally low positive impact reported in Czechia, Hungary, and Latvia.

Mobility and the school's external environment

- Over half of respondents stated that mobility has a strong effect on increasing the attention paid by local authorities to the schools' internationalisation activities. This aspect is more positively assessed in schools located in smaller towns. Qualitative findings indicate that in smaller communities, school initiatives are more visible and can play a greater role in shaping relationships with local authorities. By contrast, internationalisation in large cities is one of many educational efforts, making it harder for schools to attract direct attention or recognition from local government.
- Half of respondents also agreed that mobility contributed to increased cooperation with local businesses. This effect is more common in schools that organise mobility for all or most of their vocational programmes, and larger schools more frequently report that such cooperation has increased.

Systemic changes

- Systemic changes resulting from Erasmus+ mobility are rare and generally limited. Over half of the schools surveyed do not report changes in education law (55%), ministry-level changes (61%), or practical vocational training at the national level (51%).
- All studied countries participating in Erasmus+ have developed a range of mechanisms to support the recognition of learning outcomes from foreign placements for students, although the level of formalisation varies.
- Survey results indicate that the recognition of international mobility outcomes for students largely depend on individual schools' practices. The most common approach reported by respondents is the recognition of foreign placements as mandatory vocational training; however, the extent of recognition varies, depending in particular on the duration of the mobility. The validation of learning outcomes is most frequently based on formal documentation, especially Europass Mobility, often complemented by practice diaries, assessment sheets, and supervisors' feedback.
- Beyond formal recognition, some schools apply additional symbolic measures, such as awards, commendations, or extra exam points, further reinforcing the perceived value of mobility.

Research concept and context



Chapter 1. Project approach

1.1. Background

The growing number of Erasmus+ mobility projects shows that an increasing share of learners, including those in initial vocational education, are undertaking work placements and internships abroad. Central and Eastern European countries provide especially illustrative examples of this trend. However, existing studies on the impact of Erasmus+ have mainly focused on higher education students, emphasising the programme's role in enhancing professional skills, fostering personal growth, and building cross-cultural competences (Zimmermann and Neyer, 2013; Brandenburg et al., 2016; Dolga et al., 2015). Much less attention has been paid to how similar benefits manifest in the context of vocational education and training (VET), where international mobility is also becoming an increasingly important educational experience (Pachocki, 2018).

In the framework of an LTA (Long-term Activity), running from 2022 to 2025 and involving six countries from East Central Europe, complex research has been conducted focusing on the impact of Erasmus+ mobility (Key Action 1) on VET education covering the previous financial perspective 2014-2020. While this report examines the impact of mobility on individual participants, students and teachers, their skills, attitudes, and career paths, it also looks beyond the individual level to explore how mobility affects the school as an institution, the broader school community and its local environment, and even systemic change in national vocational education.

The links between Erasmus+ and the quality of education seem particularly important in the Central and Eastern European countries, where the growing crisis in vocational education turned out to be one of the substantial side effects of the economic transformation in the early 1990s. At the same time, EU funding contributed positively to the quality of vocational education. Therefore, it is worth exploring the role of individual mobility of students in this process, which for many years has remained the most common Erasmus+ activity undertaken by vocational schools.

1.2. Objectives and research questions

In this report, a comprehensive picture of the impact of foreign placements is presented, with an emphasis not only on the observable effects but also on the underlying conditions and enabling factors that shape these outcomes. The core objective of this LTA initiative was to examine whether, and in what ways, Erasmus+ mobility experiences impact not only the skills and competences of IVET students, but also teachers' teaching practices and attitudes, school

culture, and the broader educational environment. Moreover, the study sought to explore the extent to which Erasmus+ contributes to institutional and systemic changes in education across Central and Eastern Europe. The final findings aim to offer generalisable insights based on case studies conducted in Czechia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Slovenia.

The goal of the study was to investigate and describe how Erasmus+ students' mobility impact vocational education at three levels:

Individual Level

- To what extent do mobility experiences influence the development of students' competences and skills?
- How do mobility projects contribute to the professional development of teachers accompanying students during placements, and to the improvement of their competences, skills, and attitudes?
- Is there a mechanism for transferring the benefits of mobility (e.g., enhanced skills or attitudes) to non-participating students and staff?

Institutional Level

- In what ways do mobilities contribute to strengthening the overall institutional capacity of schools?
- To what extent do individual mobility experiences of students lead to institutional changes in schools, such as pedagogical innovations, curriculum development, infrastructure improvements, or enhanced school prestige?
- How do mobility projects affect the school as an organisation in its local environment, particularly in terms of cooperation with municipalities and local businesses?

Systemic Level

- What links, if any, exist between Erasmus+ mobility and broader systemic changes in national education systems, such as potential reforms in education policies, laws, and vocational training frameworks?

In this report, an attempt is made to answer not only to what extent mobility affects the areas mentioned above, but also what factors may differentiate or moderate this impact. These include cross-country differences, the scale of mobility projects, the type of vocational field, as well as the size of the school and the locality in which it operates.

1.3. Methodology

The data used in the analyses were collected as part of the study *The Impact of VET Placements on National Educational Systems in Central and Eastern Europe*, covering the 2014-2020 financial perspective which defined the funding framework for Erasmus+ and other EU programmes during that period. The study was conducted in six countries: Poland, Latvia, Hungary, Czechia, Romania, and Slovenia.

The research used quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative component covered all beneficiaries – mostly schools – of Erasmus+ Key Action 1 (*Learning Mobility of Individuals*) in the field of VET during the 2014-2020 programming period. An online survey (CAWI – Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing) was carried out between September and November 2023 and sent to every school to be completed by school leaders, coordinators, or other staff members. The net sample completion rate differs by country; a total of 909 completed questionnaires were obtained with response rate varying across countries.



Table 1.
Net sample completion rate by country

Country	N	Completion rate
Czechia	162	42%
Hungary	85	18% ¹
Latvia	40	89%
Poland	463	25%
Romania	102	20%
Slovenia	57	22%

Source: own elaboration

Given the differences in sample sizes and response rates across countries, weighted data were used in the analysis. Weights were applied at the country level and were based on the total number of schools participating in Erasmus+ mobility programmes in each country during the 2014-2020 period, reflecting the size of the target population. This approach ensured that each country's contribution to the aggregated results was proportional to its share in the overall population of participating schools.

¹ In Hungary, there are 46 Vocational Centres and 5 or 6 Agricultural Vocational Centres, each comprising approximately 5 to 12 VET schools. Church-run and foundation-run VET schools are not organised within these Centres. The questionnaire could have been completed either by a VET Centre or by an individual school, including those belonging to a Centre. Therefore, the actual number of institutional responses may not directly correspond to a single school or centre, which affects the precision of the response rate.

The survey was addressed to the full population of VET schools that participated in Erasmus+ mobility projects during the 2014-2020 period. However, the achieved sample consists of schools that chose to respond to the survey and is therefore subject to selfselection and nonresponse. Consequently, it cannot be considered statistically representative, either of national VET systems as a whole or of all Erasmus+ participating VET schools, particularly with regard to structural characteristics such as school size or geographical location.

In-depth interviews (IDI) were conducted with school coordinators of mobility projects and school principal. A total of 82 IDIs were conducted, with between 12 and 25 interviews per country. This approach provided a comprehensive perspective on the role of mobility in shaping vocational education at the individual, institutional, and systemic levels.

Additionally, two other sample selection criteria were applied:

- All schools were selected based on their extensive experience with Erasmus+ mobility projects.
- Regional diversity, school size, and field of education were considered.



Table 2.
Number of IDIs conducted by country

Country	N	Type of interviewers
Poland	25 IDI	school coordinators, school principal or deputy principal
Latvia	15 IDI	school coordinators, school principal or deputy principal, teachers of professional subjects
Slovenia	10 IDI	school coordinators, school principal or deputy principal
Romania ²	8 IDI	school coordinators, school principal or deputy principal, teachers of professional subjects
Hungary	12 IDI	school coordinators, school principal or deputy principal, teachers of professional subjects
Czechia	12 IDI	school coordinators, school principal or deputy principal
Total	82 IDI	

Source: own elaboration

² In the qualitative analysis, interviews (IDIs) from Romania were excluded as the related materials were not available at the time of the study.

The overall study also included a desk research component, the results of which were likewise used in this transnational report. It comprised, among others, a literature review and analysis of existing studies on Erasmus+ VET mobilities, an institutional analysis of national VET systems in partner countries, as well as exploratory qualitative studies (short in-depth interviews with school representatives, and an analysis of Erasmus+ applications and project reports). Based on these activities, a set of research tools was developed and applied in national desk research, which were subsequently compared in a cross-country analysis. The findings served to identify common patterns and differences and were compiled in a separate desk research report, which provides an important complement to the analyses presented in this international study.

In the presentation of both quantitative and qualitative data, specific methodological principles were followed. All percentage values reported in tables and figures were rounded to the nearest whole number to improve readability. Where rounding resulted in totals not equalling 100%, a one-percentage-point adjustment was applied to the largest category so that percentages sum to 100%. These adjustments do not affect the interpretation of the results.

To ensure anonymity while maintaining analytical clarity, individual in-depth interviews (IDI) conducted with representatives of vocational schools participating in mobility projects were anonymised using a standardised coding system. Each interviewee was assigned a unique identifier combining the country name and a numerical code³ corresponding to the order of interviews conducted within that country (e.g., Poland_4, Latvia_6). These identifiers are used throughout the report to label interview quotations, supporting cross-country comparison of interview data and qualitative findings while protecting the identity of individual respondents.

Chapter 2. General overview of the vocational education and training field in selected Central and Eastern European Countries

Understanding the broader social and educational context is essential for assessing the role of mobility in shaping vocational education in the studied countries. The organisation of initial vocational education and training differs across these countries in terms of system structure, types of vocational schools, and degree of employer involvement. This chapter presents the key characteristics of IVET in each country, focusing on the general structure of IVET, the

³ In the case of Slovenia, it was not possible to assign individual identifiers to interview quotations due to the aggregated format of the qualitative material provided. Consequently, quotations from Slovenia are labelled using the country name only.

organisation of work-based learning, the popularity of vocational pathways among students, public expenditure on IVET, and employment outcomes for graduates. The analysis relies primarily on Cedefop data, but also incorporates data from national reports prepared for the purpose of desk research. The time frame of the analysis primarily covers the 2014-2020 period, which corresponds to the scope of the study. The data used are drawn from publicly available sources, which do not always provide information for identical reference years across all indicators and countries. In particular, Cedefop statistics are often available only for 2015, and in some cases for 2019 or 2020.

2.1 National models of organising vocational education and training

The countries participating in this study share a common challenge: reforming their education systems – including IVET – to meet the demands of new economic and social realities following the political transformations of the early 1990s. Despite various efforts to improve the quality and image of vocational schools (such as recent reforms in Poland or the relatively positive perception of vocational education in Czechia and Slovenia), general education remains the preferred path for many young people in countries like Romania, Latvia, Poland, and Hungary.

The development of IVET systems in the region has met several persistent challenges over recent years, as documented by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training data (Cedefop, 2024).

Key challenges observed across countries include:

- The need to raise the overall attractiveness and quality of vocational education (Poland, Romania, Latvia).
- High early school leaving rates, particularly in Hungary and Romania, compounded by unequal access to education and insufficient institutional investments.
- Misalignment between VET and labour market needs, including weak employer engagement in practical training, skills matching, and curriculum review (Poland, Czechia, Latvia, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia).
- Concerns over the quality of work-based learning and competence-based assessment.
- Teacher shortages and the ageing pedagogical workforce pose challenges, alongside the need to improve teacher qualifications and ensure their skills remain relevant through professional development (noted in Poland, Hungary, Czechia, Slovenia).
- Uneven infrastructure development in VET schools, including modernisation for digital and green technologies, despite some progress in Poland, Hungary, and Slovenia.

- Limited access to career guidance and counselling services for young people, especially in Latvia and Slovenia, where efforts to develop more flexible and individualised learning pathways are ongoing to reduce early school leaving.

Overall, these challenges illustrate the complex, multi-dimensional barriers that continue to affect the evolution of IVET systems across Central and Eastern Europe, requiring coordinated and sustained policy responses. Although education systems across these countries are diverse, many share elements of three classic structural models of schooling commonly referenced in comparative education literature (Váňová, 2006; Nowakowska-Siuta, 2014):

- The classical model – characterised by an early division of students (around the age of 10 or 11) into separate educational pathways, typically based on academic ability and prestige.
- The model with later and deeper differentiation – featuring a unified primary school, followed by a lower secondary level and subsequent division into general or vocational upper secondary schools.
- The unified school model – combining primary and lower secondary education into a single comprehensive school, with differentiation occurring only at the upper secondary level.

Among the countries studied, Poland and Latvia follow the unified school model, while Czechia, Slovenia, Romania, and Hungary are characterised by later differentiation. Regardless of the model, IVET typically begins after nine years of compulsory education, around the age of 15 or 16, and is offered at upper secondary or post-secondary levels.

Despite the structural differences, the study also highlights several common reform directions pursued across the region. These include improving quality at all levels of education, promoting the use of new technologies, enhancing foreign language instruction, ensuring equal educational opportunities, and fostering intercultural understanding. These objectives closely align with the goals of the Erasmus+ programme, which promotes international cooperation and innovation in education. As such, Erasmus+ plays an important role not only in supporting individual mobility, but also in reinforcing shared European educational priorities.

2.2 IVET work-based students as a percentage of all upper secondary IVET students

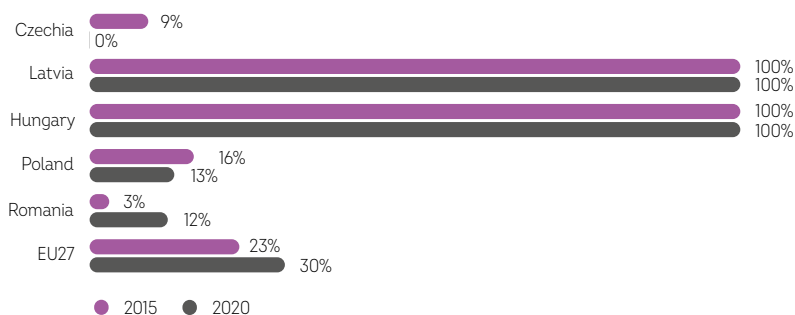
Work-based learning (WBL) is a core component of initial vocational education and training, equipping learners with the skills and qualifications needed for specific occupations. According to Cedefop, WBL includes all forms of learning in real work environments, such

as apprenticeships, internships, traineeships, and on-the-job training, often combined with classroom education. Post-2020 European VET policies emphasise strengthening WBL as a key element of IVET, facilitating the transition from education to employment and developing skills aligned with labour market needs. In 2020, Cedefop data showed that 30% of IVET students in the EU had gained work experience as part of their curriculum. However, geographical differences can be observed among countries studied. During the period covered by the study, Latvia and Hungary stood out, with all IVET students participating in WBL. Romania recorded an increase from 3% in 2015 to 12% in 2020, while Poland experienced a slight decline from 16% to 13%. No data are available for Slovenia, and figures for Czechia in 2020 are missing.



Figure 1.

Number of students in combined work- and school-based upper secondary IVET (ISCED 3) as a percentage of all students in upper secondary IVET



Source: Cedefop based on Eurostat data, *Key indicators on VET*

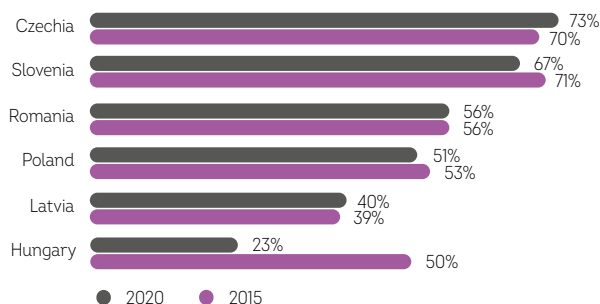
However, it should be noted that data from Cedefop may not fully capture the mandatory nature of WBL. This is due to differences in how combined work- and school-based programmes are defined and reported. For example, some forms of work-based learning might not be counted as part of combined programmes in the statistics, leading to apparently low percentages despite WBL being compulsory in practice. For example, work-based learning in Poland is mandatory for all VET-oriented programmes and takes place both in educational institutions and in workplace settings, including through apprenticeships. On-the-job training lasts between 4 and 12 weeks depending on the type of occupation and is compulsory for vocational upper secondary, post-secondary, and second-stage sectoral programmes (Cedefop & Educational Research Institute, 2023). Similarly, in Slovenia (where Cedefop data is not available), work-based learning is an integral part of all types of VET programmes. Students receive training in modern intercompany training centres, companies, as well as through apprenticeships (Cedefop & Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI), 2023).

2.3 Numbers of IVET students

Vocational education and training is a relatively popular pathway in several countries, particularly in Czechia and Slovenia. These two countries recorded the highest shares of vocational students, with around 70% of upper secondary students enrolled in VET programmes (IVET students as a share of all upper secondary students). In Czechia, however, the share of IVET students among all upper secondary students slightly declined, from 73% in 2015 to 70% in 2020. Romania maintained stable participation rates at 56%, while Poland experienced a modest increase of two percentage points, from 51% in 2015 to 53% in 2020. Hungary recorded the most visible growth, rising from 23% in 2015 to 50% in 2020. By contrast, Latvia consistently reported the lowest share of vocational students, at around 40%.



Figure 2.
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students



Source: Cedefop, Key indicators on VET

2.4 The financing of vocational education and training

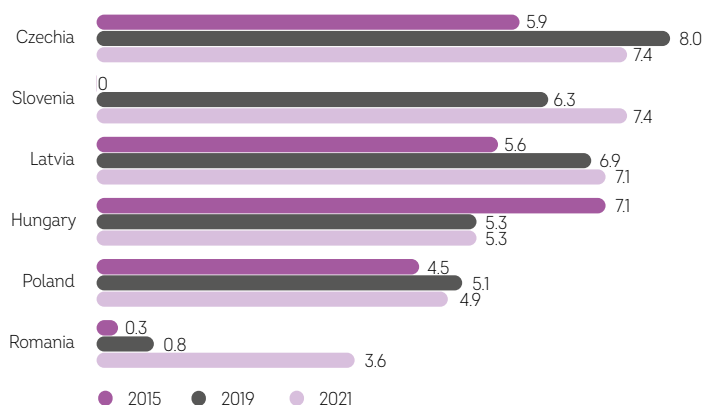
The financing of vocational education and training (VET) is a critical aspect of national education policies as it plays a substantial role in shaping the quality and accessibility of such programmes. Ultimately, the level of public investment in VET has important implications for a country's skill development, workforce readiness, and overall economic prosperity. To compare its levels across different countries, the indicator *IVET public expenditure per student* was used, measured in thousands of purchasing parity standard units (PPS) per full-time equivalent (FTE) student. It reflects the financial resources allocated by the government for each student enrolled in vocational upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 3 and 4).

The 2015-2021 trends in public expenditure per IVET student reveal diverse paths across the countries. Slovenia and Czechia allocated the highest public expenditure per VET student over years (7.4 thousand PPS units in 2021), followed closely by Latvia (7.1 thousand PPS units).

Romania starting from a lower base of 0.3, manages to more than double its expenditure by 2019 reaching 0.8 thousand PPS units and 3.6 PPS thousand PPS units in 2021. Conversely, Hungary sees a decrease in expenditure from 7.1 to 5.3 thousand PPS units over these years.



Figure 3.
IVET public expenditure per student (1000 PPS units)



Source: Cedefop, Key indicators on VET

2.5 Learning outcomes and IVET transition to work

In the studied countries, educational and labour market outcomes of vocational education and training graduates vary depending on the type of school and field of study. Despite these differences, VET pathways are gaining relevance as effective responses to labour market needs.

2.5.1 Educational performance among IVET students

International comparative evidence from OECD and PISA studies consistently shows that vocational education and training tends to attract a higher share of students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. According to PISA 2022, students with lower socioeconomic status are more likely to enrol in upper secondary vocational programmes than in general education tracks (OECD, 2023a, 2023b). OECD analyses further indicate that VET students are less likely to complete their programmes within the theoretical duration compared to students in general education, which reflects both structural characteristics of VET systems and the more heterogeneous educational profiles of VET learners (OECD, 2023a). Educational outcomes are therefore closely linked to prior achievement and social background rather than to the vocational pathway itself.

National evidence from the countries covered in this study points in the same direction. Across the analysed countries, available national and international evidence consistently indicates

that students enrolled in vocational education and training (especially in lower-level vocational schools) achieve lower educational outcomes than their peers in general secondary education. Regardless of the specific assessment frameworks used, studies point to persistent gaps in performance in key areas such as literacy, numeracy, and broader academic competencies (Bulkowski et al., 2023; National desk reports, 2023; Lannert & Holb, 2020; Cankar, 2020). These differences are observed within national education systems and contribute to the perception of VET as a less academically demanding pathway when compared to general education. As a result, vocational education is often positioned as an option associated with weaker educational outcomes rather than as an equivalent alternative within upper secondary education. Importantly, studies also show that these outcomes differences are closely linked to students' educational trajectories prior to entering VET. Vocational pathways tend to attract a higher proportion of students with lower prior competencies and from less advantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. Educational choices are strongly influenced by early academic performance, social background, and, in some cases, learning difficulties or disabilities, which shapes the composition of the VET student population (National desk reports, 2023; Cankar, 2020). Consequently, lower average outcomes in VET largely reflect patterns of social and academic selection rather than the effects of vocational education itself. These structural characteristics reinforce existing inequalities and play a key role in shaping the social image and prestige of vocational education systems

2.5.2 Labour market outcomes

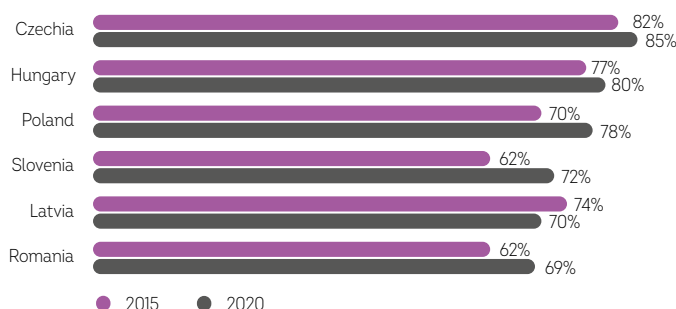
NEET rates indicating the share of young people neither in employment, education, or training, are an important measure of how successfully youth are integrating into education systems and the labour market. High NEET levels are often associated with social exclusion, lower employability, and long-term economic disadvantage.

Based on Cedefop data, NEET rates for young people aged 15-24 have generally declined between 2014 and 2020 across the six countries studied. In Czechia, the rate decreased from 7.7% to 6.7%, and in Poland from 12% to 8.4%. Romania saw a reduction from 17% to 14.8%, Slovenia from 9.4% to 7.7%, Latvia from 12% to 11.2%, and Hungary from 13.6% to 11.7%. Overall, Czechia and Slovenia consistently report the lowest NEET rates, while Romania and Hungary have the highest. These trends suggest gradual improvements in youth integration into education and employment, though challenges remain in countries with higher NEET levels.

These general NEET trends provide useful context for understanding youth transitions to the labour market. While NEET rates reflect the situation of all young people aged 15-24, looking specifically at IVET graduates allows to examine how vocational education supports

employment outcomes. Based on Cedefop data from 2015 to 2020, almost all countries included in the study recorded an increase in the employment rate of recent IVET graduates. In 2020, the employment rate reached 85% in Czechia, 80% in Hungary, 78% in Poland, 72% in Slovenia, and 69% in Romania. Latvia, by contrast, experienced a decline of 4 percentage points, from 74% in 2015 to 70% in 2020.

Figure 4.
Employment rate for recent IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds)⁴ (%)



Source: Cedefop, Key indicators on VET

Vocational education and training in Poland, Czechia, Hungary, Slovenia, and Latvia shares many common characteristics and challenges. In all these countries, VET plays an important role in preparing young people for the labour market and is increasingly aligned with employers' needs. At the same time, vocational pathways often struggle with image and prestige issues, as they are frequently chosen by students with weaker academic results or treated as a "second choice" option. Another common challenge lies in ensuring enough well-prepared teachers, especially in technical fields. Strengthening the attractiveness of VET, improving learning outcomes, and reinforcing its direct link to labour market requirements remain key priorities across the region. While most quantitative indicators presented in this chapter refer to the 2014-2020 period, the discussion also draws on more recent international evidence where available. This allows the analysis to situate historical trends within broader structural challenges that continue to shape vocational education systems in the studied countries.

⁴ Based on Eurostat LFS data on the employment rate of 20-34-year-olds with medium-level vocational qualifications (ISCED 3 or 4) obtained 1-3 years prior to the survey and not in education or training during the last four weeks.

Chapter 3. Erasmus+ mobility in vocational education and training

This chapter examines the characteristics of Erasmus+ VET mobility (Key Action 1) and its main objectives. It also highlights the scale and destinations of outgoing mobilities in each country studied.

3.1 Objectives of Erasmus+ mobility in vocational education and training

In the field of vocational education and training, the programme offers a range of opportunities for both individuals and organisations. Under Key Action 1 (*Learning Mobility of Individuals*), Erasmus+ supports organisations providing vocational education and training, as well as other organisations active in this field, that wish to organise learning mobility activities for learners, apprentices, recent graduates, teachers, trainers, and other staff.

In the previous financial perspective (2014-2020), mobility projects were highlighted as a key instrument for supporting learners in the acquisition of competences, including knowledge, skills and attitudes, enhancing their personal development and employability, and fostering a sense of European citizenship (European Commission, 2014, p. 33).

Learners' mobility under the Erasmus+ programme includes VET traineeships abroad of up to 12 months, comprising both short-term mobility periods (from 2 weeks to less than 3 months) and long-term mobility periods (from 3 to 12 months). The activity is open to VET learners, including apprentices, who undertake a vocational training placement in another country. Learners are hosted either at a workplace (an enterprise or other relevant organisation) or at a VET school, combined with periods of work-based learning in an enterprise or other relevant organisation (European Commission, 2014, p. 47).

All mobility activities are implemented within a quality framework agreed in advance by the sending and receiving organisations, including a Learning Agreement, in order to ensure a high level of quality. Learning outcomes achieved during the mobility period are formally recognised and validated at institutional level, and course contents are adapted as necessary to ensure that the mobility period abroad fits well with the VET programme in which the apprentice or VET learner is enrolled (European Commission, 2014, p. 47).

The European Commission bears the ultimate responsibility for the Erasmus+ programme, including the overall management of the budget, the setting of priorities, objectives and criteria, and the supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the programme at European

level. The programme is implemented primarily through indirect management, whereby the European Commission entrusts National Agencies with budget implementation tasks, making them responsible for promoting and delivering Erasmus+ at national level and for acting as the link between the Commission and beneficiary organisations. Across the participating countries covered by this study, the Programme is implemented through designated National Agencies, including the Foundation for the Development of the Education System (FRSE) in Poland, the Czech National Agency for International Education and Research (DZS) in Czechia, Tempus Public Foundation in Hungary, the State Education Development Agency Republic of Latvia (VIAA), the Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Mobility and European Educational and Training Programmes (CMEPIUS) in Slovenia, and the National Agency for Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training (ANPCDEFP) in Romania.

3.2. The scale of students' mobility in Erasmus+

When considering IVET student mobility in absolute terms, the overall scale of participation in the analysed countries remains relatively limited. Based on data from National Agencies for the 2015-2019 period, Poland recorded the highest number of outgoing vocational mobilities (116,728 participants), while substantially lower absolute numbers were observed in smaller countries, including Romania (21,846), Czechia (17,561), Hungary (8,010), Slovenia (7,988) and Latvia (3,009). These differences primarily reflect variations in country size, cohort volumes of IVET students, and the organisational capacity of national VET systems rather than different levels of engagement with international mobility. Importantly, even in countries with the highest absolute numbers, participation in mobility concerns only a small share of the overall IVET student population.

This general picture is further supported by comparative data published by Cedefop, which measures IVET learner mobility as the share of IVET graduates who experienced a mobility abroad lasting at least ten days. While this indicator enables crosscountry comparison in relative terms, its interpretation requires caution. Comparable data are available only for a limited number of years, and the most recent observations coincide with the COVID19 pandemic, which substantially disrupted international mobility across Europe. Despite signs of recovery in several countries, in 2021 the overall share of IVET students participating in mobility remained low, with the highest proportions observed in Latvia (around 11%), Slovenia (approximately 7%) and Poland (around 6%), while in other countries studied this share remained below 5%.

Across all analysed countries, the data indicate a consistent tendency towards choosing Southern European countries as preferred mobility destinations, with Germany also frequently selected as a host country (Zabłocka & Stasiowski, 2023).

Given this limited quantitative scale, the impact of IVET mobility should not be assessed solely through the outcomes of individual participants. While international experience can benefit students directly involved in mobility projects, its broader importance lies in indirect and multiplier effects at the institutional level. The preparation and implementation of mobility projects can influence teaching practices, curriculum orientation, cooperation with enterprises and the international profile of VET schools. Moreover, returning students and staff may disseminate knowledge, skills, and practices acquired abroad, extending the effects of mobility beyond the immediate group of participants.

Findings of the research study



This part presents the findings of both qualitative and quantitative research on the impact of students' mobility. It covers effects at the individual level – on participating students and accompanying teachers – as well as on non-participating students. Additionally, it examines the impact on schools as organisations, including teaching processes, curricula, infrastructure, and external cooperation, and considers broader systemic-level effects.

Chapter 4. Planning, coordination, and student selection in Erasmus+ VET mobilities

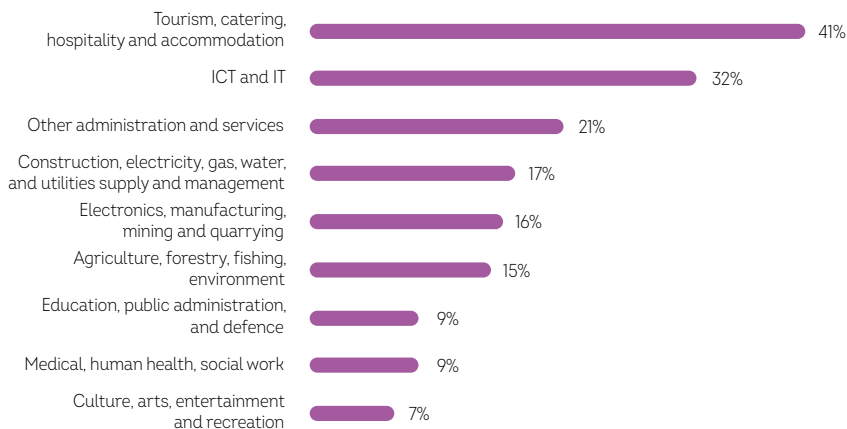
The following section examines how the mobility process was organised in schools participating in the Erasmus+ programme between 2014 and 2020, based on data from both qualitative and quantitative studies. The chapter explores key features of mobility, the scale of participation in mobilities in surveyed schools, and the structure of activities undertaken by students abroad. Attention is given to how mobility is implemented at the school level – from planning and establishing partnerships to recruiting and preparing students. The chapter also discusses common challenges and barriers encountered during the implementation of mobility projects, including administrative difficulties, logistical problems, and the student selection process.

4.1 Vocational fields in which mobility takes place and the scale of VET placements among surveyed schools

In the survey, respondents were asked to indicate the vocational areas for which their schools organise mobility projects. The character of the industry or occupation was determined using predefined occupational categories: nine industrial sectors were listed, with the option to select additional areas not covered by the main categories to prevent data loss. Respondents could select more than one option. Within the schools covered by the survey, mobility projects were most frequently organised in the *tourism, catering, hospitality and accommodation* sector, selected by 41% of respondents. This is followed by *ICT and IT* at 32%. The next four most represented sectors are: *other administration and services* (21%), *construction, electricity, gas, water and utilities supply and management* (17%), *electronics, manufacturing, mining and quarrying* (16%), and *agriculture, forestry, fishing, environment* (15%) (see Table 3 and Figure 5).

On the contrary, fields related to *medical, human health, social work and education, public administration and defence*, as well as *culture, arts, entertainment and recreation*, were less frequently reported by the surveyed schools as areas in which mobility projects are organised, with each sector accounting for only a small percentage of respondents (ranging from 7% to 9%).

Figure 5.
The popularity of occupational areas in mobility projects



Source: own calculation N=909

The distribution of mobility by occupation reported by the surveyed schools across the participating countries reveals several recurring patterns, alongside notable differences between countries. Within the schools covered by the study, mobility projects are most frequently organised in the *tourism, catering, hospitality and accommodation* sector, a pattern reported across most countries, although with varying intensity. This sector is most often indicated by surveyed schools in Poland (54%) and Latvia (50%).

The *ICT and IT* sector is another vocational area frequently reported by the surveyed schools as a field for mobility projects, particularly in Slovenia (47%) and Poland (44%). Mobility projects organised by schools in the *construction, electricity, gas, water, and utilities supply and management* sector are relatively common in Latvia (43%) and considerably less frequent in Romania (8%).

In Latvia, the surveyed schools report organising mobility projects more frequently in the *agriculture, forestry, fishing, environment* sector (25%) as well as in *culture, arts, entertainment and recreation* (48%), while schools in other countries indicate lower levels of mobility organisation in these areas. Compared to other participating countries, schools in Slovenia report a relatively high level of mobility organisation in the *electronics, manufacturing, mining and quarrying* sector (47%).

Table 3.

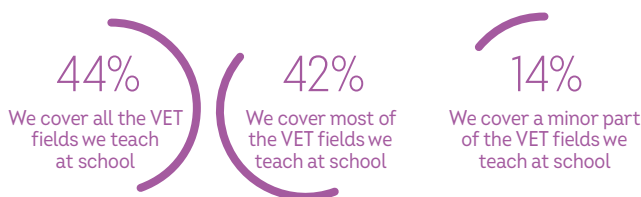
The popularity of occupational areas in the mobilities by country

	Czechia	Hungary	Latvia	Poland	Romania	Slovenia
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, environment	14%	13%	25%	17%	14%	12%
ICT and IT	23%	26%	30%	44%	23%	47%
Electronics, manufacturing, mining and quarrying	11%	9%	20%	14%	24%	47%
Construction, electricity, gas, water, and utilities supply and management	12%	18%	43%	19%	8%	19%
Tourism, catering, hospitality and accommodation	25%	39%	50%	54%	35%	37%
Education, public administration and defence	11%	16%	0%	5%	9%	12%
Other administration and services	23%	13%	23%	22%	25%	7%
Medical, human health, social work	15%	18%	5%	2%	9%	7%
Culture, arts, entertainment and recreation	10%	6%	48%	3%	4%	7%
Other	19%	25%	40%	46%	30%	33%

Source: own calculation N=909

An important contextual factor in interpreting the data is the extent to which mobility covers the full range of VET fields offered by the schools in the research sample. In the survey, respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which their schools organise mobility for all vocational programmes they provide. The findings show that 44% of responding schools cover all VET fields taught at the school by mobility, while in 42% of cases, mobility covers most VET fields. Only 14% of schools report covering a minor part of their vocational programmes through mobility.

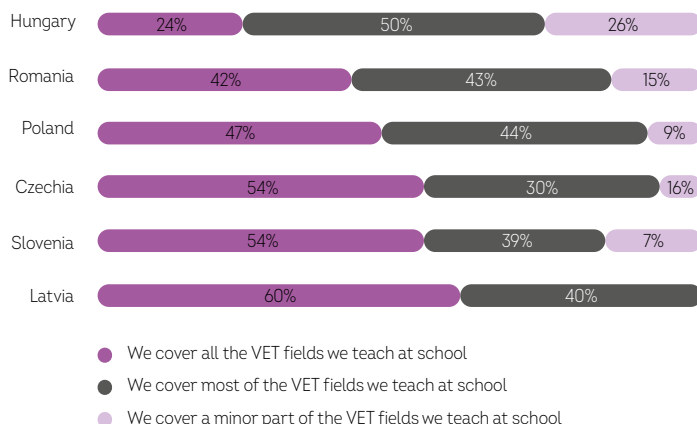
Figure 6.
VET fields covered by organised mobilities at schools



Source: own calculation N=909

There are noticeable differences between countries. Latvia reports the highest percentage of schools fully covering all VET fields (60%), followed by Czechia, Slovenia (both 54%), and Poland (47%). Hungary reports the lowest level of full coverage, with only 24% of schools providing mobility for all vocational fields they offer.

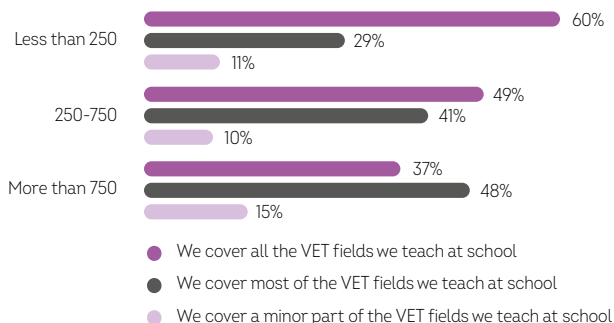
Figure 7.
VET fields covered by organised mobilities at schools by country



Source: own calculation N=909

Schools with less than 250 students are more likely to cover all the VET fields they teach by mobility, with 60% of such schools reporting full coverage. Conversely, larger schools (more than 750 students) were somewhat less likely to cover all fields taught at school (37%), but they were more likely to cover most of them (48%).

Figure 8.
Scale of mobilities organised by schools by the school size



Source: own calculation N=909

The relationship between school size and the extent of VET fields covered by organised mobility projects was analysed using Pearson's chi-squared test. The results show a statistically significant association between these two variables (Pearson's chi-square $\chi^2 = 21.773$, $p < .001$), indicating that school size is associated with the scope of VET fields covered by mobility projects. This is further supported by the nominal association measures, Phi (.155) and Cramér's V (.109), which both indicate a statistically significant but weak association between school size and the scale of VET fields covered by mobility ($p < .001$ for both).

4.2 The process of organising international placements by schools

Drawing on qualitative research with VET coordinators of mobility projects and teachers, this section examines the organisation of mobility in schools, the resources involved, and the methods of student recruitment, while also highlighting the organisational barriers reported by respondents.

4.2.1 Managing and coordinating international placements in schools

Most interviewees participating in the qualitative study represented vocational schools with extensive experience in implementing Erasmus+ projects. This experience has enabled them not only to accumulate valuable know-how but also to establish stable networks of international partners. These schools actively exchange information about the quality of cooperation with foreign organisations to avoid partnerships with institutions that breach agreements or fail to meet expectations. The experience gained by the participating schools has allowed them to develop effective organisational and structural solutions for implementing mobility projects. Participation in mobility projects requires the allocation of human resources and the establishment of a clear organisational structure to efficiently manage the process of arranging international placements.

The qualitative analysis suggests that different approaches to mobility management can be observed across the schools included in the qualitative study. These variations appear to be related to factors such as school size, the scale of mobility projects implemented, as well as the schools' prior experience in organising mobility activities. Interview accounts indicate that the availability of organisational and human resources, together with accumulated experience in managing Erasmus+ mobility projects, plays an important role in shaping how schools approach mobility. In this context, respondents frequently highlighted the role of the school principal, whose engagement and institutional support are perceived as key enabling factors for the effective implementation of mobility projects.

The analysis of the qualitative material made it possible to identify the following recurring patterns.

- **Schools with limited mobility and less experience with mobility projects**
In schools with a low number of mobility projects a single project coordinator, often the school principal or deputy principal, is appointed to oversee the process. This person is responsible for organisation, administration, and communication with international partners.
- **Schools with extensive mobility activities and experience with mobility projects**
Organisations with a high level of mobility activity and long-standing experience in Erasmus+ programme tend to form dedicated project teams, usually composed of staff members responsible for various aspects of project implementation.
 - **School principal:** plays a key leadership role by approving projects, assuming financial responsibility, motivating staff to engage, and fostering a positive atmosphere for international cooperation. In many schools, Erasmus+ is viewed as an integral part of the school's educational strategy. In some cases, the principal also participates in preparatory visits, student selection, and the dissemination of project outcomes.
 - **Project coordinator:** oversees the overall organisation and administration of the project, liaises with international partners, and ensures the preparation of necessary documentation. While this role may be fulfilled by the principal or deputy principal in smaller schools, larger institutions usually assign a dedicated coordinator.
 - **Teachers:** contribute to student selection, internship preparation, accompanying students abroad, and monitoring their progress. Teachers involved in mobility projects typically include vocational subject teachers or foreign language instructors.
 - **Finance/Accounting staff:** handle financial administration of the project, including contracts, invoicing, and financial reporting.

- **School counsellor or psychologist:** support the selection of suitable candidates and assess their readiness and capacity for international placements.

Challenges for schools in organising Erasmus+ VET placements

Interviews revealed a wide range of challenges schools face when organising international mobility projects. These challenges span from engaging teaching staff, through finding suitable partners, to navigating a complex administrative environment and ensuring adequate staffing.

- **Teacher engagement and leadership commitment**

Convincing teachers to participate in mobility projects is often a slow process and it requires time. Initially, many teachers are sceptical, viewing internships abroad as “trips” with little educational value and worrying about students missing lessons.

“They [teachers] were questioning whether it was worth sending the students, thinking it might just be a fun trip without much benefit for their skills, and concerned about them missing regular lessons. (Latvia_2)

Reluctance stemmed also from insufficient foreign language skills and fear of responsibility in the event of an incident during the trip. The requirement for the accompanying person to have subject-matter expertise (e.g., in mechanics or aviation) often meant that technically skilled teachers hesitated due to language anxiety.

“Eight years ago nobody wanted to go, for example because they didn’t know the language well. The assumption was that the accompanying person should be someone who understands the industry, for instance because they monitor certain aspects of education, so a teacher would say, “I know about mechanics” or “I know about aviation”, but they were afraid because of the language. The second concern was: “I won’t go, because if something happens to someone, what will I do?”. (Poland_9)

“The lack of English knowledge is the biggest disadvantage that’s why colleagues do not want to participate so actively. (Hungary_2)

Over time, however, teachers and school principals often come to appreciate the benefits of Erasmus+, not only for professional development but also for its sociocultural impact, which fosters openness and international awareness among students.

“ However, both teachers and administrators have now realised that the Erasmus offers more than just professional development. They’ve also recognised the importance of the sociocultural aspect and how it’s important for us not to be seen as a school isolated in the countryside. (Latvia_2)

“ During the years since I am here, the teachers’ attitude has improved but to tell the truth only the same colleagues take part from year to year. (Hungary_2)

The success of mobility projects depends heavily on the commitment of school leadership. Motivated and supportive leaders are key to mobilising staff, forming dedicated project teams, and prioritising mobility within the school’s agenda. Conversely, passive or overburdened management can hinder project implementation.

“ [...] It works if somebody, for some reason, is very committed, and that somebody has to be pretty high up in the school. So, I think in a school where the school leadership is not actually determined that they want to do this and they see something good in it and they’re not personally involved in it, I don’t think it works there. (Hungary_1)

“ I think that it can work well in schools where the head of the institution is committed to the programmes, because if he’s not, it’s difficult for the teaching community [...] So, we definitely need a leader. (Hungary_9)

“ It is preceded by an awful lot of work and the responsibility that goes with it. And you must have really passionate people in the school who do not count their time and do not just wait for more money. And of course the support of the leadership is important [...] (Czechia_7)

“ It’s highly recommended to involve senior management, as their understanding from the top level can make it a priority and guide the development of education. (Latvia_9)

- **Finding and maintaining reliable partners**

Securing suitable and committed international partners is a notable challenge, particularly in specialised vocational fields. Sectors such as construction, road engineering, electrical work, and healthcare face particular difficulties, as host companies may be reluctant

to take responsibility for students or may require longer placements than Erasmus+ allows. Professional music and arts schools also report problems in finding matching institutions abroad.

For schools without prior mobility experience, the absence of a reliable network and access to trustworthy contacts is a major barrier. Many partnerships are ad hoc, based on personal contacts rather than institutional agreements, making long-term cooperation unstable. Negative experiences, such as partners cancelling at short notice, being unresponsive, or offering limited learning opportunities, undermine trust and willingness to continue collaboration.

”The biggest challenge is to find the right employers, those who are willing to work with students, to engage them, to teach them.” (Slovenia)

”It can be quite challenging to find a suitable traineeship for some programmes, such as for construction and road engineering technicians. Finding a suitable traineeship abroad can be particularly difficult for them due to the scarcity of opportunities in this specialised field. [...] Furthermore, there are not many schools in Latvia that offer this programme, so our cooperation partners are unable to provide suitable traineeships.” (Latvia_12)

Interviewees emphasised that establishing effective cooperation with foreign partners requires more than just formal arrangements. It also involves building relationships based on trust and mutual understanding. Personal meetings and preparatory visits play a key role, as they allow schools to better understand the partner’s working conditions, expectations, and organisational culture.

”The institution should look for a suitable partner, take the trouble with it or make a preparatory visit to travel for a personal meeting. This is very important. [...] A face-to-face meeting and personal meeting are very useful to avoid later problems.” (Hungary_3)

- **Administrative and bureaucratic burden**

Participation in Erasmus+ places a heavy administrative burden on schools, especially where projects must be coordinated through VET centres like in Hungary.

All schools face a high level of bureaucratic complexity when preparing applications, managing finances, and reporting project results. They must simultaneously comply with EU rules and procedures (e.g., e-forms or Mobility Tool+, later replaced by the Beneficiary Module), National Agency requirements, and local financial procedures imposed by municipalities or regional authorities. These different systems often have conflicting formats, accounting rules, and approval processes.

SS *My colleague and I are the only ones doing all these tasks and we do them in our own time. You don't see that part of the work. What people notice are the trips, and there's sometimes envy, like we're just going off somewhere while others stay and work hard. (Poland_23)*

SS *Writing the projects themselves, preparing all those regulations – I must admit, when I look at all this paperwork and the reporting, it really is a huge challenge. (Poland_12)*

The complexity is compounded by:

- **Changing EU IT tools** – requiring continuous staff training.
- **Overly complex application forms** – posing difficulties especially for inexperienced schools.
- **Mismatch between EU procedures and local school governance (e.g., municipal authority or VET centres)** – creating duplication of effort and additional delays.
- **Delayed grant disbursement** – often caused by misalignment between application timelines, project schedules, and local administrative procedures.

SS *There's the financial issue, and the large extra workload. It's not possible to carry out a project and handle it fully within your regular teaching duties. It requires a separate commitment. If you don't manage to form a team, it usually falls on one person and that's tough. That's one reason why some people try, submit applications, but don't succeed. (Poland_2)*

SS *It is a lot of work and paperwork. [...] It is hard to find somebody and teach them, it is difficult, it is such a living organism, the rules change all the time. I do not know how many databases there has been, maybe four or five, and I do not understand why they keep changing it, it does not work very well and we always have to learn what to write. (Czechia_2)*

Erasmus is very complicated in terms of school economics. There are no methodologies that would be provided centrally. We sign a contract where the rules are given but every region has a different system of the economics of running schools, and the methodological support from the founder can vary. (Czechia_9)

These administrative demands substantially reduce flexibility and create uncertainty in planning.

- **Staff shortages and lack of resources**

Organising mobility requires considerable time outside regular teaching hours, often on a voluntary and uncompensated basis. Many schools lack dedicated administrative staff for Erasmus+, meaning the workload falls on a small number of teachers, which leads to fatigue and burnout.

It is certainly the biggest problem in many schools that there aren't enough people who can deal with it. It would be good if a full-time colleague could deal with it. (Hungary_2)

A particularly acute problem mentioned by respondents from Czechia and Slovenia is covering teaching hours when staff travel abroad. Schools struggle to find substitutes, especially for specialist VET subjects, and there is often reluctance among colleagues to take additional classes.

In many schools, there is only one teacher for a given professional module, making it difficult to find a replacement. Often, it is general subject teachers who provide cover, which can deprive students of learning specialist content. To address this, some schools schedule teacher mobilities during holidays. However, this creates new challenges: some teachers are unwilling to participate during holidays, and costs for items such as air tickets and accommodation rise significantly.

It's extra work, we're under pressure. When teachers go abroad, hours are lost, it's hard to find replacements. Most of the substitute teachers are general subject teachers. We changed the rules this year: a teacher can go on training during the holidays, can escort students for a shorter period, and cannot attend training at the same time. (Slovenia)

Another issue raised by respondents from Czechia is the high cost of substitute teachers accompanying students abroad. While these costs can sometimes be covered by the project's organisational budget, schools often need to cover the teacher's salary from their own internal funds.

This is considered a necessary expense if a teacher participates in Erasmus+ mobility and a substitute is required. Schools are responsible for ensuring compliance with relevant legislation. However, respondents are not always fully aware of this, and reimbursement does not always cover the full cost of providing substitutes.

Finally, some schools also report that insufficient foreign language skills among staff limit the pool of potential project coordinators and group leaders.

- **Experience-based advantage**

Access to Erasmus+ mobility is more readily available to schools with prior experience. Those without it often lack the skills needed to prepare successful applications, perpetuating inequalities in access to international opportunities. As the qualitative research was conducted in 2023, respondents occasionally referred to experiences from different programming periods, and perspectives related to the 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 frameworks sometimes overlapped in their accounts. As a result, some respondents referred to the accreditation system when reflecting on access to mobility, institutional capacity and longterm planning, presenting it as a forwardlooking point of reference rather than an evaluation of the new programme period.

Accreditation provides an advantage: it ensures predictable funding, facilitates annual participation in projects, and creates a more stable and less competitive environment. Many experienced schools view the current accreditation system positively, emphasising that it promotes institutional readiness, facilitates knowledge sharing, and encourages long-term planning.



What the accreditation has helped us the most is searching for stable partners. It has been good this year but I do not know if I will have the money again next year and I will not know until July, so I cannot book it and set a firm date if I do not know whether we will get some support. So this kind of guessing, how much we are going to get or not going to get, if we are going to get anything at all, keeping that long-term collaboration and that development of collaboration were the worst. That's where the accreditation is great, in my opinion. (Czechia_11)

However, schools without prior experience in Erasmus+ and without accreditation express uncertainty about their capacity to regularly organise international mobility. Two key barriers were identified:

- **Sector-specific challenges**

Schools representing certain sectors, such as culture, music, and the arts, face difficulties in aligning their programmes with Erasmus+ application criteria. This issue was especially emphasised in interviews with representatives from Latvian schools, who reported a lack of guidance on how to apply accreditation requirements to sector-specific vocational training. As a result, some institutions from these areas have been unable to secure accreditation.

- **Limited resources and expertise**

Schools with more experience in mobility projects are at an advantage, as preparing a successful application demands considerable time, administrative capacity, and a well-informed team. It also requires engagement of school leadership and overcoming resistance or scepticism among staff. Many schools, particularly smaller or less experienced ones, lack the necessary resources to undertake this complex process.

Consequently, prior participation in Erasmus+ projects often creates a “success spiral” – schools with established experience continue to benefit from it, while those without prior involvement face compounded barriers that limit their ability to access international mobility opportunities.

4.2.2 Student selection criteria for mobility projects

Equal access, diversity, and social inclusion have been consistently promoted within Erasmus+, initially framed under *equity and inclusion* in the 2014-2020 period and further reinforced as a horizontal priority in the 2021-2027 programme. The programme seeks to ensure participation of learners with fewer opportunities through dedicated support mechanisms and inclusive approaches.

In line with the programme's goals, organisations are expected to design their activities in an inclusive and accessible manner, ensuring that mobility is a real opportunity for students who, for various reasons, may face barriers to participating in international projects. These barriers may include economic, health-related, educational, linguistic, cultural, geographical, social, or discriminatory factors.

In this context, the selection of students for mobility in vocational schools should go beyond academic achievements and take into account the broader social and personal circumstances of the candidates. This includes learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with fewer opportunities, whose access to mobility may be constrained by personal, social, economic, health-related, cultural, or geographical obstacles. Such an inclusive approach to selection builds on the equity and inclusion principles embedded in the Erasmus+ programme in the 2014-2020 period and has been further reinforced as a horizontal priority in the 2021-2027 financial framework, which places inclusion at the core of programme implementation.

Data from the qualitative study among school representatives indicate that beneficiary schools most commonly organise internal student selection procedures for Erasmus+ mobility twice a year, followed by an assessment of candidates. In some institutions, students can apply throughout the school year. In those cases, eligible students may be assigned a mobility place in the following semester, or in the current semester if one of the approved students suddenly fails.

Interviews with representatives of schools from all countries studied made it possible to identify several types of criteria considered in the student recruitment process. Some schools report an overrepresentation of applications from students, with some choosing a particular school specifically because of the opportunities to participate in Erasmus+ professional internships abroad. Interviewees emphasise that the number of applicants for mobility programmes is often higher than the number of available spots. As a result, schools are often required to implement selection procedures for international placements.

SS We have a heavy overflow of demand. (Czechia_10)

SS In the end, it is the educational measures that influence the selection, if there are too many pupils and they have the other criteria equalised. But the criterion is basically an even distribution between the two fields of study: woodworking, mechanical engineering. (Slovenia)

Cumulative advantage

During the interviews, it was mentioned that the elite character of Erasmus+ is often perceived as a reward for high achievements. In many cases studied, regardless of the country, one of the key criteria taken into account in the selection process is academic performance. However, respondents also indicated that it is not always used in isolation and may be balanced with other factors in the selection process.

First, we look at the student's academic performance in their previous school period, specifically their average mark. Additionally, we assess their motivation. (Latvia_2)

A special committee evaluates the applicants, considering their average grades, other achievements in school such as in sports. (Latvia_5)

Academic results are evaluated particularly in vocational subjects and foreign languages.

That means the average grade from the previous year. [...] The next criterion is English language, also based on the grade from the previous year. (Poland_20)

I won't hide the fact that we try to prioritise good students. Therefore, overall grade point average, grades in vocational subjects, and, where applicable, the results of the vocational examination are taken into account. (Poland_23)

But you should at least get a B. So, these criteria are an advantage, if he has participated in a professional competition, if he has an extra language exam. (Hungary_5)

The opinions of vocational subject teachers, language teachers, class tutors, and school counsellors are also considered. In some interview narratives (e.g., from Latvia, Poland and Czechia), teachers' evaluations were described as taking into account factors such as students' subject-related knowledge as well as feedback from company mentors during practical training. Teacher recommendations play a key role; vocational subject teachers, foreign language teachers, and homeroom teachers assess students and nominate those they believe would benefit most from participating in mobility programmes.

Beyond academic performance: behavioural, personal, and motivational criteria

Many schools incorporate additional criteria into their recruitment process that go beyond academic performance. Responsibility is a key factor – schools seek students with no behavioural issues, minimal or no unexcused absences, and active classroom engagement.

We require students to have 100% attendance during their foreign placements, so attendance is also taken into account and the conduct grade, as the headmistress mentioned, when a student travels, they are not only

representing themselves but also representing the city and the country, hence the conduct grade. (Poland_20)

” Well, there are stipulations that you can’t have more than 3 hours of unexcused absences, no disciplinary issues. (Hungary_5)

Personality traits are also valued, with a preference for more extroverted, adaptable students who can adjust to new environments and follow rules. Motivation is assessed not only through written applications but also by discussing why mobility is necessary for students and whether they are psychologically prepared for extended periods away from home.

” The willingness to learn and work on oneself is certainly important for us; it is our main criterion for selecting participants. The certainty that it will pay off, that it will have some benefit for them, that is important to us and the grades are secondary. (Czechia_4)

Additionally, schools often prioritise students’ genuine interest in their vocational field and their motivation to further develop in it.

” We try to make it a fair selection, we do not have a criterion that it has to be a learner with the best results, or that it just has to be an outstanding student; it is more about an interest in the craft. (Czechia_5)

” The most important criterion is what the placement teacher and the PUD organiser say about how the student is doing in the placement (attitude to work, mentor, classmates, colleagues). (Slovenia)

Some schools introduce preparatory activities to assess attitude and commitment before mobility. Teachers observe whether students attend sessions regularly, complete assigned tasks, persevere, and work well in teams.

” Attendance is compulsory, so we expect them to attend these coaching sessions, which usually take place every week or two weeks. Here the children research different topics, look for food in the country of destination, and then they must do a little bit of a tour of the culture and then they make presentations. During the coaching, it’s also nice to see who really sticks with it, who really sticks with it. [...] we can see who is persistent and who

will do it and we also do team-building, how they will be with each other, because they will be dependent on each other, among other things.
(Hungary_9)

In some cases, there are efforts to support students who may struggle academically or with foreign languages. While language proficiency is important for communication with host organisations, certain schools offer pre-departure language preparation to ensure equal participation opportunities.

“ Even an average student can go if we know he or she is the kind of smiling, positive child who helps at school events. Such a student may be a hard worker who doesn't do well academically but still has a lot to offer. (Czechia_1)

Finally, involvement in school, class, and community life is often valued. This includes participation in sports competitions, subject olympiads and other contests, and representing the school externally. Engagement in professional or cultural activities is also recognised.

“ The main focus was on students' engagement in professional development and their interests – any kind of interests. For example, if a student took part in poetry contests, that was also seen as a sign that they wanted to do something more with their lives, and it gave them the opportunity to benefit from vocational mobility programmes. Volunteering was highly valued in the recruitment criteria. Cooperation with employers was also important. (Poland_3)

Inclusive selection criteria

Many interviewees pointed out that their schools include additional measures to enable students with less favourable starting conditions to participate in mobilities. This is often achieved by awarding extra points to students from vulnerable groups.

Some schools actively seek to give a chance to students from socially and economically disadvantaged families who would otherwise be unable to take part in a study visit abroad without Erasmus+ support.

“ Students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds can get extra points. Regional remoteness, single-parent families, chronic illnesses are additional factors. (Slovenia)

And it could easily just be a weaker learner where maybe the class teacher has information about that family and knows that it is not quite ideal and it is a great opportunity for that child. (Czechia_5)

Based on interviews conducted in Poland, it appears that schools with many students from rural areas or small towns are particularly focused on addressing social exclusion during the recruitment process. One interviewee noted that students from wealthier families, who can afford private travel abroad, tend to have higher grades on average. For this reason, some schools prioritise the student's motivation for personal development over academic results or give greater weight to socioeconomic background compared to schools in larger towns.

In contrast, schools in larger towns often add extra recruitment stages, such as an interview in English, which can favour students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds.

I think students whose parents have invested in private tutoring or who have had the chance to use English in conversations are likely to feel more comfortable during such an interview, so these are usually students from higher social status families. (Poland_1)

Several schools stressed that inclusivity is a matter of principle.

On principle, we do not just select the top students or the over-motivated children because, in the long run, that doesn't work. These children often have big demands and are not the right fit for such programmes. We focus a lot on students from families with imperfect socioeconomic conditions, for example, those living with a single parent or in large families. (Poland_3)

Some schools, particularly those with a high number of students with special educational needs, also award additional points to students with intellectual disabilities.

In Latvia, some interviewees highlighted flexibility in the selection process.

The selection conditions are flexible, and we ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate. The most important thing is a positive attitude to learning. Even students with special needs codes can participate if they have the right attitude. (Latvia_12)

” And now Erasmus is inclusive. If we have a student with a code who has difficulty in learning, that does not prevent them from going. The selection conditions are flexible, and they are designed in such a way that everyone really has the opportunity to go on mobility. The key is a positive attitude to learning. (Latvia_12)

An example from Hungary illustrates the transformative potential of such inclusive practices: a student with high-risk behavioural issues was selected, and the experience proved life-changing, leading the student to later enrol in a school in France.

Accredited schools also reported taking into account students' backgrounds and initial challenges. However, this observation requires further confirmation through quantitative research. Based on the qualitative interviews, it remains unclear to what extent these additional criteria are decisive enough to genuinely ensure the participation of students from disadvantaged groups.

Many schools emphasise that the number of applicants for mobility programmes is often higher than the number of available spots. However, when there are too many candidates, additional selection becomes necessary. In such cases, some schools primarily focus on behavioural aspects and, in the next step, aim to ensure that placements represent all the vocational fields taught.

For safety reasons, schools prefer not to take responsibility for minors. Most schools try to send students who are at least 18 years old.

” We aim to ensure that the applicants are 18 years old; this year, we had 16- and 17-year-olds applying, but we have deferred their applications to next year. (Latvia_5)

” 9th graders, yes, we don't take the very young ones, because then we find out who proves what, and then usually at the beginning of 11th or 12th grade or after graduation. So, I always discuss with the headmistress which classes to focus on. The 10th graders prefer to just even to prepare for the mobility. (Hungary_7)

Recruitment processes

Recruitment processes for international placements are generally complex and start engaging students early on. In schools with extensive experience and a high level of student interest in going abroad, interviewees noted that the selection process has evolved and improved over time. To ensure transparency, some schools have implemented additional organisational measures, such as establishing recruitment committees. More staff members are now involved in the evaluation process, which increases objectivity. These teams usually consist of vocational subject teachers, language teachers, and school psychologists or pedagogues, and sometimes also include the school principal or deputy principal.

SS We have a recruitment team. We also have a full recruitment regulation. We pay particular attention to equal opportunities and the risk of social exclusion. (Poland_6)

SS We have to set up a selection committee where the principal has the final say; we evaluate everything that possible to evaluate there and that is quantifiable so it cannot be contested. (Czechia_10)

Clear regulations with defined selection criteria are developed to guide the recruitment process. These regulations often emerge from discussions among teaching teams and typically emphasise professional development, student engagement, and extracurricular interests.

SS The regulations were developed during a subject and modular team meeting. We mainly focus on students' involvement in professional growth and interests. (Poland_19)

In addition to grades and teacher recommendations, some schools conduct written tests, such as foreign language proficiency assessments. Interviews are commonly used to better understand students' motivation, language abilities, and personalities. As part of this process, students may be required to prepare a CV in English, introduce themselves, explain their motivation for the internship, and answer questions related to their vocational field.

SS The process in fact it is a well-established routine already in our school for students to submit a CV and a cover letter for each application [...] After choosing the students, in fact, they receive training in four areas before travelling: mental culture, foreign language and vocational training in a certain number of hours. (Hungary_10)

Students apply to a call for applications, which requires: a CV, a motivation letter, a description of how the student contributes to the school. Then comes the selection process: I read the dossier, interview the class teacher and, if necessary, the counselling service and the management. (Slovenia)

For the companies the CV and the cover letter of students can be sent so that they get a general idea of the student and can choose which student fits the profile of their company. (Hungary_3)

Students are also assessed during preparatory sessions before they are selected for mobility. These sessions allow teachers to observe students' commitment, engagement, and teamwork skills, providing an additional layer of evaluation beyond grades and formal criteria.

This approach encourages students to reflect on their skills, experiences, and readiness for mobility. As a result, it not only increases their awareness but also helps shape their values and future goals.

Transparency in selection has also improved over time in schools with long experience in organising international placements. In many cases, students can now view the scores they receive. One school in Czechia has implemented an internal application platform for traineeships with a clear, point-based scoring system. To manage expectations and reduce frustration among students who are not selected, the school also offers "VIP" traineeships domestically to motivated candidates.

In conclusion, student selection for international mobility is a complex, multi-stage process due to high demand and the need to balance school benefits with student suitability. Schools prioritise not only academic performance but also motivation, behaviour, social skills, and responsibility, avoiding students with serious behavioural issues. In many schools, inclusion is addressed through extra points for students from disadvantaged backgrounds or peripheral regions. Selection tools vary, including CVs, motivation letters, interviews, and, in some countries, tests or psychological assessments. Because of the high number of applicants, transparency in the selection process is particularly important for fairness, and participation in Erasmus+ is treated as a privilege and a reward. Overall, the selection process aims to prepare participants effectively, minimize risks to the programme's and school's reputation, and ensure a clear, fair, and well-documented procedure, recognising both good behaviour and academic performance.

Chapter 5. Mobility individual impact

5.1 Indicators of the impact of mobilities on students' development

The impact of mobility on students participating in VET placements was assessed through an online survey and indepth interviews with school coordinators, school principals and teachers, who evaluated how mobility influenced various aspects of students' development. This approach is naturally subject to certain methodological limitations. In particular, the assessment captures the perceived and observed impact of mobility on students from the perspective of school representatives. While this perspective provides valuable insights into institutional assessments of students' development, it does not replace learner-level evidence and should therefore be interpreted as an indirect measure of the impact of VET mobility.

In the online survey, respondents answered to 19 statements related to the impact of VET placements on students' skills, competencies, competences and personal traits using a 5-point Likert scale. The original survey question for these statements asked: *How do VET placements affect the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of learners who participated in training abroad?* Respondents had to express their level of agreement.

Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics for each statement in the questionnaire relating to the perceived impact of mobilities on students. The most significant perceived impact was related to the improvement of the ability to work in an international environment. This is reflected in the highest average score (4.58) and the smallest standard deviation (.625), indicating a strong consensus among respondents across all countries. The responses regarding the effects of mobility on several different skills, competences, and personal traits varied within a relatively broad range, with mean scores ranging from 4.58 to 3.68.



Table 5.
Descriptive statistics for 19 statements on the perceived impact of mobility on students

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Enhancing ability to work in an international environment	4.58	.625
Increasing communication skills	4.42	.675
Enhancement of intercultural skills	4.42	.765
Increasing team-working skills	4.40	.747
Increasing cultural awareness	4.36	.796
Expanding vocational skills	4.33	.759

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Increasing motivation towards learners' VET field	4.29	.766
Increasing motivation towards foreign language learning	4.29	.790
Improving communication in a foreign language	4.23	.783
Increasing tolerance attitudes	4.22	.863
Increasing awareness of the characteristics of individual workplaces	4.19	.793
Broadening the knowledge of foreign language general vocabulary	4.18	.791
Broadening the knowledge of foreign language professional vocabulary	4.16	.805
Increasing motivation towards learning in general	4.14	.808
Increasing independence in the learning process	4.12	.834
Enhancement of relations with other learners at your school	4.03	.927
Enhancement of relations with their teachers at your school	4.02	.885
Enhancement of relations with your school community	3.87	.945
Increasing ICT skills	3.68	.985

Source: own calculation N= 894

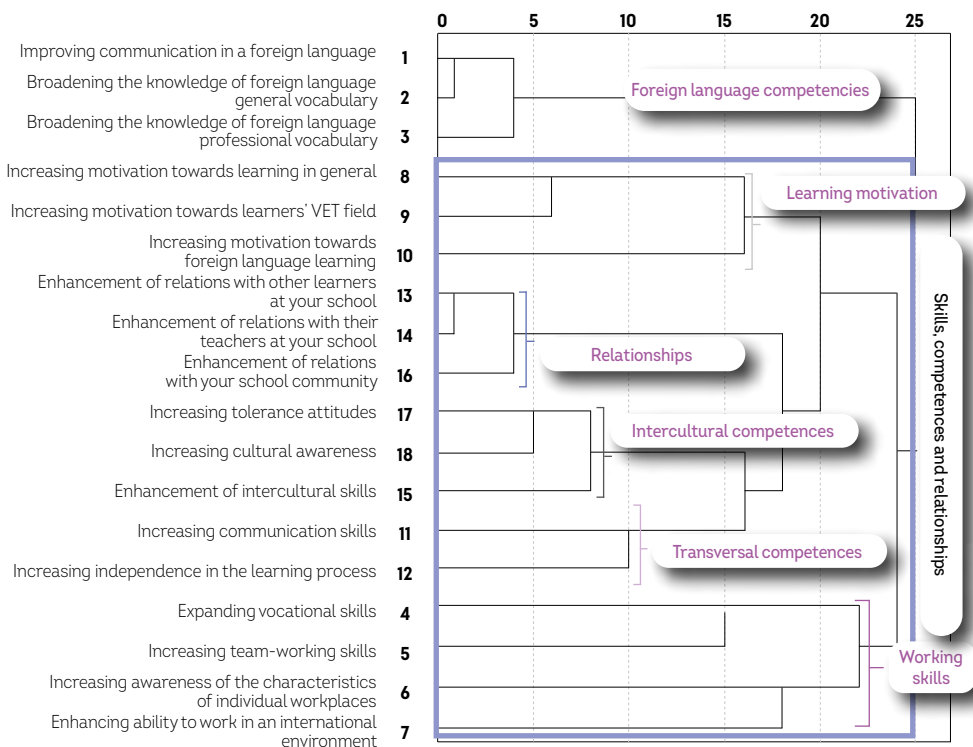
Given the large number of variables (19 statements), an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was initially conducted to identify the underlying structure and reduce dimensionality. Two factors emerged, explaining 62.4% of the variance. However, some variables exhibited cross-loadings or weak associations, making one of the factors difficult to define. Notably, the variable related to the perceived impact on ICT skills showed a low factor loading (.50) on both factors, indicating weak alignment with either dimension. Pearson correlation analysis further confirmed that *ICT skills* had relatively weaker associations with competencies, competences, and personal traits compared to other variables, suggesting that it may represent a distinct construct rather than integrating into the broader framework.

To refine the categorisation, a hierarchical cluster analysis was performed, excluding the *ICT skills* variable. The resulting dendrogram (see Figure 9) revealed two main branches: one capturing the **perceived impact on students' foreign language skills**, and the other encompassing **skills, competences, and relationships**. The first branch reflects the development of foreign language abilities, including improved communication and an expanded vocabulary, both general and professional. The second branch includes various dimensions

of student development: **intercultural competences, transversal competences, learning motivation, working skills, and relationships**, which encompass improved interactions with peers, teachers, and the broader school community. These branches were subsequently used to create combined indicators for further analysis.



Figure 9.
Dendrogram with subgroup titles from the hierarchical cluster analysis



Source: own calculation N=894

After clustering, reliability analysis was conducted. Cronbach's alpha values were calculated for each indicator to determine the reliability of the groupings. The results of this analysis are presented below.



Table 6.
Descriptive statistics and reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of indicators
measuring the individual impacts of students' mobility

Composite indicators	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's alpha
Working skills	892	1.00	5.00	4.37	.597	.830
Intercultural competences	894	1.00	5.00	4.33	.729	.886
Transversal competences	894	1.00	5.00	4.27	.695	.809
Learning motivation	894	1.00	5.00	4.24	.686	.851
Foreign language competencies	890	1.00	5.00	4.18	.729	.909
Relationships	894	1.00	5.00	3.97	.846	.910
Total	894					

** To refine the categorisation, the ICT skills variable was excluded
Source: own calculation N=894*

The analysis shows that mobility had the strongest influence on skills relevant to the labour market, with working skills standing out as the most impacted among outbound students (mean: 4.37). This finding confirms that according to surveyed teachers, mobility placements have largely achieved their goals, helping students acquire and refine professional competencies that they further develop in education and apply in the labour market. International placements not only allow students to test their skills in a specific role and environment but also provide insight into work and vocational training across Europe.

Students' intercultural competences ranked second in terms of the perceived impact of mobility, with a mean of 4.33. This highlights its alignment with key EU priorities, particularly "common values". Mobility experiences foster tolerance and cultural awareness, which are essential for strengthening European identity. These findings confirm that mobility projects play a vital role in promoting common EU values and preparing students for engagement in an interconnected world.

The perceived impact of mobilities on transversal competences ranked third with a mean of 4.27, including key soft skills, such as effective communication and the ability to learn independently. Research highlights their role in fostering flexibility and a positive attitude,

which are essential for collaborative work (Robles, 2012; Finch et al., 2013). Another vital aspect is learning autonomy, which is crucial in the context of lifelong learning (LLL) and the knowledge-based economy. As a driver of productivity and competitive advantage (Pieńkosz and Maj, 2024), the ability to learn independently and continuously develop skills is highly valued in today's dynamic labour market.

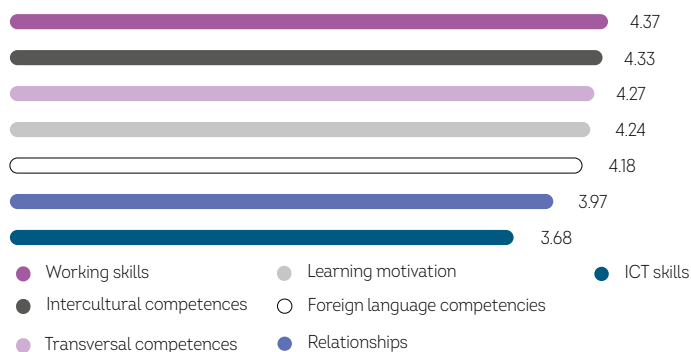
Students' learning motivation was the fourth most impacted area (mean: 4.24), followed by foreign language competencies (4.18). This suggests that mobilities not only enhance specific skills but also foster students' intrinsic motivation to learn, which is fundamental for their long-term personal and professional development. Increased motivation can lead to greater engagement in academic activities, a stronger commitment to lifelong learning, and a more proactive approach to self-improvement.

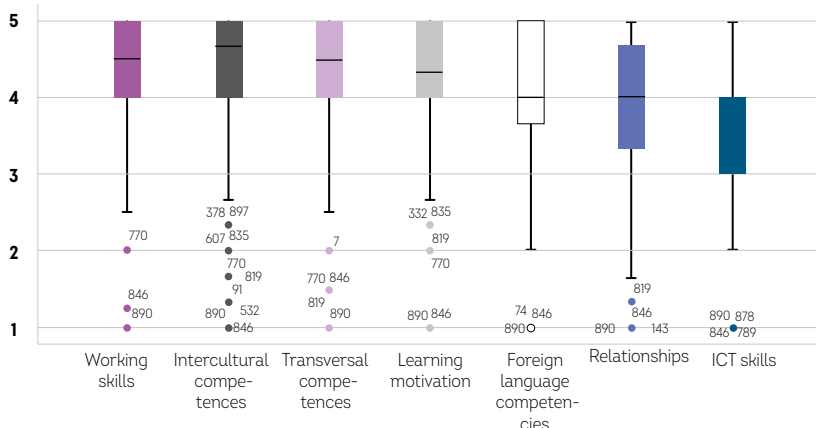
However, if we look at boxplots, the extent of variability in responses differs notably between indicators. The most consistent (least dispersed) results were observed in the areas of intercultural competences, working skills, transversal competences, and learning motivation. These indicators are characterised by low variance (~ 0.35 - 0.53), relatively high medians (≥ 4.33), and narrow interquartile ranges (IQR = 1.00), suggesting agreement among respondents. Higher variability is noticeable in language competences and student's relationships indicators, with higher interquartile ranges (IQR = 1.33) and variances (~ 0.53 - 0.72), indicating more diverse experiences. The most dispersed responses were found in the *increasing ICT skills* item. These differences in dispersion highlight that while certain areas of student development benefit more consistently from mobilities, others (especially ICT skills) may vary more depending on individual, institutional or cultural factors.



Figure 10.

Comparison of indicators related to the impact of mobility on students' skills and personal traits. Mean values (below) and box plots (next page)





Source: own calculation N=894

In the next part of the report, some of the composite indicators are examined separately to explore how their values differ across key background variables. This helps identify the specific contexts in which mobility has the most substantial effect on students' development.

To support these analyses and enhance clarity, indicator scores were grouped into three categories along the 1-5 scale: ≤ 2.5 – *low impact*, 2.51-3.5 – *moderate impact*, > 3.5 – *high impact*. This classification allows the detection of trends and statistically significant differences based on institutional features.

5.1.1 Impact on students' working skills

This section focuses on examining how the impact of mobility on competencies related to the labour market, specifically *working skills*, varies depending on key contextual factors, particularly the vocational fields in which mobility takes place.

The composite indicator working skills was constructed based on four items that capture key dimensions of students' development in this area. Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *not at all* to *completely*. The internal consistency of the scale, measured by Cronbach's alpha, was high ($\alpha = .830$), indicating strong reliability. The responses show that, according to the teachers, a large majority of students benefit in all aspects measured. 94% of respondents stated that international placements affect students' ability to work in an international environment either *a lot* or *completely*, and 87% reported similar improvement in students' team-working skills.

Table 7.
Response frequencies for items forming the student's working skills indicator

Items	% Not at all + only a little	% To some extent	% A lot + completely
Increasing team-working skills	2	11	87
Increasing awareness of the characteristics of individual workplaces	2	16	82
Enhancing ability to work in an international environment	1	5	94
Expanding vocational skills	1	12	87

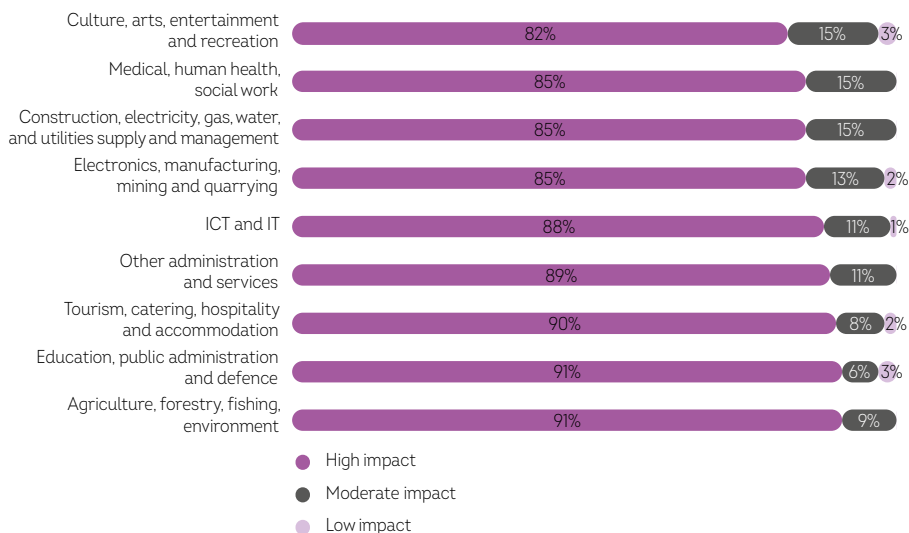
Source: own calculation N=892

This section examines how the perceived impact of mobility on students' *working skills* indicator varies across different vocational fields in which schools organise mobility activities. The data presented in the figure below (Figure 11) reflect the distribution of responses within three impact categories: *low*, *moderate*, and *high*. Across all vocational fields, the majority of respondents assessed the impact of mobility on students' working skills as high, with the percentage of *high impact* responses ranging from 82% to 91%. The highest levels of perceived impact are observed in fields such as *agriculture, forestry, fishing, environment; education, public administration, and defence*; and *tourism, catering, hospitality and accommodation*, each reporting around 90% or more in the *high impact* category. On the other end of the spectrum, slightly lower – but still substantial – levels of *high impact* ratings are found in areas like *culture, arts, entertainment and recreation* (82%) and *medical, human health, social work* (85%). These fields also show slightly higher percentages in the *moderate* and *low impact* categories, indicating a more varied perception of mobility outcomes for students' working skills.

Overall, the data suggest that mobility is broadly perceived as having a strong positive influence on working skills across different vocational domains, though some variability is present depending on the field.



Figure 11.
Mobility impact on students' working skills by occupational field in which the school organises mobility placements



Source: own calculation N=892

5.1.2 Impact on students' intercultural competences and foreign language competencies

The impact of mobilities on students' intercultural competences consisted of three items and demonstrated high reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .886$). The vast majority (87%) of respondents answered that mobilities affect the enhancement of students' intercultural skills *a lot* or *completely*, as well as increasing their cultural awareness (87%). Regarding increasing tolerance attitudes, a slightly lower proportion of respondents (82%) indicated that mobilities affect this aspect *a lot* or *completely*.

Table 8.

Response frequencies for items forming the student's intercultural competences indicator

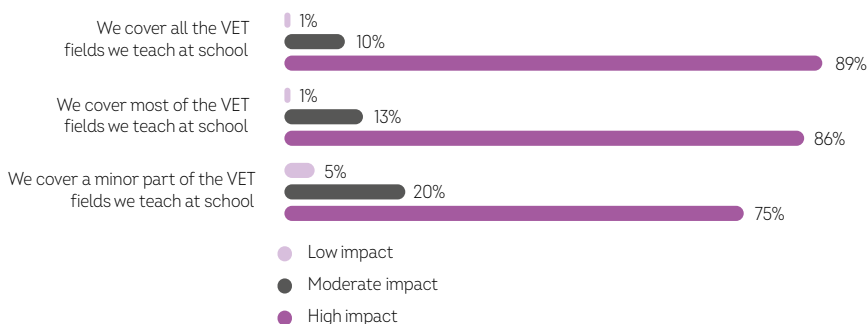
Items	% Not at all + only a little	% To some extent	% A lot + completely
Enhancement of intercultural skills	2	11	87
Increasing tolerance attitudes	4	14	82
Increasing cultural awareness	2	11	87

Source: own calculation N=894

Analysis of the impact of various independent variables on the development of students' intercultural competences indicates that the effects vary depending on the scale of mobilities organised at the school and the size of the locality where the school is located. Furthermore, differences are also noticeable between the countries studied, which reflects the cultural and systemic context that influences the perception and effectiveness of such activities.

Figure 12 shows the distribution of responses in three categories – *low*, *moderate*, and *high impact* – of organised mobilities on the development of students' intercultural competences, depending on the scale of mobilities organised by the school. In schools where mobilities cover all VET fields taught, as many as 89% of respondents perceive the impact as high, indicating a strong link between a broad scope of mobilities and positive effects on students' intercultural competences, while only 1% consider the impact low. In schools where mobilities cover most of the VET fields, the impact is also predominantly rated as *high impact* (86%), with a slight increase in *moderate impact* assessments (13%) and minimal *low impact* (1%). As the scale of organised mobilities decreases, the share of respondents rating the impact on students' intercultural competences as high also declines. For schools where mobilities cover only a minor part of the VET fields, the indicator of impact reached 75% in the *high impact* category, 20% in the *moderate*, and 5% in the *low impact* category. The chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association between the analysed variables ($\chi^2(4) = 14.19$, $p = .007$), however, the strength of this association is weak, as indicated by Cramér's V ($V = .089$).

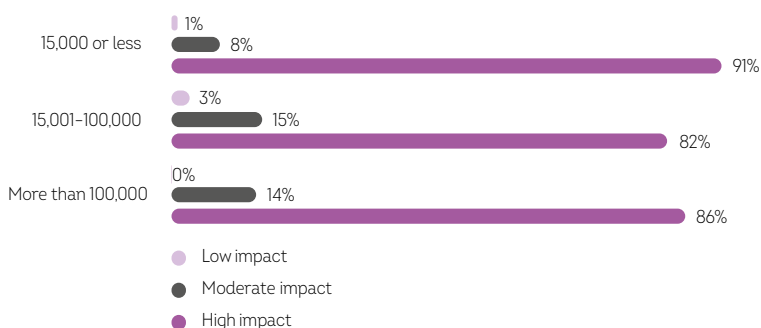
Figure 12.
Mobility impact on students' intercultural competences by the scale of mobilities organises by school



Source: own calculation N=894

At the same time, some variation can be observed in the evaluation of the perceived impact of mobility on the development of students' intercultural competences, although these differences remain relatively small. Schools located in smaller localities (15,000 or less inhabitants) achieved the highest values of the indicator for *high impact* on students' intercultural competences – 91% – while schools in medium-sized localities (15,001-100,000 inhabitants) reached 82% in the *high impact* category, with a larger share of *moderate* and *low impact* ratings – schools in large cities (more than 100,000 inhabitants) reported 86% *high impact* – higher than medium-sized localities but lower than small ones.

Figure 13.
Mobility impact on students' intercultural competences by the size of town where school is located



Source: own calculation N=893

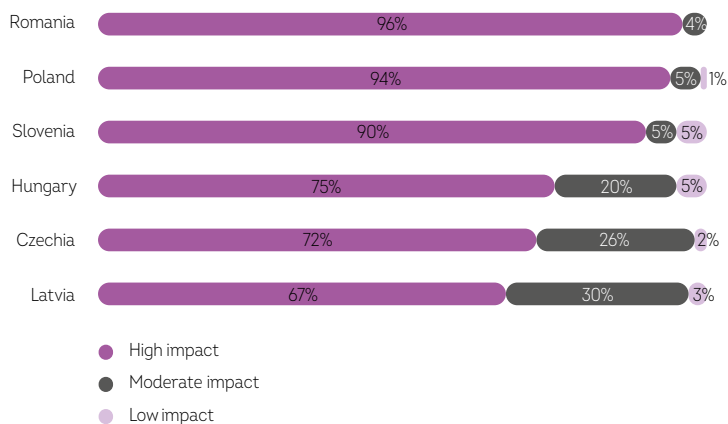
The higher perceived positive impact of mobility on intercultural competences reported by respondents from schools located in small localities may be related to contextual and

perceptual factors rather than to measurable differences in actual competence development. In interviews and survey responses, school representatives from smaller towns more frequently described mobility as a particularly visible and intensive experience for students, possibly because local exposure to cultural diversity is more limited in everyday settings. As a result, changes in students' intercultural attitudes and behaviours may be more noticeable to surveyed school representatives and therefore evaluated more positively.

The perceived impact of mobilities on students' intercultural competences, measured through a composite indicator, varies notably across the studied countries. Romania and Poland record the highest proportions of respondents classified in the *high impact* category (96% and 94%, respectively). Slovenia also shows a strong result, with 90% in the *high impact* category, though slightly lower than Romania and Poland. In contrast, Hungary, Czechia, and Latvia record considerably lower proportions in the *high impact* category (75%, 72%, and 67%, respectively), accompanied by higher shares of *moderate impact* and *low impact*. The chi-square test confirms a statistically significant association between country and indicator classification ($\chi^2(10) = 125.33$, $p < .001$), with a moderately strong relationship indicated by Cramér's V ($V = .265$).



Figure 14.
Mobility impact on students' intercultural competences by country



Source: own calculation N=894

As with the measurement of intercultural competences, the impact of international mobilities on students' foreign language competencies was assessed using a composite indicator consisting of three items. The indicator achieved a high reliability score (Cronbach's $\alpha = .909$), and the mean score across responses was 4.17, indicating a strong perceived impact overall.

The highest-rated item was improvement communication in foreign language, with 84% of respondents stating that mobility helped *a lot* or *completely*. The other two items – broadening the knowledge of foreign language general vocabulary and professional vocabulary – also received over 80% in the *a lot* or *completely* responses, showing a consistently strong effect across all language domains assessed. Only a small percentage of respondents indicated that mobilities *did not affect* or *affected only a little* the three measured aspects of foreign language competencies (2% across all items), further highlighting the effectiveness of mobility experiences in enhancing these competencies.



Table 9.

Response frequencies for items forming the student's foreign language competencies indicator

Items	% Not at all + only a little	% To some extent	% A lot + completely
Improving communication in a foreign language	2	14	84
Broadening the knowledge of foreign language general vocabulary	2	17	81
Broadening the knowledge of foreign language professional vocabulary	2	17	81

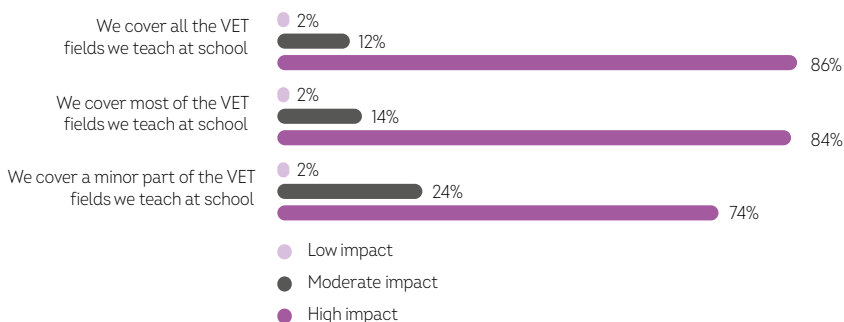
Source: own calculation N=890

When we consider the composite indicator (with three categories: *low*, *moderate*, and *high impact*), we observe variation – similar to that seen in the development of intercultural competences – based on the scale of mobility organised in a school, but also the size of the school. Again, differences are also noticeable between the countries surveyed.

As with the impact of mobility on students' intercultural competences, the broader the scale of mobilities organised in a school, the more often the composite indicator for mobility impact on students' foreign language competencies reaches the *high impact* category. In schools that organise mobilities covering all VET fields taught, 86% of respondents indicate a *high impact*. This percentage slightly decreases to 84% in schools where mobilities cover most VET fields and drops further to 74% in schools where mobilities are limited to a minor part of the VET curriculum. The findings indicate that the extent of mobility opportunities across VET fields is associated with the perceived enhancement of students' foreign language competences ($\chi^2(4) = 13.75$, $p = .008$); however, the strength of this association is weak (Cramér's $V = .088$).

Figure 15.

Mobility impact on students' foreign language competencies by the scale of mobilities organises by school

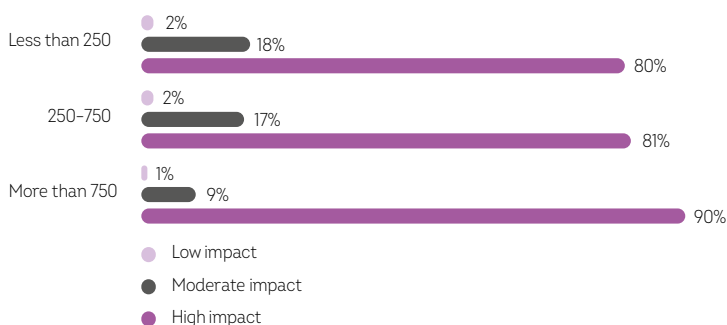


Source: own calculation N=890

The composite indicator for mobility impact on students' foreign language competencies reaches the *high impact* category more frequently in larger schools. In large schools (more than 750 students), the highest share of respondents report a *high impact* of mobilities on students' language competencies (90%). Medium-sized schools (250-750 students) show a slightly lower share of *high impact* (81%) and higher *moderate* and *low impact* ratings. Smaller schools (less than 250 students) have the lowest proportion of *high impact* on students' foreign language competencies (80%) and the highest percentage of *moderate impact* (18%). However, the differences between small and medium-sized schools remain relatively minor.

Figure 16.

Mobility impact on students' foreign language competencies by the size of school



Source: own calculation N=890

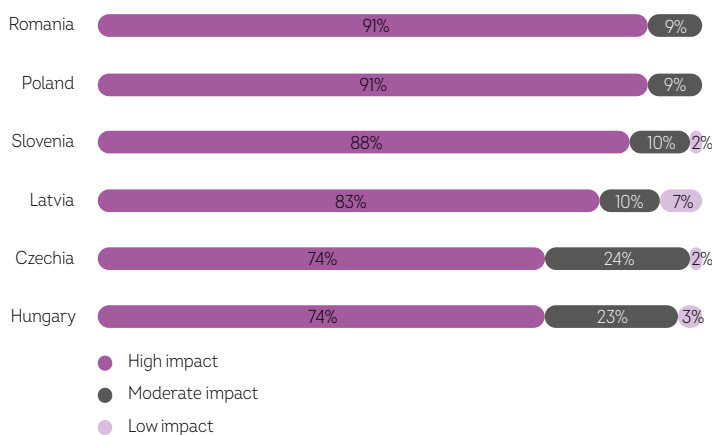
If we look at the differences in the perceived impact on students' language competencies, we observe a similar pattern as before. The highest shares of high impact are reported by

respondents in Romania (91%), Poland (91%), and Slovenia (88%). In contrast, Hungary (74%) and Czechia (74%) show the lowest proportions of high impact, with a larger share of moderate impact responses (23%, 24%, respectively), suggesting more cautious evaluations. In Latvia, the indicator also reaches a high value in the high impact category (83%), although the share of low impact assessments (7%) is slightly higher than in other countries. Country also remains a statistically significant differentiating factor, with a moderately strong association between national context and impact classification.



Figure 17.

Mobility impact on students' foreign language competencies by country



Source: own calculation N=890

5.1.3 Impact on students' school relationships

The composite indicator for students' interpersonal relationships within their schools after returning showed one of the lower mean values at 3.97, though its reliability was high (Cronbach's $\alpha = .910$). This indicator was based on three items measuring the perceived enhancement of relationships with teachers, other students, and the wider school community.

According to the responses, a strong majority of teachers reported a positive impact on students' relationships: 75% indicated that mobility enhanced their relationships with both teachers and other learners *a lot* or *completely*, while 68% felt similarly about their connection to the overall school community. Only a small proportion (6-8%) responded that mobilities did not affect students' relationships at all, or that the effect was very small (*only a little*).

Table 10.

Response frequencies for items forming the student's school relationships indicator

Items	% Not at all + only a little	% To some extent	% A lot + completely
Enhancement of relations with their teachers at your school	6	19	75
Enhancement of relations with other learners at your school	6	19	75
Enhancement of relations with your school community	8	24	68

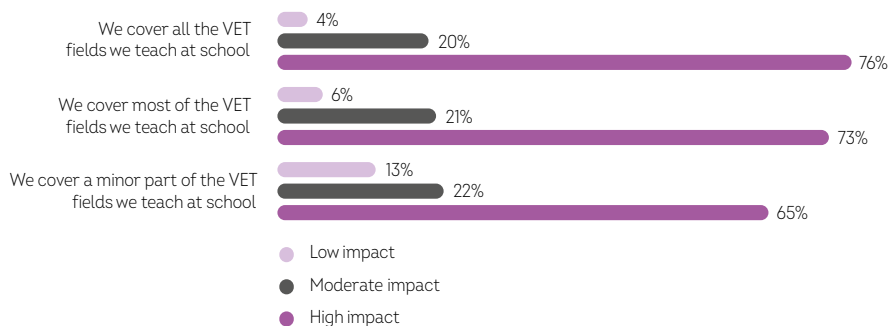
Source: own calculation N=893

In further analyses, the indicator scores were classified into three groups based on the overall classification scale: *low impact* (scores ≤ 2.5), *moderate impact* (2.51-3.5), and *high impact* (> 3.5).

Interesting differences emerged when considering the scale of organised mobilities within schools and the size of the school locality. Specifically, schools covering all VET fields reported the highest share of *high impact* ratings (76%), followed closely by schools covering most VET fields (73%). Schools with mobilities covering only a minor part of their VET fields had a lower proportion of *high impact* responses (65%) and a notably higher percentage of *low impact* ratings (13%). Overall, across all schools, nearly three-quarters of respondents (73%) perceived a *high impact* of mobility on students' interpersonal relationships within the school, while only 6% reported *low impact*. The chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association ($\chi^2(4) = 13.51$, $p = .009$); however, the strength of the association is weak (Cramér's $V = .087$).

Figure 18.

Mobility impact on students' school relationships by the scale of mobilities organised by schools



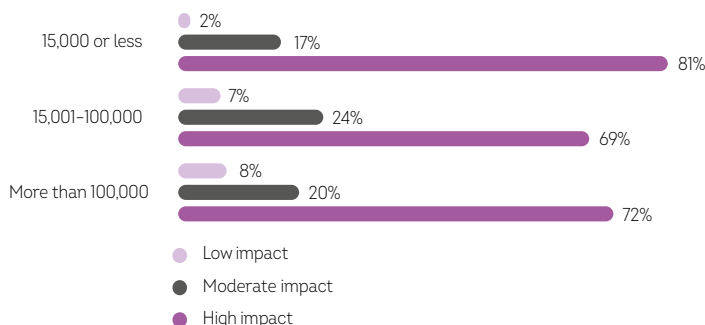
Source: own calculation N=893

Although differences by locality size are not large, Figure 19 indicates some variation in the composite indicator measuring the perceived impact of mobilities on students' relationships at school. The indicator reaches its highest value in schools located in smaller towns (15,000 inhabitants or less), where the share of cases classified in the *high impact* category amounts to 81%. In medium-sized towns (15,001-100,000 inhabitants), this share is lower (69%), while schools located in large cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants record an intermediate value (72%). A possible explanation for the higher indicator values observed in smaller towns may be stronger social cohesion and closer interpersonal relations within smaller school communities, where mobility-related changes in students' relationships are more visible. In larger towns and cities, where school communities tend to be more dispersed, such effects may be less noticeable from the school perspective.



Figure 19.

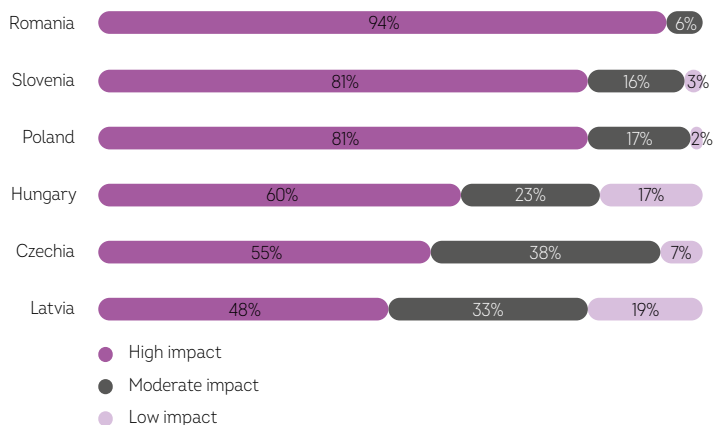
Mobility impact on students' school relationships by the size of town where school is located



Source: own calculation N=893

Statistically significant differences are observed when comparing countries in terms of the perceived impact of mobilities on students' relationships at school. Romania shows the most favourable profile, with 94% of the composite indicator values classified in the *high impact* category and no values in the *low impact* category. Similarly, Slovenia and Poland also record relatively high shares of *high impact* classifications (81% in both countries). By contrast, lower indicator values are observed in Hungary, Czechia and Latvia. In these countries, the proportion of *high impact* classifications is smaller: 60% in Hungary, 55% in Czechia, and 48% in Latvia, and is accompanied by comparatively higher shares of *low impact* classifications, particularly in Latvia and Hungary. This pattern points to more cautious assessments of mobility-related benefits for students' relationships in these national contexts.

Figure 20.
Mobility impact on students' school relationships by country



Source: own calculation N=893

5.1.4 Impact on students' ICT skills

Among the 19 items used to assess the impact of mobilities, one focused specifically on *increasing students' ICT skills*. This indicator received the lowest mean score among those analysed (mean = 3.68).

Looking at the frequency distribution, 11% of respondents reported that mobilities did not affect increasing students' ICT skills at all or affected them *only a little*, 30% indicated an impact *to some extent*, and 59% reported that mobilities affected increasing students' ICT skills *a lot or completely*.

Figure 21.
Distribution of responses to the question "How do VET placements affect increasing ICT skills of learners who participated in training abroad?"



Source: own calculation N=894

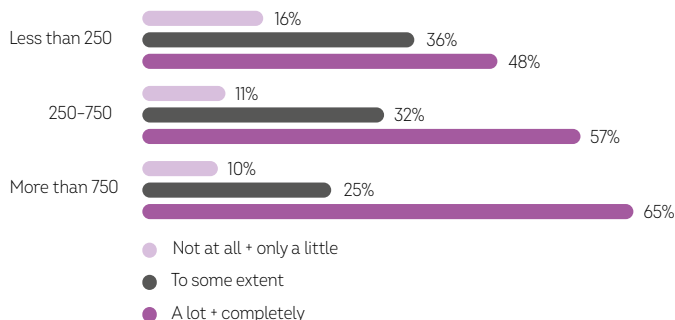
One possible explanation for the lower ratings attributed to ICT skills is that digital competences are rarely defined as a primary objective of international placements. Mobility projects in VET are typically designed to foster vocational, linguistic and intercultural outcomes, while digital tools function mainly as enabling instruments rather than explicit learning goals. Research on observation based assessment shows that educators' evaluations are strongly shaped by assumptions about the intended function of an intervention and by the interpretative lens through which its outcomes are viewed (White & Klette, 2024). As a result, attention tends to focus on outcomes aligned with the dominant and expected functions of mobility, while other effects, such as ICT development, may be less readily recognised or reported.

The development of ICT skills tends to be indirect: students use technology for communication, documenting their work, or online collaboration, but the growth of digital competencies is not explicitly monitored or assessed within the programme. Consequently, teachers may perceive the impact on ICT skills as relatively modest. Teacher perception also plays a role: educators tend to evaluate the most visible and measurable outcomes of mobilities. While digital skills may develop indirectly during mobility, their less explicit and less measurable nature makes them harder to recognise at institutional level, highlighting the importance of perception and observability in schoolbased assessments of mobility outcomes.

Variation is also observed in the perceived impact of mobilities on students' ICT skills when school size is taken into account. Respondents from larger schools are more likely to report that mobilities contributed *a lot* or *completely* to improving students' ICT skills. In schools with more than 750 students, nearly 65% of respondents agree that mobilities affect *a lot* or *completely* increasing student's ICT skills. This percentage dropped to 57% in medium-sized schools (250-750 students), and further to 48% in small schools (less than 250 students). Moreover, respondents from small schools were more likely to perceive little or no impact of mobilities on student's ICT skills: 16% of them selected *not at all* or *only a little*, compared to around 10% in both medium and large schools. A statistically significant association was found between the variables ($\chi^2(4) = 12.17$, $p = .016$), although the strength of the relationship was weak (Cramer's $V = .082$).

Figure 22.

Distribution of responses to the question "How do VET placements affect increasing ICT skills of learners who participated in training abroad?" by the size of school

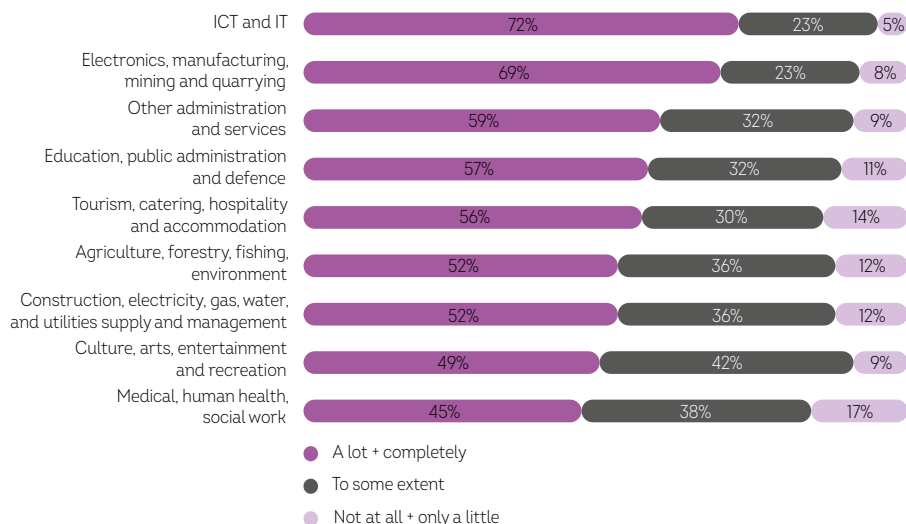


Source: own calculation N=894

A particularly revealing perspective arises when examining how the impact of mobility on students' ICT skills is perceived across different VET fields. Notably, the impact is rated highest in sectors where digital skills are central to professional practice. The highest ratings for the perceived impact of mobilities on students' ICT skills were reported in schools organising placements in fields such as *construction, electricity, gas, water, and utilities supply and management*, where 81% of respondents indicated that mobilities affected ICT skills *a lot or completely*, and in *ICT and IT*, with 72% giving the same assessment. Similarly, high ratings were observed in *electronics, manufacturing, mining and quarrying* (69%) and *other administration and services* (60%), where ICT tools and digital environments are a routine part of students' work-based learning. At the other end of the spectrum, the lowest shares of respondents reporting that mobilities affected students' ICT skills *a lot or completely* were observed in fields such as *culture, arts, entertainment and recreation* (49%) and *medical, human health, social work* (45%), likely reflecting the less central role of ICT in these professions. These differences are also statistically significant. The results revealed a statistically significant association between the field of mobility and the perceived impact on ICT skills. Respondents from ICT-related fields are significantly more likely to report a high ICT impact, with results pointing to a consistent directional trend whereby more digitally intensive VET fields correspond to higher reported ICT effects. ($\chi^2(4) = 36.32$, $p < .001$, Cramér's $V = .202$)

**Figure 23.**

Distribution of responses the question “How do VET placements affect increasing ICT skills of learners who participated in training abroad?” by the occupational area in which school carry out placements



Source: own calculation N=894

These findings emphasise the importance of aligning mobility projects with the digital skill needs of specific sectors, ensuring that students can fully benefit from work-based learning experiences abroad, especially in professions undergoing rapid digital transformation.

5.2 The mechanism of mobilities' impact on students' development

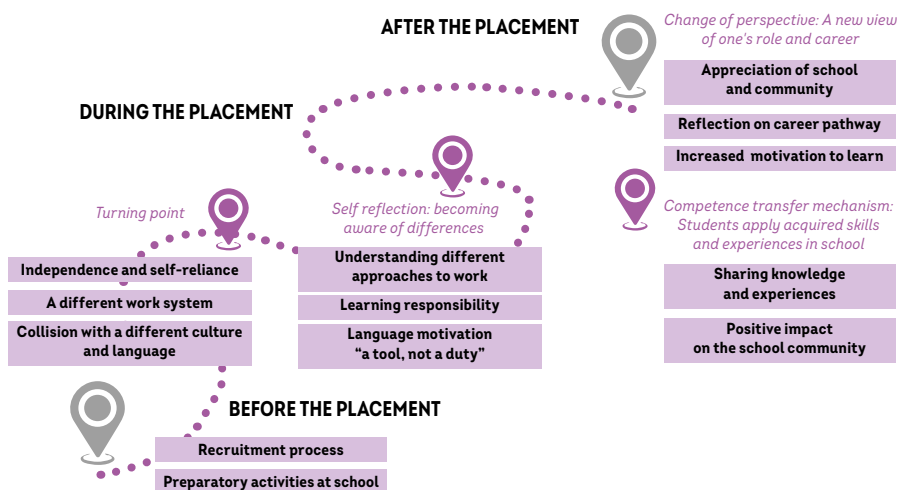
Empirical studies exploring the importance of higher education students' mobilities (Brown, 2009; Nada et al., 2018; Cushing et al., 2019; Nada and Legutko, 2022) show that such experiences can have a transformative effect on learners, fostering the development of intangible personal traits. However, transformative learning does not occur automatically. It requires students to engage deeply with unfamiliar cultural contexts and to critically reflect on their new experiences in ways that can challenge existing assumptions and lead to changes in perspectives (Otten, 2003). Murphy-Lejeune (2003, p. 10) describes studying abroad as a “natural learning situation that stimulates many more aspects of learners' personalities than are usually catered for in educational institutions”. Similarly, Cushing et al. (2019, p. 213) emphasise the development of “intangible personal characteristics or soft skills” as a key outcome of international experiences. However, some researchers question the transformative potential of short-term mobility, arguing that transformations cannot be expected within such a short time (Sigalas, 2010).

While this body of research focuses primarily on higher education students, the present study draws cautiously on these concepts to explore how learning processes associated with mobility may also be understood in the context of vocational education and training. Mobility is described as having the potential to contribute to personal and professional development, even within short-term projects, particularly among young adult learners (18+). In this context, learning processes appear to take a more incremental form, involving gradual expansion of perspectives, increased selfawareness, and shifts in attitudes, rather than fully articulated or consciously recognised transformative reflection. Importantly, the reported developmental effects stem from schoollevel observations and interpretations rather than from students' own accounts. Interviewees provided examples of changes they associated with mobility participation, such as greater appreciation of vocational pathways, stronger identification with the chosen profession, and increased students' awareness of national and cultural context. These observations suggest that learning and development related to mobility should be understood as a process that begins before departure, continues during the mobility period, where skill acquisition is accompanied by reflection on new experiences, and is further sustained after students' return through follow-up activities and subsequent interpretation of these experiences within the school context. Figure 24 presents a journey map illustrating the subsequent stages students typically go through during mobility.



Figure 24.

The student pathway in mobility projects: from preparation to long-term outcomes



Source: based on qualitative study (IDI)

During mobility students must adapt to a new culture, language, and work system while confronting the theoretical knowledge acquired in school with practical vocational experience, often at an employer's site. They gain professional competencies, learn specialised vocabulary, and understand their industry in a different cultural context.

” I don't want to imply that they depart without any knowledge, but it introduces a slightly different perspective. For instance, there is a certain approach we don't use here. When they learn new things, both in theory and in practice, it enhances their professional knowledge. (Latvia_3)

” Each company has its own unique characteristics, such as discipline, hierarchy, and responsibilities. These are things we can only discuss at school. The Erasmus programme provides a great opportunity for students to experience different company cultures. For example, in our area, there are no large creative companies, only small businesses with one or two employees. This makes it challenging for our children to understand how a company operates during their internships. (Latvia_2)

” There is professional, undoubtedly, because it confirms in general that they are on the right track. That they can manage with the knowledge they have acquired here. (Hungary_5)

Moreover, for many students, it is also their first experience of independence away from their families. Teachers emphasised that mobility contributes strongly to personal growth, particularly in terms of autonomy, responsibility, and self-confidence.

” It is mainly about personal development. That the child has been somewhere on his or her own, has done and organised something, is not afraid to express his or her opinion. (Czechia_10)

” You have to cooperate... no mum who wakes you up in the morning, prepares your lunch... responsibility to be on time at work, to not bring shame to school, to myself. (Hungary_5)

” But above all, I believe they learn a sense of responsibility. Because there, everyone was accountable for their part of the work. There was a duty roster,

certain tasks had to be done. [...] But also a kind of tolerance, a sense of working together. Independence. (Poland_10)

They found that they can survive without their family, that they can take care of themselves, that they are more independent, even though they were afraid of it. (Czechia_6)

The mobility period can be a time of reflection. Students observe variations in work methods depending on the profession and the host organisation, encountering diverse approaches to learning and job-related tasks. Sometimes, this critical analysis leads to tensions, especially when apprentices perceive the advantages of foreign infrastructure, greater access to equipment, mentoring support, and, most importantly, the opportunity to engage in more diverse and stimulating tasks. At other times, however, it fosters appreciation for the organisation of education and work in their home institutions.

In a small town in Germany, a student walked into a garage and his mouth dropped open because inside were tools he had only seen in pictures. And I think we have well-equipped garage at the technical college, but even there I was like - wow. There was so much to see. (Latvia_4)

As for strictly vocational skills, the Spanish or Portuguese companies are less well equipped than the Polish ones, because while there are some state-of-the-art firms operating in the twenty-first century, there are also workshops where the equipment is the same as what we had in Poland 20 years ago. (Poland_9)

The adaptation process goes beyond just learning a profession. There is a deeper learning mechanism at play. Students learn through interactions with new environments and peers, which is an essential component of social education and aligns with the concept of situated learning, where knowledge is acquired through participation in real-life contexts. (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Brown et al., 1989)

They [students] learn to take care of themselves and others, develop group relationships. As a result, they have better relations with their peers and teachers at school, they are more open to other cultures.... (Slovenia)

” This international approach to being communicative, this sense of belonging, this sense of togetherness, this sense not only that we are Europeans, but also that there, as a community at all, they often come together in the same way, in several classes, they don't even know each other and that they are building, they are out there building community among themselves, this too. (Hungary_8)

Mobility often leads to a shift in perspective. Students begin to appreciate their schools, their roles in the school community, and their chosen profession more.

” School loyalty increases, they are always ready to help. (Slovenia)

” We feel that they behave better afterwards at school, not only to each other, but also to their colleagues, the teachers. Maybe they appreciate the fact that the school has made it possible for them, they come to thank us, even the parents, they realise that it is a lot of money. (Czechia_5)

Daily tasks and diverse responsibilities help them better understand the specifics of their field. They become more aware of their career path and reflect more frequently on their future. Many confirm their career choices after mobility.

” Mobility helps them gain a better understanding of their occupation. Those who have experienced mobility also tend to work in the industry and at higher positions. (Latvia_11)

However, in some cases, gaining a deeper understanding of the job convinces students that their chosen profession is not the right fit for them, prompting them to change their career direction.

Interviewees noticed that students become more motivated to learn after returning from mobility, as reflected in improved attendance, better academic performance, and greater commitment to their chosen educational or vocational path.

” The wondering is there in the child, and it can give a kind of motivation towards language learning, towards learning in general, that their thinking changes, that they become more ambitious, that they feel that “oops, if

I speak the language better or speak English better, I can do more”.
(Hungary_7)

“Students come out of mobility with a different attitude to work [...] Employers here in Slovenia also notice this, e.g., communication with customers. Students have a greater joy of learning, better academic performance.
(Slovenia)

The learning process continues beyond the mobility experience itself: students continue to develop and apply the skills acquired abroad. Based on the study, we can conclude that many schools experience “transfer of skills” – a lasting impact on both the school itself and other students. Upon returning, students share their experiences, inspiring their peers to participate in similar projects. This strengthens the long-term impact of the programme, benefiting both individuals and the entire school community.

“Certainly the learners, when they come back, present what they have learned to their classmates and specialist subject teachers give them space so that other learners can learn something new at the same time. [...] At the end of each school year, the students have presentations here, in the university auditorium, in a dignified setting. Each branch presents their experience so there is transferability to younger students. (Czechia_4)

5.3 From mobility to career: recognition and relevance of international experiences for student's pathways

As highlighted earlier, according to teachers, mobilities strengthen both vocational skills and transversal competences that are highly valued in the labour market, and they also play an important role in increasing students' motivation to learn. Such experiences often enhance self-confidence, adaptability, and employability, making participants better prepared for both further education and the labour market. In this way, mobility can play a crucial role in shaping students' educational and career pathways.

In the survey, teachers were asked: *How do VET placements affect increasing the positive impact on the educational and career pathways of VET graduates?* Respondents answered on a five-point scale where 1 indicated *not at all* and 5 *completely*. A clear majority of respondents (88%) indicated that VET placements increase this impact either *a lot* or *completely*, highlighting the strong perceived benefits of mobility for students' future educational and professional trajectories.

**Figure 25.**

Distribution of responses to the question "How do VET placements affect increasing the positive impact on the educational and career pathways of VET graduates?"



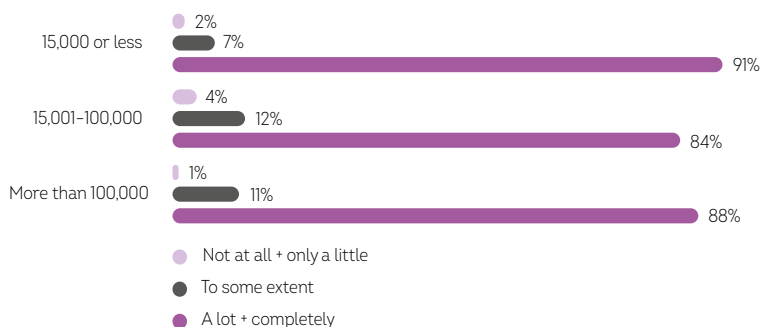
Source: own calculation N=894

An analysis of teacher responses across six countries reveals interesting patterns in how the impact of international mobility on students' career and educational development is perceived.

According to the data, teachers from schools located in smaller towns (15,000 inhabitants or less) are more likely to report a strong positive impact of mobility experiences on students' pathways. As many as 91% of teachers in these areas indicated that mobility affects students' trajectories *a lot or completely*, compared to 84% in medium-sized towns (15,001-100,000) and 88% in larger cities (more than 100,000).

**Figure 26.**

Distribution of responses to the question "How do VET placements affect increasing the positive impact on the educational and career pathways of VET graduates?" by the size of town where school is located



Source: own calculation N=894

A possible explanation for these findings is that students from smaller or rural communities often have limited access to diverse career pathways, international exposure, or advanced vocational training. Mobility helps fill this gap by offering opportunities that are otherwise

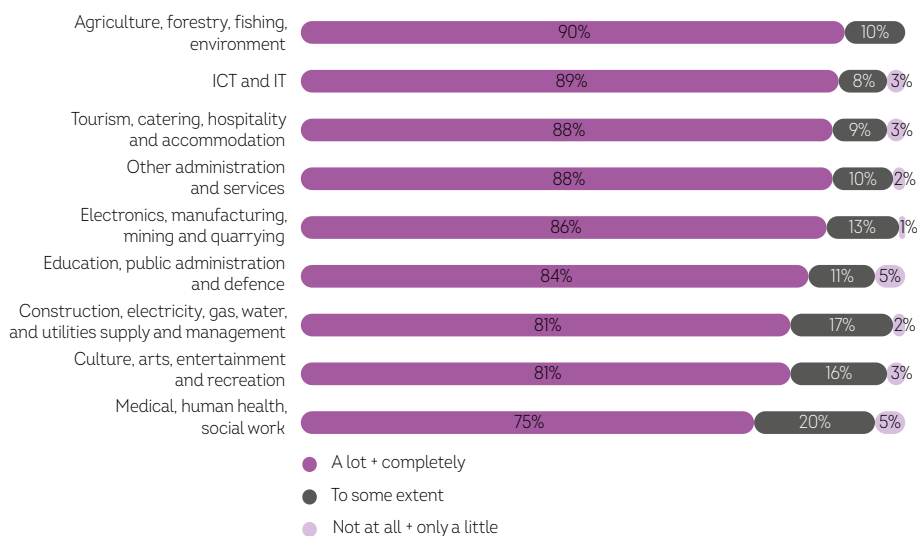
unavailable in their local environment. The effects of mobility may also be more visible to teachers in small-town schools. In these settings, students' development during and after the mobility experience tends to stand out more clearly, especially when compared to a less dynamic local context.

The perceived positive impact of mobility is particularly strong in specific vocational fields. For example, 90% of teachers from schools which organise mobilities in *agriculture, forestry, fishing, environment*, and 89% in *ICT and IT* agree *a lot or completely* that mobility has a positive impact on students' educational and professional pathways. High scores were also observed in fields such as *tourism, catering, hospitality and accommodation* (88%) and *electronics, manufacturing, mining and quarrying* (86%).



Figure 27.

Distribution of responses "How do VET placements affect increasing the positive impact on the educational and career pathways of VET graduates?" by occupational field in which the school organises mobilities



Source: own calculation N=894

It is important to note that these figures refer to sectors in which the respondents indicated their schools organise mobility activities. Since this was a multiple-choice question, and teachers could select more than one vocational area, the findings should be interpreted with caution.

According to school representatives participating in the qualitative research, mobility substantially enhances students' employability. Although most schools do not keep systematic records of students' career pathways, the interviews revealed clear patterns and potential long-term benefits of mobility experiences, even though their impact largely depends on the industry. Fields such as ICT and agriculture are rapidly evolving and are strongly connected to global markets and innovations. Mobility allows students to access modern technologies, industry practices, and international networks that are not always available locally. Depending on the country, some sectors face recognised skills shortages and a strong demand for qualified professionals. In these cases, mobility can enhance students' employability by giving them hands-on experience and credentials that increase their competitiveness – both domestically and abroad. The benefits of mobility may be especially noticeable in fields where local labour markets are either saturated or very competitive. In such environments, international experience can serve as a key differentiator, helping students stand out when applying for jobs or further training. In sectors like tourism, catering, and hospitality, international experience is often essential. These professions involve working with diverse clients, understanding intercultural expectations, and adapting to global service standards.

Nevertheless, international experience strengthens students' professional standing: listing foreign apprenticeships on a CV and possessing a Europass certificate significantly increases their competitiveness. Interviewees across almost all countries noted that students become more attractive to employers, particularly in sectors with high demand. Employers value certificates and documentation from mobility programmes, such as Europass.

“Students get a Europass mobility certificate, which also has an impact on their employment. This certificate is recognised by employers, even abroad. (Slovenia)

According to interviewees, mobility students often demonstrate greater entrepreneurial ambition, with some showing a higher tendency to start their own businesses. A particularly interesting conclusion, which could be seen as part of a process of reflection, is that mobility can strengthen students' commitment to their chosen career paths, making them more likely to stay in their field after graduation.

“Many people who have experienced mobility end up working in the same occupation. Mobility helps them gain a better understanding of their occupation. Those who have experienced mobility also tend to work in the industry and at higher positions. (Latvia_11)

Interview accounts suggest that mobility is perceived by school staff as supporting the development of students' social capital, particularly through the establishment of professional contacts during placements abroad. In some cases reported by respondents, such contacts were later linked to employment-related opportunities.

“They kept in touch with fellow travellers and then with foreigners. In fact, I won't say every year, but there were many times when they were offered a job and were expected back abroad after finishing school. (Hungary_2)

5.4 Indicators of transfer of knowledge effect on students who do not participate in international placements

The previous chapter focused on the impact of international placements on the development of participating students. This section examines whether mobility also has effects on students who did not take part in international placements. The aim is to explore how the mechanism of transfer of skills functions within the school environment, and to what extent competences, skills, motivation to learn, and peer relationships of non-participating students may be influenced through the example of their peers. This analysis is particularly relevant because adolescence is a period in which peer influence plays an important role in shaping attitudes and behaviours. Although such indirect effects may be more subtle and difficult to measure, they are essential for understanding the full scope of mobility projects' influence in educational settings.

Similarly to the analysis of the impact of mobility on participants, the data in this section were collected based on a survey question addressed to teachers and project coordinators: “*How do VET placements affect the knowledge, skills and attitudes of learners who did not take part in the training abroad? To what extent do you agree they positively impact the following areas?*”. Responses were categorised using a five-point Likert scale. Table 11 ranks the 19 listed items in descending order based on the mean values of teachers' evaluations regarding the indirect effects of mobility on students who did not participate in mobilities. The resulting order provides interesting insights into which changes are most observable within the wider student community.

At the top of the list are items related to motivation and professional orientation. The highest-rated aspect is increased motivation towards students' VET field (mean = 3.22), followed by general learning motivation (3.13) and motivation towards foreign language learning (3.11).

In fact, the next three items relate to strictly professional skills, such as expanding vocational skills, teamwork, and awareness of workplace characteristics, with mean scores around or

slightly above 3.00. Conversely, at the bottom of the list are items more directly related to international or intercultural experiences, such as the enhancement of intercultural skills, the development of language vocabulary, and the ability to work in an international environment. These items all have mean scores below 2.70, with the lowest rated being enhancing the ability to work in an international environment (mean = 2.44).



Table 11.

Descriptive statistics of mobility individual impact on non-travelling students

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Increasing motivation towards learners' VET field	3.22	1.108
Increasing motivation towards learning in general	3.13	1.098
Increasing motivation towards foreign language learning	3.11	1.187
Expanding vocational skills	3.01	1.090
Increasing team-working skills	2.98	1.116
Increasing awareness of the characteristics of individual workplaces	2.97	1.070
Increasing communication skills	2.89	1.135
Enhancement of relations with other learners at your school	2.88	1.125
Increasing tolerance attitudes	2.87	1.148
Enhancement of relations with their teachers at your school	2.86	1.122
Increasing cultural awareness	2.82	1.184
Enhancement of relations with your school community	2.80	1.129
Increasing independence in the learning process	2.78	1.110
Increasing ICT skills	2.73	1.065
Improving communication in a foreign language	2.69	1.123
Broadening the knowledge of foreign language professional vocabulary	2.68	1.123
Enhancement of intercultural skills	2.66	1.179
Broadening the knowledge of foreign language general vocabulary	2.64	1.092
Enhancing ability to work in an international environment	2.44	1.205

Source: Own calculations, N=889

The differences between students taking part in mobility and non-travellers

Based on responses from school representatives across six countries, composite indicators were constructed to capture the perceived impact of mobility on students. These indicators were subsequently compared between students who participated in training abroad and those who did not. Paired t-tests were conducted to compare the composite indicators between travelling and non-travelling students (Table 12). The differences between the pairs of indicators were not only statistically significant but also substantial in magnitude. The means of the two groups of students are arranged in descending order. It can be observed that while all differences are significant, their sizes vary across indicators. For ICT skills and learning motivation, the difference between groups was smaller; interestingly, respondents indicated a relatively higher effect on students who did not participate in training abroad (Table 12).

Table 12.

Paired t-test comparison of the effects of mobility on students taking and not taking part in training abroad

	Mean	Paired Differences				T	Df ⁵	Signifi- cance Two- Sided p
		Std. Devia- tion	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 ICT skills	.945	1.038	.035	.876	1.013	27.188	891	<.001
Pair 2 Inter- cultural compe- tences	1.543	1.037	.034	1.475	1.611	44.411	889	<.001
Pair 3 Trans- versal compe- tences	1.434	.996	.033	1.368	1.499	42.973	891	<.001
Pair 4 Working Skills	1.527	.924	.031	1.466	1.588	49.282	888	<.001
Pair 5 Learning motiva- tion	1.081	.968	.032	1.017	1.144	33.263	888	<.001

⁵ Note that the number of observations (pairs) varies slightly across indicators due to some missing responses, which is reflected in different degrees of freedom (Df) in the paired t-tests

	Mean	Paired Differences				T	Df ⁵	Signifi- cance Two- Sided p
		Std. Devia- tion	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 6 School relation- ships	1.124	.971	.032	1.060	1.188	34.531	889	<.001
Pair 7 Foreign language compe- tencies	1.522	1.057	.035	1.453	1.592	42.937	888	<.001

Source: Own calculations

It is noteworthy to observe the differences in mean scores between students who participated in mobility (TR: travellers) and those who did not (NON-TR: non-travellers), as shown in Figure 28. What is particularly interesting is the case of learning motivation. While this factor ranked fourth among students who took part in mobility (mean = 4.2), it was rated highest among those who did not participate in such activities (mean = 3.2), suggesting that indirect effects of mobility may affect motivation levels among non-mobile students. This is the most noticeable divergence between the two groups and may indicate a positive peer effect or increased aspiration among students who remained at school.

Overall, although students who participated in mobility scored consistently higher across all dimensions, the data suggest that the presence of mobility projects can have a broader positive impact on the entire school community.

Table 13.

Differences between the means of mobility impact indicators of two student subsamples

Impact factors	Mean TR	Mean NON-TR	Differences between means (TR and NON-TR)	Std. Deviation TR	Std. Deviation Non-TR
Working skills	4.37	2.84	1.53	.597	.033
Intercultural competences	4.32	2.78	1.54	.730	1.115
Transversal competences	4.27	2.83	1.44	.695	.023
Learning motivation	4.2	3.15	1.05	.783	1.026
Foreign language competencies	4.18	2.66	1.52	.730	.035
Relationships	3.97	2.84	1.13	.848	1.028
ICT skills	3.68	2.73	.95	.984	1.065
Valid N (listwise)	892	889			

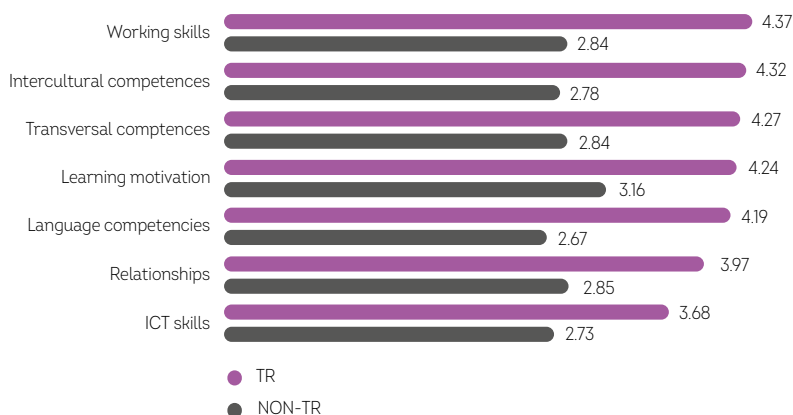
Legend:

TR = travellers - students participated in placements abroad;

NON-TR = non-travellers - students did not participate in placements abroad

Figure 28.

Differences between the means of the individual impact indicators on students



Source: own calculation TR group: N=892; NON-TR group: N=889

5.4.1 Motivation to learn among non-travellers

Given that the indicator measuring the impact of mobility on students' learning motivation reached the highest composite value among the assessed factors, it is worth examining this aspect more closely. As with the indicator for participating students, this indicator was composed of three items. The internal consistency of the scale is high (Cronbach's $\alpha = .937$), indicating strong reliability.

According to teachers, the most notable improvement in motivation was observed in relation to vocational subject learning. Specifically, 39% of respondents stated that mobilities increased non-travellers' motivation to learn towards their VET field either *a lot* or *completely*. An identical proportion (39%) perceived a positive effect of mobilities (*a lot* or *completely*) on non-travellers' motivation to learn foreign languages. In comparison, the impact of mobility on general learning motivation was rated slightly lower. Only 35% of teachers answered that international placements affected increasing motivation towards learning in general *a lot* or *completely*, while a notable 26% agreed that mobility had little or no positive impact.



Table 14.

Distribution of responses to the question "How do VET placements affect the knowledge, skills and attitudes of learners who did not take part in the training abroad? To what extent do you agree they positively impact the following areas?"

Items	% Not at all + only a little	% To some extent	% A lot + completely
Increasing motivation towards learning in general	26	39	35
Increasing motivation towards learners' VET field	25	36	39
Increasing motivation towards foreign language learning	30	31	39

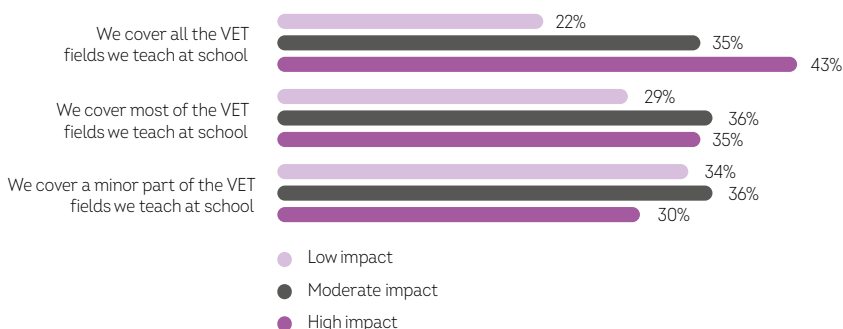
Source: own calculation N=889

In the following analyses, reference is made to three categories of the composite indicator measuring the impact of mobility on the motivation to learn of non-travelling students, based on scale items rated from 1 to 5. The aggregated mobility impact indicators were calculated based on the mean school representatives' responses to several related questions, using a five-point rating scale (1–5). The results were subsequently grouped into three categories: ≤ 2.5 – *low impact*, 2.51–3.5 – *moderate impact*, >3.5 – *high impact*.

The transfer effect of mobility on learning motivation appears to vary somewhat depending on how broadly mobility projects are implemented across vocational fields. The data suggest a gradual pattern rather than sharp differences: schools organising mobilities across all vocational fields report slightly higher motivational effects among non-travelling students. In such schools, 43% of respondents indicate a *high impact*. Where mobilities are offered in most fields, this share is moderately lower (35%), while in schools covering only a limited number of vocational fields the reported *high impact* is less frequent (30%), with *low impact* assessments occurring more often. Overall, these results point to a modest, context-dependent variation rather than pronounced differences.



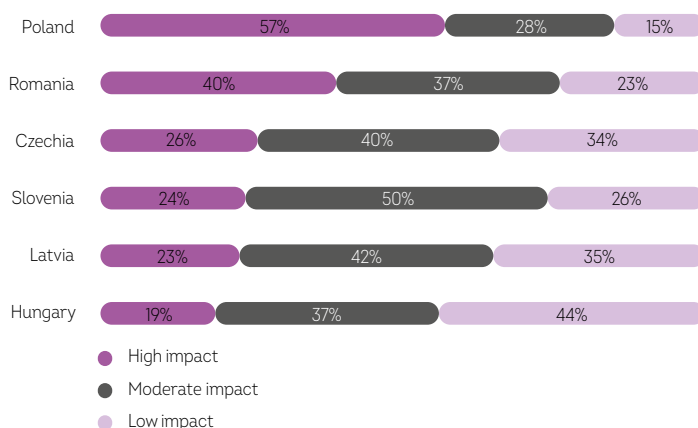
Figure 29.
Mobility impact on nontraveler's motivation to learn by the scale of mobilities organised by school



Source: own calculation N=889

Based on a synthetic index of teachers' assessments, the perceived impact of mobility on non-travellers' learning motivation differs across countries, with country emerging as a statistically significant differentiating variable. The highest values of the synthetic indicator are observed in Poland, where 57% of respondents report a *high impact*, followed by Romania (40%). Lower index values are recorded in Hungary, Latvia, and Slovenia, where *high impact* responses remain below one quarter of cases. In Hungary in particular, low impact assessments are most prevalent (44%), suggesting a comparatively weaker perceived transfer effect.

Figure 30.
Mobility impact on non-traveller's motivation to learn by country



Source: own calculation N=889

Increased motivation among non-mobile students – possible mechanisms of effect

Based on individual interviews conducted with vocational school teachers and school project coordinators, several mechanisms can be identified that indirectly contribute to increased learning motivation among students who do not directly participate in international mobility projects. Two key mechanisms of socio-educational transfer emerge from the data.

Experience transfer: formal and informal sharing

Many schools require students returning from mobility to disseminate the knowledge and skills obtained during their time abroad. This occurs through structured activities such as Erasmus+ Days organised at the school, demonstration lessons and practical workshops involving returned participants, and showcasing specific vocational skills acquired during the internship.

Students and teachers must show new possibilities during practical lessons.
If you went abroad – show what you've learned. (Poland_18)

[...] after they come back we discuss what they learned. At the end of each school year, the students have presentations here, in the university auditorium, in a dignified setting. Each branch presents their experience so there is transferability to younger students. (Czechia_4)

Informal peer-to-peer interactions also play a crucial role. Conversations among students about their experiences abroad – new environments, cultures, and even financial aspects (e.g., pocket money or salaries) – stimulate curiosity and foster a desire to improve and participate in future mobilities. These dynamics align with social learning theory, particularly observational learning and the influence of peer modelling on students' attitudes and aspirations.

“ They start to understand that they should participate, rather than just listening to their friends. It's no secret that young people are already influenced by their peers. But when friends come back, sometimes even pocket money is earned. (Latvia_5)

Mobility as an achievement-based incentive – the role of selection criteria for mobilities

Another important mechanism relates to the selection procedures for mobility placements applied by schools. Participation in mobility projects is often conditional upon meeting specific academic and behavioural criteria, such as satisfactory grades (particularly in vocational subjects), regular attendance, and adequate foreign language proficiency.

In this way, mobility functions as a motivational tool by serving as a tangible reward for educational achievement. For many students, the prospect of taking part in a mobility experience provides a strong incentive to engage more actively in learning and to improve their overall school performance.

5.5 The impact of mobility on accompanying teachers

This chapter explores the impact of international internships and placements on teachers who accompany students abroad. It examines which subject teachers are most often involved in such mobility activities and explores the benefits they gain in terms of competencies, attitudes, and professional development. The analysis also considers the key factors that influence the extent and nature of this impact, offering insights into how international experiences contribute to teachers' growth and their role in supporting student mobility.

5.5.1 Accompanying staff during student mobility

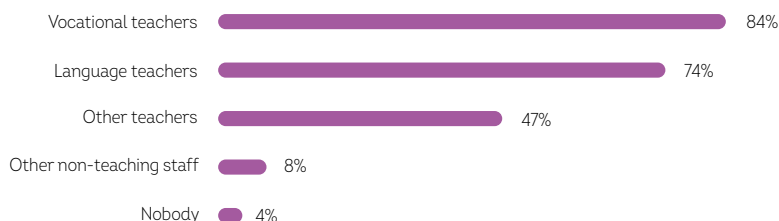
Student mobility within the Erasmus+ programme rarely takes place without the support of accompanying supervisors, particularly when it involves underage participants. Mobility activities have the potential to impact not only students but also the teachers who accompany them abroad. These experiences can contribute to the professional development

of teachers, enhance their intercultural competences, and support the evolution of their educational practices.

The study also sought to examine who is typically assigned to accompany students during mobility periods abroad. Multiple responses were allowed to the question concerning the profile of accompanying staff in the surveyed schools. It was reported that students were most frequently accompanied by vocational teachers (84%) and foreign language teachers (74%). Other subject teachers were involved in 47% of the surveyed schools, while in 8% of cases the accompanying role was fulfilled by a non-teaching staff member. Sending students abroad without supervision was found to be very rare, with only 4% of the surveyed schools reporting such approach.



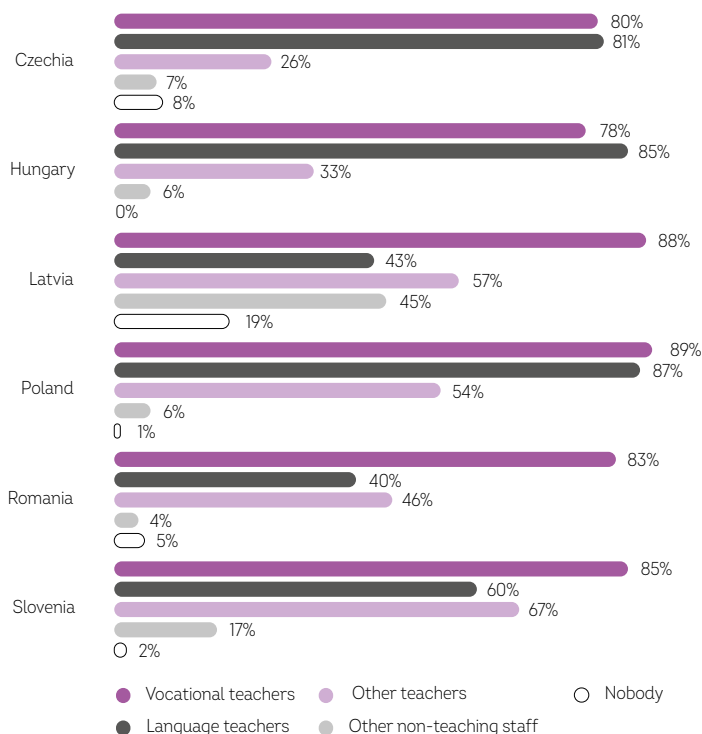
Figure 31.
Accompanies for students during placement abroad



Source: own calculation N=909

However, particularly in the case of other teachers and the option of no assistance, differences between countries can be observed. While vocational teachers most often accompany students in most of the studied countries (except Hungary), differences can be observed in the case of language teachers. In Latvia, Romania, and Slovenia, language teachers accompany students during international placements less frequently than in other countries, while in these countries, other teachers tend to travel more often. In Latvia, teachers from other staff categories also accompany students more frequently than in case of schools from other countries. In Poland and Hungary, students are almost never sent without assistance; in Latvia, however, 19% of respondents declared this practice.

Figure 32.
Accompanies for students during placement abroad by country



Source: own calculation N=909

5.5.2 Mobility impact on teachers' competences, attitudes and professional development

The survey used fifteen variables to investigate the impact on teachers' competences, attitudes and professional development. Respondents answered on a five-point scale (1 = *not at all*; 2 = *only a little*; 3 = *to some extent*; 4 = *a lot*; 5 = *completely*). Table 15 presents descriptive statistics of each item, ranked in descending order by mean value. As the table demonstrates, respondents' opinions show differences, with means on a five-point scale ranging from the highest mean of 4.20 for the statement *Increasing the involvement towards schools' internationalisation* to the lowest mean of 3.75 for *Overcoming professional burnout*, accompanied by a large standard deviation.



Table 15.
The descriptives of the impact of mobilities on the teaching staff

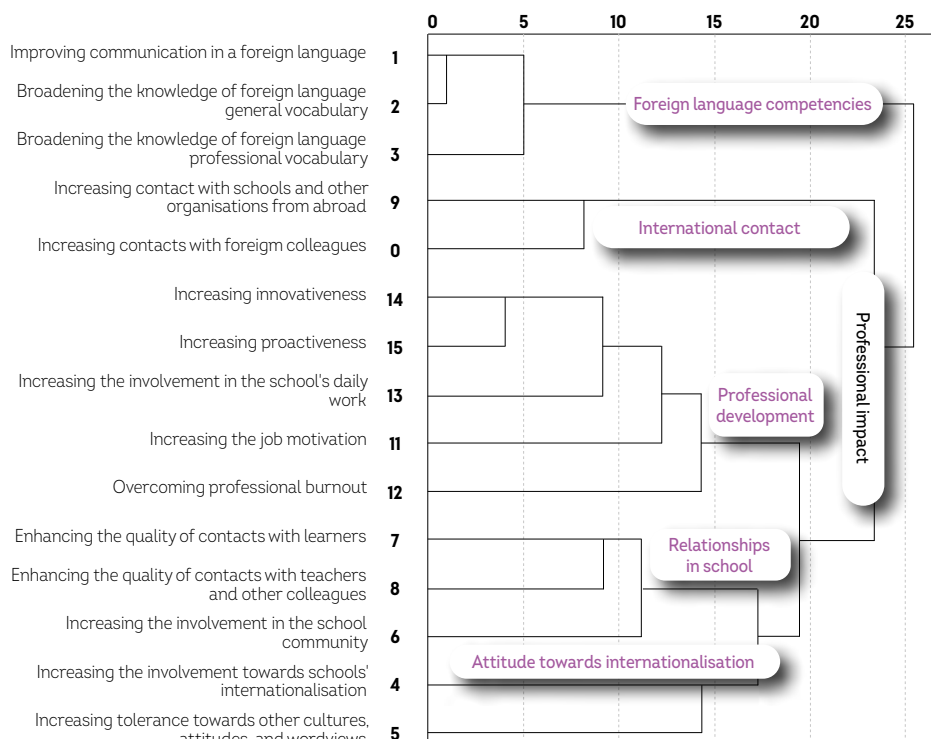
Impact items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Increasing the involvement towards schools' internationalisation	4.20	.904
Increasing tolerance towards other cultures, attitudes, and worldviews	4.15	.937
Increasing contact with schools and other organisations from abroad	4.13	.948
Enhancing the quality of contacts with learners	4.10	.931
Increasing the job motivation	4.06	.965
Increasing contacts with foreign colleagues	4.02	1.017
Increasing innovativeness	4.02	.930
Increasing proactiveness	4.01	.962
Increasing the involvement in the school community	3.97	.977
Enhancing the quality of contacts with teachers and other colleagues	3.92	.979
Increasing the involvement in the school's daily work	3.90	.982
Broadening the knowledge of professional vocabulary	3.81	.042
Improving communication in a foreign language	3.79	1.019
Broadening the knowledge of general vocabulary	3.77	1.058
Overcoming professional burnout	3.75	1.044

Source: own calculation N=891

Despite the means ranging from 4.20 to 3.75, it was deemed necessary to investigate how the examined factors are interconnected in the respondents' thinking. The goal was to identify broader thematic units and derive composite indicators that would allow for a clearer presentation of the findings and facilitate further analysis. To achieve this, a hierarchical cluster analysis was conducted, the results of which are visually represented in a dendrogram (see Figure 33). This approach helps streamline the data, making it more interpretable and suitable for in-depth analysis.

Figure 33.

Dendrogram showing clusters of items related to the perceived impact of mobility on teachers, based on hierarchical cluster analysis



Source: own calculations, N=891

An explanatory text has been placed on the original figure, depicting the content of the identified factors and their relationship to each other. Upper case letters indicate the main clusters, and sentence case letters indicate the thematic groups and the smaller clusters.

Also, the dendrogram shows two large clusters, one of which groups variables related to *foreign language competencies*, and the other to *professional impact*. Within the latter, clusters for *attitudes towards internationalisation*, *relationships at school*, and *professional development* are further distinguished. After the cluster analysis of the impact items for the teaching staff, the following clusters were identified:

- **Foreign language competencies:** improving communication in a foreign language; broadening the knowledge of general vocabulary; broadening the knowledge of professional vocabulary.

- **Professional impact:**
 - **Development of international contacts:** increasing contact with schools and other organisations from abroad; increasing contacts with foreign colleagues.
 - **Relationships in school:** increasing the involvement in the school community; enhancing the quality of contacts with learners; enhancing the quality of contacts with teachers and other colleagues.
 - **Attitude towards internationalisation:** increasing the involvement towards schools' internationalisation, increasing tolerance towards other cultures, attitudes, and worldviews.
 - **Professional development:** increasing innovativeness, increasing proactiveness, increasing the involvement in the school's daily work, increasing the job motivation, overcoming professional burnout.

Table 16 presents descriptive statistics for all five composite indicators derived from the 15 items. The composite indicators were calculated, as before, by averaging the numerical values assigned to the responses (on a 1-5 scale). The means of these indicators range from 3.78 to 4.17, indicating a generally positive impact of mobility activities on various aspects of teaching staff. The standard deviations vary from .866 to 1.001, suggesting a moderate spread in the respondents' answers. It is important to highlight the reliability of these indicators, as evidenced by the high Cronbach's alpha values for each cluster, ranging from $\alpha = .870$ to $\alpha = .960$. These values indicate very good internal consistency, further validating the robustness and reliability of the measurements.



Table 16.
The descriptives of the impact of mobilities on the teaching staff

Clusters	N	Mini- mum	Maxi- mum	Mean	Std. Devia- tion	Cron- bach's alpha
Attitude towards internationalisation	891	1	5	4.17	.866	.870
Development of international contacts	888	1	5	4.07	.944	.914
Relationships in school	889	1	5	3.99	.902	.915
Professional development	884	1	5	3.94	.896	.952
Foreign language competencies	891	1	5	3.78	1.001	.960
Total	891					

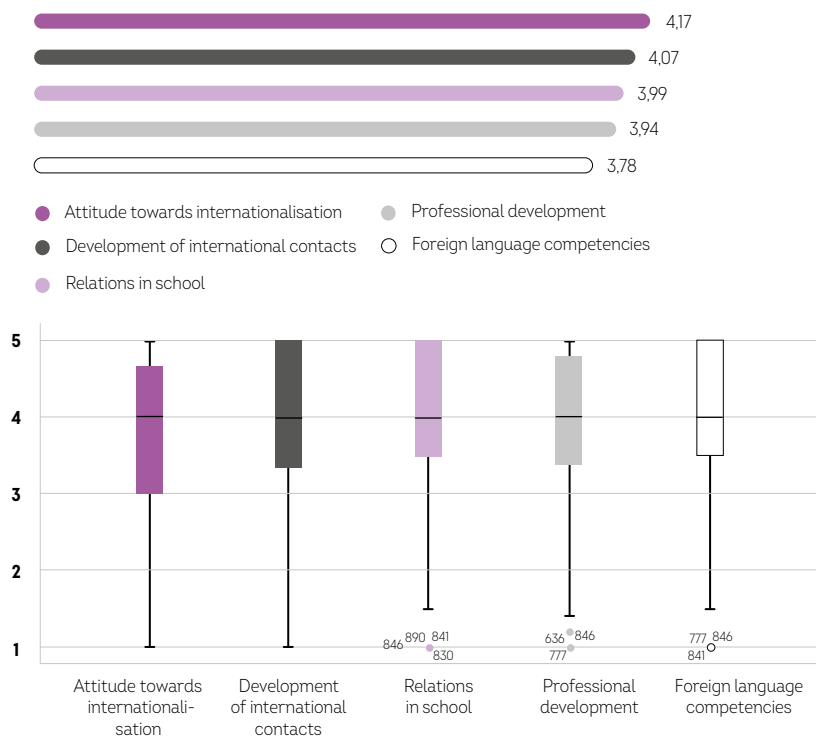
Source: own calculation N=891

For all five indicators, the median score is 4, meaning that half of respondents rated the impact of mobility on teachers above 4, and half rated it below. This suggests a generally positive assessment, though not without variation. *Attitude towards internationalisation* has the highest mean ($M = 4.17$), confirming strong positive views in this area. However, a small number of outliers below the lower whisker indicate that not all experiences were equally positive. Foreign language competence shows the lowest mean ($M = 3.78$) despite a median of 4, reflecting more varied opinions, with a greater number of lower ratings. *Relationships in school* indicator also has a median of 4 and a mean of 3.99, but displays the greatest spread of responses (range: 1-5), indicating a highly diverse experience among respondents. *Development of international contacts* ($M = 4.07$) and *professional development* ($M = 3.94$) are also rated positively overall. Yet both, along with *attitude towards internationalisation*, include outliers below the lower whisker – suggesting that in some cases, the benefits of mobility in these areas were limited or not observed at all.



Figure 34.

Comparison of five summary indicators based on mean scores and distribution of responses



Source: own calculation $N=891$

In the following section of the report, each of the five summary indicators will be discussed individually, with a focus on how their values vary depending on selected background variables. This approach allows to better understand the specific conditions under which mobility experiences have the strongest impact on teaching staff. To facilitate these analyses and improve interpretability, each indicator was divided into three categories based on its position on the 1-5 scale: *low impact* (≤ 2.5), *moderate impact* (2.51-3.5), and *high impact* (>3.51).

5.5.2.1 Teachers' attitude towards internationalisation

The *attitude towards internationalisation* indicator received the highest mean score among all five indicators. Table 17 presents the specific items included in this indicator along with the percentage of respondents who agreed or disagreed that mobilities positively impact these areas of teacher's development. Majority of respondents – 80% and 78%, respectively – agreed *a lot* or *completely* that mobility has a positive impact on *increasing teacher's involvement towards schools' internationalisation* and *increasing tolerance towards other cultures, attitudes, and worldviews*. Only a small proportion (5%) indicated little or no impact in these areas.



Table 17.

Response frequencies for items forming the "attitude towards internationalisation" indicator

Items	% Not at all + only a little	% To some extent	% A lot + completely
Increasing the involvement towards schools' internationalisation	5	15	80
Increasing tolerance towards other cultures, attitudes, and worldviews	5	17	78

Source: own calculation N=891

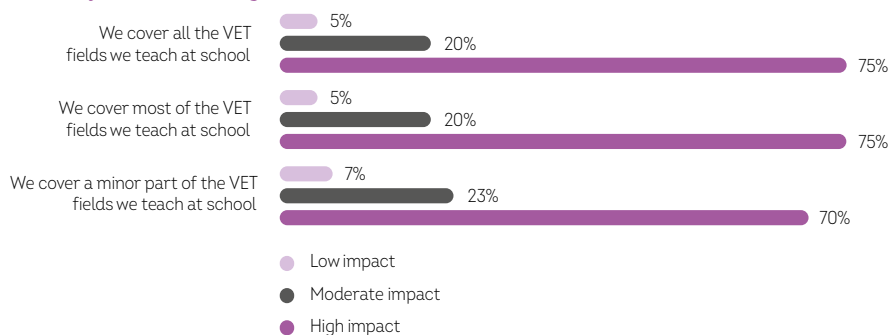
In analysing the results of the set of questions related to faculty impact, it was considered important to explore differences that reveal distinct patterns and statistically significant variations linked to institutional characteristics, as defined by background factors. Further analyses will be conducted using three-level classification of impact: *low*, *moderate* and *high*.

Analysis of the composite indicator measuring the perceived impact of mobility on teachers' attitudes towards internationalisation shows limited differentiation by the scale of mobility activities organised at the school. Schools that include mobility across all or most VET fields

reach very similar levels of the indicator, with comparable shares of observations classified as *high impact* (75% in both cases). By contrast, slightly lower indicator values are observed in schools where mobility covers only a minor part of the VET offer. In this group, the share of classifications in the *high impact* category is around six percentage points lower than in schools with broader coverage.



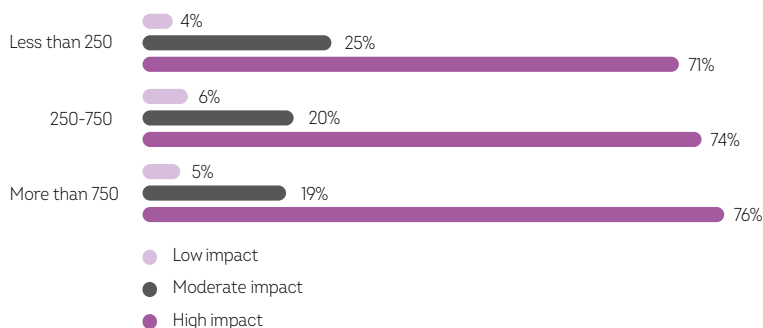
Figure 35.
Perceived impact on teachers' attitude towards internationalisation
by the scale of organised mobilities



Source: own calculation N=891

Figure 36 illustrates how the value of the composite indicator measuring the perceived impact of Erasmus+ mobilities on teachers' attitudes towards internationalisation varies by school size. Higher indicator values are observed in larger schools (more than 750 students), with a slightly greater concentration of *high impact* classifications (76%) compared to medium sized schools (250-750 students) and small schools (less than 250 students), although the difference between large and small schools remains modest, amounting to around six percentage points.

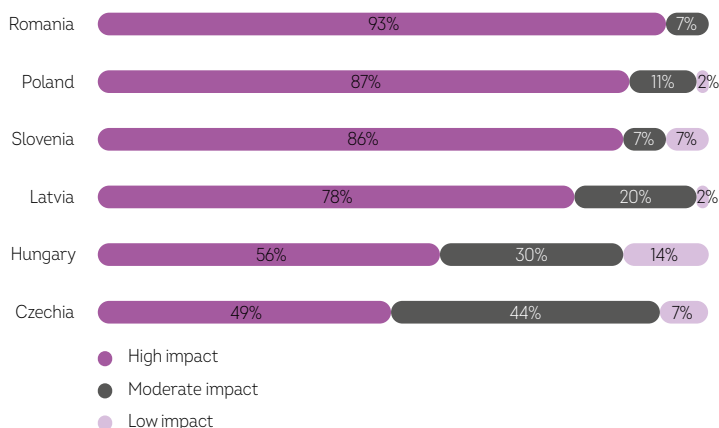
Figure 36.
Perceived impact on teachers' attitude towards internationalisation by the size of school



Source: own calculation N=891

The analysis reveals substantial crosscountry variation in indicator values. While high values are observed in all surveyed countries, the distribution of classifications differs markedly. The highest concentration of *high impact* values is recorded in Romania (93%), followed by Poland (87%), Slovenia (86%), and Latvia (78%), where the *high impact* category clearly dominates. In contrast, considerably lower shares of *high impact* values are observed in Czechia and Hungary (49% and 56%, respectively). Notably, Hungary also stands out with the largest share of *low impact* classifications (14%). The chi-square test confirms that the observed crosscountry differences are statistically significant ($\chi^2(10) = 165.04$, $p < .001$), with effect size measures (Cramér's $V = .304$) indicating a moderately strong association between two variables.

Figure 37.
Perceived impact on teachers' attitude towards internationalisation by country



Source: own calculation N=891

5.5.2.2 Development of teachers' international contacts

The next indicator also reached a high value in the study, both regarding the mean score and the distribution of responses. This indicator examined the perceived impact of mobility on the development of international professional networks. Table 18 presents the distribution of responses for the individual items comprising this indicator. The results show that the vast majority of respondents selected the higher end of the scale (*a lot or completely*) when assessing the impact of mobility on the development of teachers' international contacts. Specifically, 78% of respondents agreed either *a lot or completely* that mobilities had a positive impact on increasing contacts with schools and other organisations abroad, while only 6% chose *not at all or only a little*. Similarly, 73% reported that student placements had a positive impact (responded *a lot or completely*) on increasing teachers' contacts with foreign colleagues, compared to just 8% who agreed that mobility had little or no impact.



Table 18.

Response frequencies for items forming the development of international contacts indicator. Respondents were asked: "How do the learners' placements impact the teaching staff? To what extent do you agree they positively impact the following areas?"

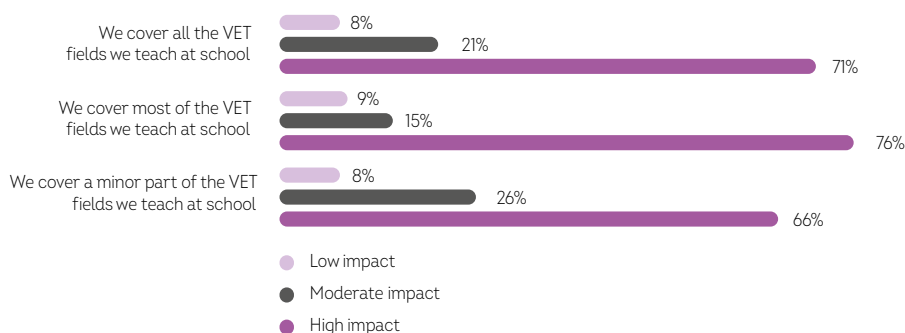
Items	% Not at all + only a little	% To some extent	% A lot + completely
Increasing contact with schools and other organisations from abroad	6	16	78
Increasing contacts with foreign colleagues	8	19	73

Source: own calculation N=888

As in the previous case, the next stage of the analysis applied a division based on the scale positions (1-5), which made it possible to distinguish three categories of the perceived impact of mobility on the development of international contacts.

Figure 38 shows variation in the composite indicator measuring the perceived impact of mobility on the development of international contacts among teachers across schools differing in the extent of VET fields covered by mobility activities. Higher values of the indicator, corresponding to the *high impact* category, were more frequently observed in schools covering most or all VET fields (76% and 71%, respectively), compared to schools where mobility covered only a limited part of VET fields (66%).

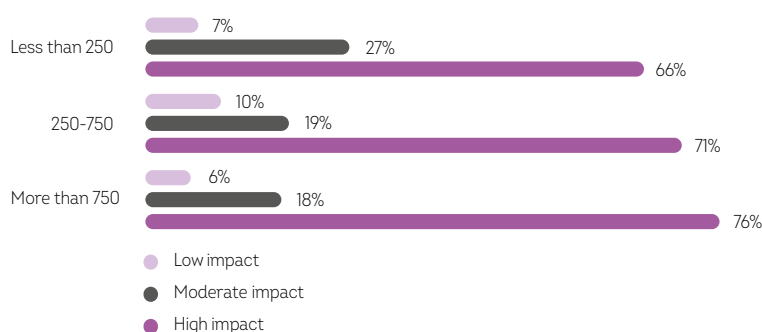
Figure 38.
Perceived impact on development of international contacts by the scale of organised mobilities



Source: own calculation N=888

The findings suggest that the larger the school, the higher the value of the composite indicator measuring the perceived impact of mobility on the development of international contacts among teachers. The share of cases classified as *high impact* increases with school size, rising from around two thirds in the smallest schools (less than 250 students) to over three quarters in the largest schools (more than 750 students). This represents a difference of approximately ten percentage points between small and large schools (see Figure 39). However, the chi-square test indicates that observed differences by school size are not statistically significant ($\chi^2(4) = 2.38, p = .667$).

Figure 39.
Perceived impact on development of international contacts by the size of school



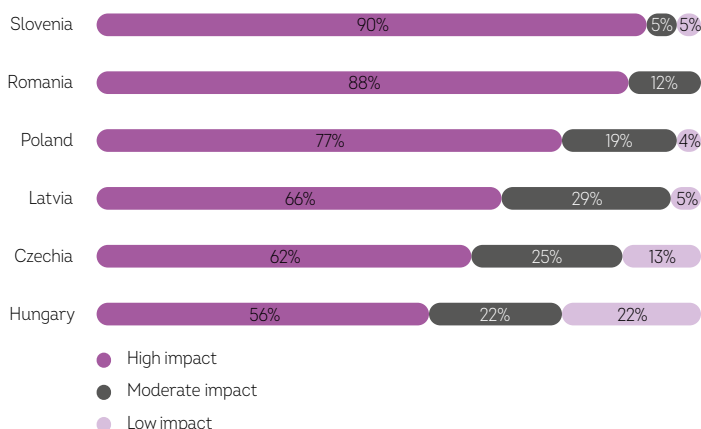
Source: own calculation N=888

Cross-country variation is evident in the distribution of the composite indicator of perceived impact of mobilities on development of teacher's international contacts. While the *high impact* category dominates in all participating countries, its relative weight varies, indicating different overall levels of perceived impact captured by the indicator. Countries such as Slovenia, Romania, and Poland show a particularly strong concentration of observations in the *high impact* category (90%, 88%, and 77%, respectively), whereas Latvia and Czechia display a more balanced distribution across impact levels. The lowest overall level of the composite indicator was observed in Hungary. Compared to other countries, Hungary shows the smallest concentration of cases classified in the *high impact* category (56%) and a relatively larger share of *low impact* classifications (22%). The observed crosscountry differences are statistically significant, as confirmed by the chi-square test ($\chi^2(10) = 113.88, p < .001$), indicating a moderate association between country and the distribution of impact classifications (Cramér's $V = .253$).



Figure 40.

Perceived impact on development of international contacts by country



Source: own calculation $N=888$

While the topic of building international professional networks was not a dominant theme in qualitative interviews, it emerged in several cases, offering valuable context to the quantitative findings. The interviews revealed that relationships formed during mobility experiences are often long-term, personal, and practically oriented, especially in schools with experience in organising mobility projects. Unlike the one-off nature of student mobility, teacher participation tends to be more consistent – often involving the same staff over time. This continuity enables the development of stable, trust-based partnerships, which also facilitate the organisation of student internships and placements.

☞ *This cooperation is usually long-term and spans many years... we simply know and like these people. If there are new teachers, we get to know them too. So when a group comes with their teachers, we not only ensure good internship placements but also meet and spend time together. It enriches us – we get to know each other's cultures, and it's really nice. (Poland_18)*

The connections established through mobility do not end with the trip. Teachers often engage in an ongoing exchange of materials, ideas, and inspiration, leading to professional growth and even institutional innovation. They share educational content such as photos, descriptions, and articles for publication. A Latvian example highlighted how a mobility trip to Spain inspired a greenhouse-related project that is still running in the school today.

☞ *We often take ideas and think about them. We take photos and show them to colleagues. For example, in Spain, there was a greenhouse module that we are still working on. We have also written training materials based on the information and photos from the mobility placements. (Latvia_8)*

5.5.2.3. Teachers' relationships in school

The indicator of mobility impact on teachers' relationships in school was composed of three items measuring the perceived influence of mobility on teachers' relationships with different groups within the school. The internal consistency of the scale is high (Cronbach's $\alpha = .915$), suggesting that the three items reliably measure a single construct, and the overall mean score of 3.99, indicating a generally positive perception of mobility in this area.

The data suggests that mobility is broadly seen as a driver of improved relationships within the school environment. It is particularly associated with increased engagement in the school community and enhanced interpersonal dynamics with both students and colleagues. Among the three items that constitute the indicator, the highest-rated effect concerns teachers' relationships with their students. 77% of respondents reported that mobility enhanced the quality of contact with learners *a lot* or *completely*, while only 5% perceived little or no impact. In all three cases, the share of teachers who perceived no or only minimal impact remains relatively low (ranging from 5% to 8%). This suggests that participation in mobility projects may contribute to more open, engaging, and empathetic communication between teachers and students.

Table 19.

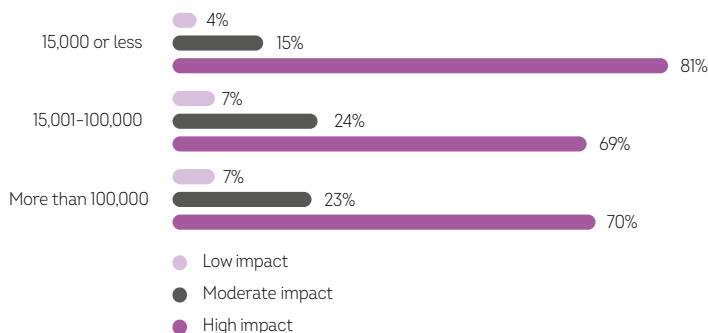
Response frequencies for items forming the relationships in school indicator. Respondents were asked: "How do the learners' placements impact the teaching staff? To what extent do you agree they positively impact the following areas?"

Items	% Not at all + only a little	% To some extent	% A lot + completely
Increasing the involvement in the school community	7	22	71
Enhancing the quality of contacts with learners	5	18	77
Enhancing the quality of contacts with teachers and other colleagues	8	22	70

Source: own calculation N=889

As in previous cases, the perceived impact of mobility on school relationships varies depending on contextual variables. In a later stage of the analysis, responses on the original 1-5 scale were grouped into three categories, which allowed for clearer differentiation between *low*, *moderate*, and *high* levels of perceived impact. A pattern similar to that observed for the composite indicator measuring the perceived impact of mobility on student relationships (see section 5.1.3) can also be identified for the composite indicator capturing the impact of mobility on relationships among teachers, with schools located in the smallest localities standing out in particular. Schools located in small towns (15,000 inhabitants or less) reach the highest values of the indicator, with a strong concentration of cases classified in the *high impact* category (81%). In schools situated in towns with more than 15,000 inhabitants, the share of *high impact* classifications is lower by around 11-12 percentage points compared to schools located in small towns. By contrast, schools situated in medium-sized towns (15,001-100,000) and large cities (more than 100,000 inhabitants) display lower and largely comparable levels of the indicator, with no clear differences in the share of *high impact* classifications between these two categories. Differences by size of locality are statistically significant, as confirmed by the chi-square test ($\chi^2(4) = 13.03$, $p = .011$), although the strength of the association is weak (Cramér's $V = .086$). These findings suggest that schools located in smaller communities tend to record higher levels of perceived relational impact of mobility, possibly because international activities are more visible and distinctive in such contexts and may exert a stronger influence on school culture and staff relations.

Figure 41.
Perceived impact on relationships in school by the size of the town where school is located

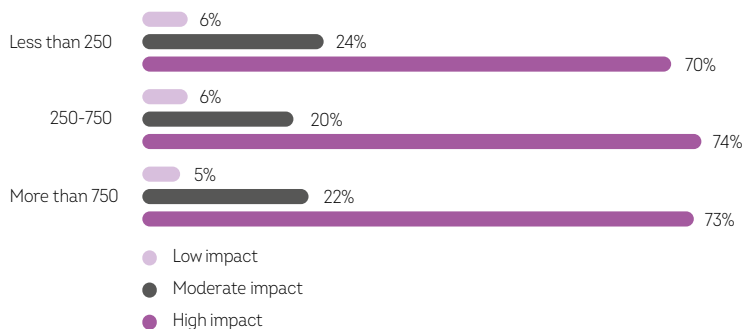


Source: own calculation $N=889$

To complement the distribution-based analysis, differences in mean values of the composite indicator measuring the perceived impact of mobility on teachers' relationships in school were additionally examined by the size of locality. Given that the indicator is measured on a continuous scale and group sizes are relatively balanced, a one-way analysis of variance was applied. The results confirm statistically significant differences in mean values across categories of locality size ($F(2, 886) = 7.84, p < .001$). However, the effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .017$). Detailed statistical results are presented in Annex A (Table A1).

When school size is taken into account, the distribution of the composite indicator measuring the perceived impact of mobility on relations among teachers does not reveal a clear linear pattern. Overall, the indicator displays a very similar structure across small (less than 250 students), medium-sized (250-750 students) and large schools (more than 750 students), with high values prevailing in all three categories. Medium-sized schools show slightly higher shares of classifications in the *high impact* category than both smaller and larger schools; however, these differences remain modest.

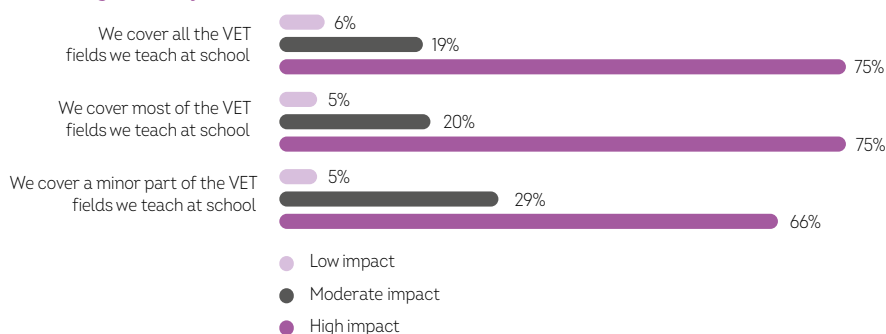
Figure 42.
Perceived impact on relationships in school by the size of school



Source: own calculation N=889

As with the previous indicators, variation in the value of the composite indicator measuring the perceived impact of mobility on teachers' relationships within the school community can also be observed depending on the scale of mobility activities organised at the school. Schools in which mobility covers only a minor part of the VET offer display lower indicator values, with the share of *high impact* classifications around nine percentage points lower than in schools that include all or most VET fields. By contrast, schools with broader coverage reach consistently higher and largely comparable indicator values, indicating that while differences by scale of mobility are visible, they remain moderate in magnitude.

Figure 43.
Perceived impact on relationships in school by the scale of mobilities organised by school



Source: own calculation N=889

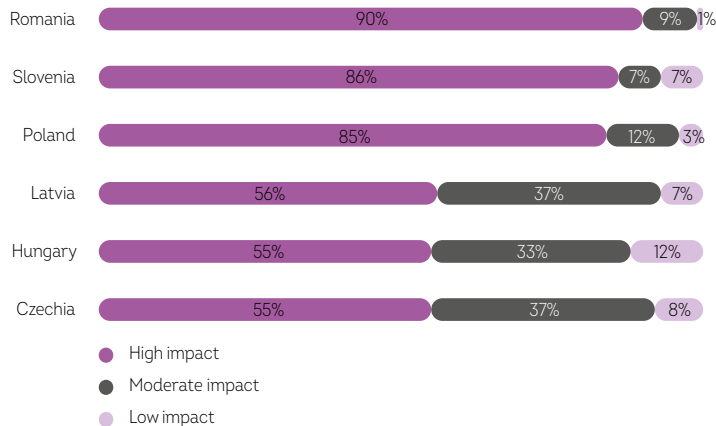
As with other indicators, the value of the composite indicator reflecting the impact of mobility on internal school relations shows pronounced differences across countries.

The highest concentrations of *high impact* classifications are observed in Romania (90%), followed by Slovenia (86%), and Poland (85%), indicating consistently elevated indicator levels in these contexts. By contrast, substantially lower indicator values are recorded in Latvia, Hungary, and Czechia, where only around 55–56% of cases fall into the *high impact* category. In these countries, a markedly larger share of observations is classified as *moderate impact*, particularly in Latvia and Czechia, where this category accounts for around 37% of classifications. Cross-country differences in the distribution of indicator values are statistically significant, as confirmed by the chi-square test ($\chi^2(10) = 113.88$, $p < .001$), indicating a moderately strong association between country and impact classification (Cramér's $V = .253$).



Figure 44.

Perceived impact on relationships in school by country



Source: own calculation $N=889$

The survey findings are corroborated by qualitative interviews, particularly those conducted in Poland and Latvia, which offer valuable context to the statistical patterns observed. Several Polish interviewees emphasised that mobility experiences serve as a powerful integrator, fostering closer bonds between teachers and students participating in placements. One teacher described the transformation of traditional roles during longer mobility periods, noting that educators often evolve from formal authority figures to emotional anchors, mentors, and even parental figures:



You can really see the transformation – the change from a strict teacher behind the desk to someone who becomes a caregiver, a supporter, sometimes a psychologist, sometimes a mother or a father during the four-

week mobility. These things happen because we're all human, and young people who are thrown into completely unfamiliar environments need that extra support. (Poland _25)

A similar sentiment was echoed in Latvia, where interviewees stressed that mobility helped build stronger rapport and trust between accompanying staff and students. These qualitative insights align with the broader finding that mobility fosters more empathetic, open communication, and strengthens the sense of community within schools.

“Perhaps the impact is even greater on them because they come as teachers for two or three weeks and they have a different way of connecting with the children. They see the children not just in a 40-minute lesson, but as individuals, not just as students. They have the opportunity to communicate on various topics, to understand their general way of life, their thoughts, and their dreams. This helps to build strong connections between them. When they return, they continue to communicate in a different way because they already share a common experience. This experience even helps them in teaching their lessons. (Latvia_1)

5.5.2.4 Teachers' professional development

The internal consistency of the scale measuring the impact of mobility on teachers' *professional development* is high (Cronbach's $\alpha = .952$). The scale ranges from 1 to 5, with a mean score of 3.94, which places it fourth in comparison to the other indicators measuring the impact of mobilities on teachers' competences and attitudes.

The indicator consisted of 5 items. 75% of respondents agreed (responses *a lot* and *completely*) that mobility had a positive impact on increasing teacher's job motivation. Similarly, 75% of respondents reported that mobility positively impacted increasing teachers' proactiveness, and 74% agreed it positively affected increasing teachers' innovativeness. 69% of respondents agreed that mobility had a positive impact on increasing involvement in the school's daily work, while 61% agreed that mobility had a positive effect on overcoming professional burnout. In conclusion, the results highlight that mobility had the strongest perceived impact on aspects related to teachers' motivation, proactiveness, and innovation, making these the most positively influenced dimensions of teachers' professional development.

Table 20.

Response frequencies for items forming the indicator impact on teacher's professional development. Respondents were asked: "How do the learners' placements impact the teaching staff? To what extent do you agree they positively impact the following areas?"

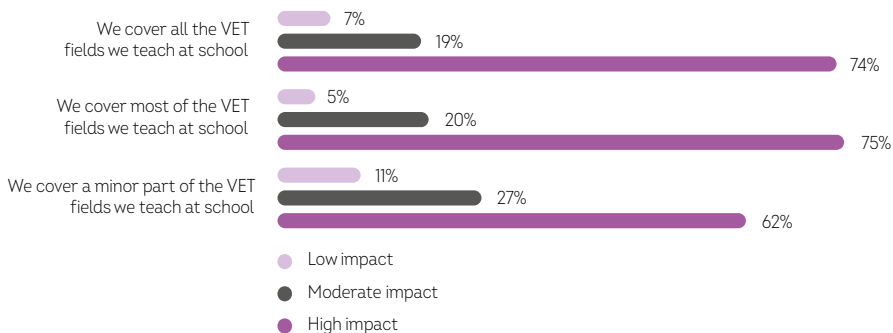
Items	% Not at all + only a little	% To some extent	% A lot + completely
Increasing the job motivation	6	19	75
Overcoming professional burnout	10	29	61
Increasing the involvement in the school's daily work	8	23	69
Increasing innovativeness	6	20	74
Increasing proactiveness	7	18	75

Source: own calculation N=884

As with other indicators, differences are visible depending on the scope of mobility organised by schools. Schools that organise mobility for all or most VET fields report higher values of the indicator for perceived teachers' professional development. Schools that include all or most VET fields show similarly high levels of the composite indicator, with a strong concentration of *high impact* classifications (74% and 75%, respectively). In contrast, schools where mobility covers only a minor part of the VET offer display lower overall indicator values, characterised by a smaller share of *high impact* (62%) and a more pronounced presence of *moderate* and *low impact* classifications.

Figure 45.

Perceived impact on teacher's professional development by the scale of mobilities organised by school

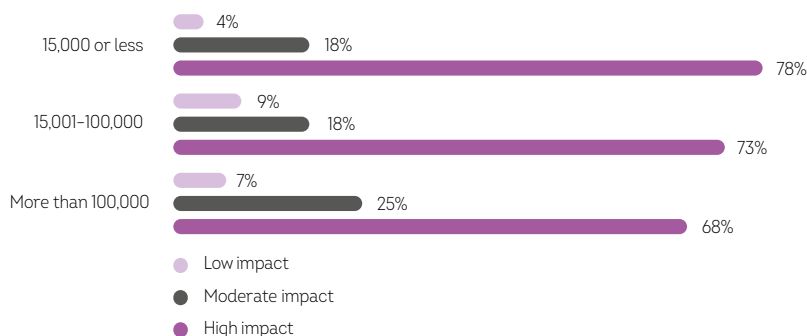


Source: own calculation N=884

The highest indicator values classified as *high impact* are observed in schools located in towns with less than 15,000 inhabitants (73%). Indicator values decline with the size of the locality in which the school is situated, with the share of *high impact* classifications decreasing by around ten percentage points in schools located in the largest cities (more than 100,000 inhabitants) compared to small localities. Differences in the distribution of indicator values by size of locality are statistically significant, as confirmed by the chi-square test ($\chi^2(4) = 12.15$, $p = .016$), although the strength of the association is weak (Cramér's $V = .083$).

Figure 46.

Perceived impact on teacher's professional development by the size of town where school is located



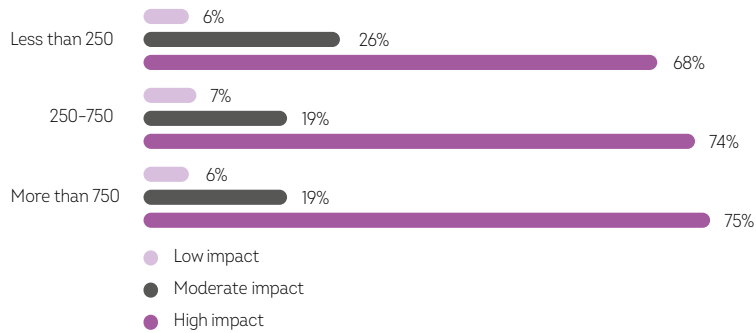
Source: own calculation N=884

To complement the distribution-based analysis, differences in mean values of the composite indicator measuring the perceived impact of mobility on teachers' professional development were additionally examined by the size of locality. Given that the indicator is measured on a continuous scale and assumptions of the test were met, a one-way ANOVA analysis of variance was applied. The analysis revealed statistically significant differences in mean values across categories of locality size ($F(2, 881) = 4.83$, $p = .008$). However, the effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .011$). This pattern is consistent with the descriptive analysis, which showed slightly higher perceived impact in schools located in smaller towns. Detailed statistical results are presented in Annex A (Table A2).

As with other indicators, the perceived impact of mobility on teachers' professional development varies slightly with school size. Smaller schools (less than 250 students) show somewhat lower indicator values, with around 68% of cases classified as *high impact*. Medium-sized schools (250-750 students) and large schools (more than 750 students) reach marginally higher values, with 74-75% classified as *high impact*.

Figure 47.

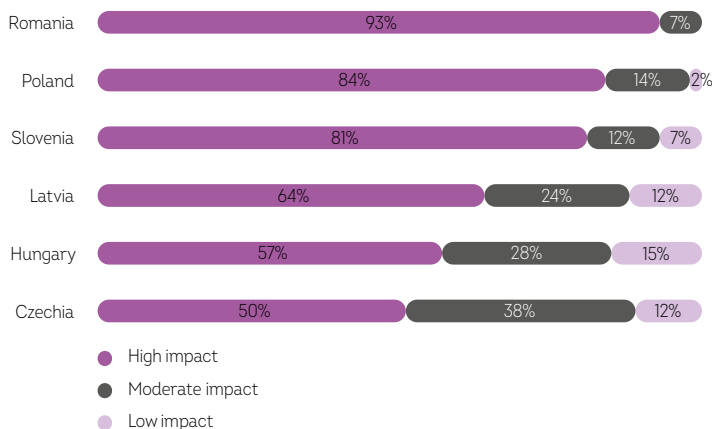
Perceived impact on teacher's professional development by the size of school



Source: own calculation N=884

The distribution of the composite indicator measuring the perceived impact of mobility on teachers' professional development varies substantially across countries. The highest concentrations of *high impact* classifications are observed in Romania (93%), followed by Poland (84%) and Slovenia (81%), indicating clearly elevated indicator values in these contexts. Latvia occupies an intermediate position, with 64% of cases classified as *high impact*. By contrast, markedly lower indicator values are recorded in Hungary and Czechia, where only 57% and 50% of cases, respectively, fall into the *high impact* category. In these two countries, a comparatively larger share of observations is classified as *moderate impact*. As with the other indicators, crosscountry differences are statistically significant, as confirmed by the chi-square test ($\chi^2(10) = 125.77$, $p < .001$), with effect size measures indicating a moderately strong association between country and impact classification (Cramér's $V = .267$).

Figure 48.
Perceived impact on teacher's professional development by country



Source: own calculation N=884

The analysis of data from interviews with teachers and coordinators of mobility programmes highlights how participation in international VET placements impacts teachers' professional development by generating new ideas, solutions, and skills. These experiences give teachers the opportunity to observe how companies and educational institutions function in other countries, which contribute to the development of their professional skills. These learning outcomes encompass several key areas, including knowledge of new technologies and teaching methods, practices used in foreign companies and educational institutions, as well as exposure to new resources, materials, and professional approaches. They also involve gaining cultural awareness that helps teachers broaden their perspectives and better prepare students for the challenges of the global labour market, alongside the development of foreign language skills.

First of all, one can see how not only education but also work in other countries looks, in the professions that we are currently training for. (Poland_12)

If I go abroad to a company where a young person is doing an Erasmus traineeship, I always try to learn as much as possible about the company's hospitality. For example, I look into what's new, the companies they are working with, the menu, the prices of the food and drinks, their top dishes, and the seasonal cocktails they offer. (Latvia_5)

” In the project, we wrote training materials and I used them myself as an accompanying teacher in Austria. I had the opportunity to take photographs and use the visual materials from the historical parks. There are photographs, descriptions, and presentations made, and teachers often prepare articles for publication. We are currently exploring possibilities for the next projects and looking for new partners and topics. (Latvia_8)

In some schools, teachers are obligated to introduce changes after returning from mobility, and these changes can take various forms. In one case, a teacher who participated in a mobility was required to present a proposal for change in their school, which became part of the process of implementing new ideas and solutions.

During mobility, teachers also have the chance to observe workplaces, which fosters their innovative thinking and generates new ideas for working with students. This can involve adapting teaching methods, changing classroom layouts, or introducing new educational tools. By observing how teaching is conducted in other countries, teachers become familiar with new trends, technologies, and methods, motivating them to introduce innovative solutions in their own classrooms.

” Our photographers were in Germany and we saw graphic tablets for the first time and we loved the idea and got them too. Today we have about 15 of them and some of the children cannot imagine working without them so this was a benefit for us. (Czechia_6)

Teachers accompanying students during international placements also have the opportunity to compare curricula when mobility takes place in foreign educational institutions. This experience enables them to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different programmes, providing a basis for adapting their own teaching methods and curricula to better meet the evolving needs of their students.

” You just see the foreign trend there: everything is organic, wholemeal flour, nutritionally balanced meals, and here our plans are designed differently and suddenly the modern practice is different and that’s where it becomes clear, that we really need to adapt our curricula, to incorporate those new things. (Czechia_12)

Interviewees also referred to changes in teachers' motivation to work following their mobility experiences. These changes took various forms, including:

- reduced stress levels, which contribute to a more comfortable classroom atmosphere and improve the quality of teaching;
- shifts in worldview resulting from contact with different cultures, leading to a broader perspective on students and the teaching process;
- a greater appreciation of communication as a key skill in language learning, alongside increased recognition of the importance of soft skills such as cooperation and responsibility, which are becoming essential elements of the educational process.

It definitely helps because when they return and share their experiences, it's even a completely different way of working. When she first went to Italy, everything there was slow, with siestas, and that you don't have to rush, that the work culture is a bit different. So, teachers have a different perception of the world. (Poland_4)

What my colleague said regarding the experiences of our professional colleagues, is that what they observe during these mobilities, they are later able to weave into their programme content and modify the programme they had planned. I'll also add that we use the materials they provide us here and pass them on to younger classes. So, they benefit from the experiences of their older colleagues. (Poland_8)

Taken together, these experiences contribute to the transformation of teachers' professional development and have a lasting impact on their approach to teaching and the quality of education in the schools where they work. Participation in mobility projects is therefore not only an opportunity to acquire new skills, but also a space for reflection on one's teaching practice and professional growth.

5.4.2.5 Teachers' foreign language competencies

Although one might expect that international mobility would play a particularly strong role in developing teachers' language competencies, this indicator reached slightly lower values (mean score of 3.78) compared to other indicators of mobility impact on teachers. The internal consistency of the scale measuring the perceived impact of mobility on language competencies is high (Cronbach's $\alpha = .960$), indicating strong reliability. The indicator was

constructed from three items, all of which showed a similar distribution of responses. Over half of respondents indicated a strong impact (responses *a lot* and *completely*) when asked about the effect of mobility on *improving communication in a foreign language* (65% of responses for *a lot* and *completely*), *broadening the knowledge of general vocabulary* (62%), and *broadening the knowledge of professional vocabulary* (65%). At the same time, around 10-12% of responses reported minimal or no impact, as indicated by the combined response *not at all* and *only a little*.



Table 21.

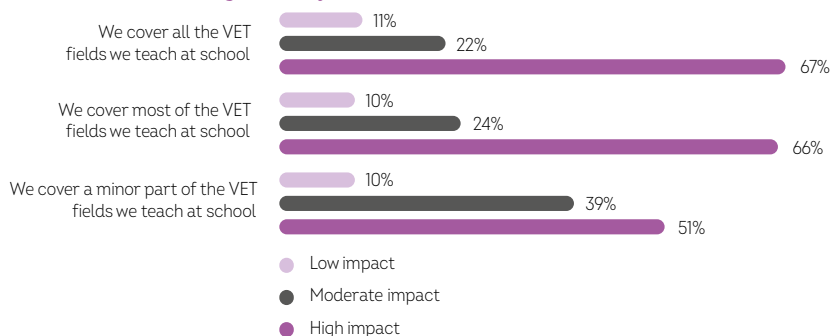
Response frequencies for items forming the foreign language competencies indicator. Respondents were asked: "How do the learners' placements impact the teaching staff? To what extent do you agree they positively impact the following areas?"

Items	% Not at all + only a little	% To some extent	% A lot + completely
Improving communication in a foreign language	10	25	65
Broadening the knowledge of general vocabulary	12	26	62
Broadening the knowledge of professional vocabulary	11	24	65

Source: own calculation N=891

The distribution of the composite indicator measuring the perceived impact of mobility on teachers' foreign language competencies varies clearly with the scope of VET fields covered by mobility activities. Schools that organise mobilities across all or most VET fields display very similar and relatively high indicator values, with around two thirds of cases classified as *high impact*. By contrast, in schools where mobility covers only a minor part of the VET offer, the share of *high impact* classifications drops by approximately fifteen percentage points, accompanied by a substantially higher concentration of *moderate impact* classifications. These differences are statistically significant, as confirmed by the chi-square test ($\chi^2(4) = 15.82$, $p = .003$), although the strength of the association is weak (Cramér's $V = .094$).

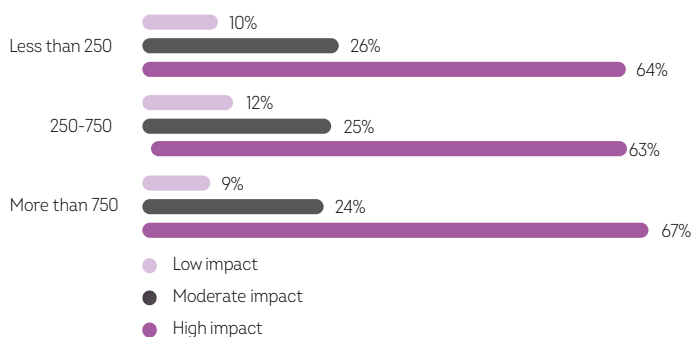
Figure 49.
Perceived impact on teacher's foreign language competencies by the scale of mobilities organised by school



Source: own calculation N=891

When analysed by school size, the composite indicator measuring the perceived impact of mobility on teachers' foreign language competencies shows a high degree of stability across categories. Indicator values are slightly lower in the smallest schools (less than 250 students), where around 64% of cases are classified as *high impact*, and remain at a similar level in medium-sized schools (250-750 students). In the largest schools (more than 750 students), the share of *high impact* classifications increases marginally to 67%.

Figure 50.
Perceived impact on teacher's foreign language competencies by school size



Source: own calculation N=891

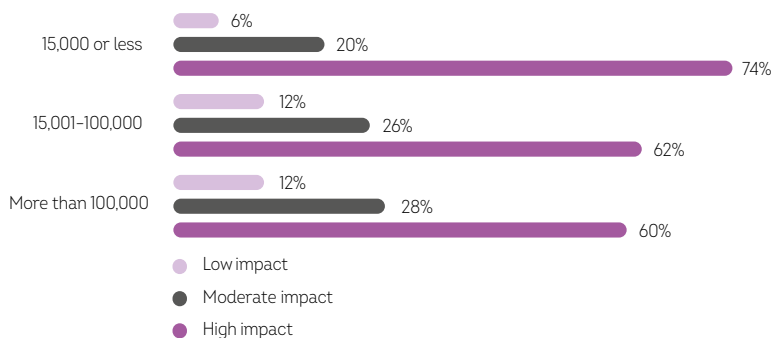
More pronounced variation is observed depending on the size of the locality in which the school is located. The highest indicator values are observed in schools situated in small towns (15,000 inhabitants or less), where approximately 74% of cases are classified as *high impact*. Indicator values decrease noticeably in larger localities, with the share of *high impact* classifications falling to 62% in medium-sized towns (15,001-100,000 inhabitants) and further to 60% in large

cities (more than 100,000 inhabitants). Overall, the decline of around 14 percentage points between small towns and large cities indicates that differences related to school location are more substantial than those observed for school size. These differences are statistically significant, as confirmed by the chi-square test ($\chi^2(10) = 133.52$, $p < .001$), with effect size measures indicating a moderately strong association between school location and impact classification (Cramér's $V = .274$).



Figure 51.

Perceived impact on teacher's foreign language competencies
by the size of town where school is located



Source: own calculation $N=891$

In addition to the distribution-based analysis, mean differences in the composite indicator measuring the perceived impact of mobility on teachers' foreign language competencies were analysed with respect to the size of locality. Given the continuous nature of the indicator and minor violations of the homogeneity of variance assumption, a robust comparison of mean values was applied. The results indicate statistically significant differences across categories of locality size, with higher mean values observed in schools located in smaller towns. The effect size remains small ($\eta^2 = .019$), suggesting that while the differences are systematic, their practical significance is limited. Detailed statistical results are provided in Annex A (Table A3).

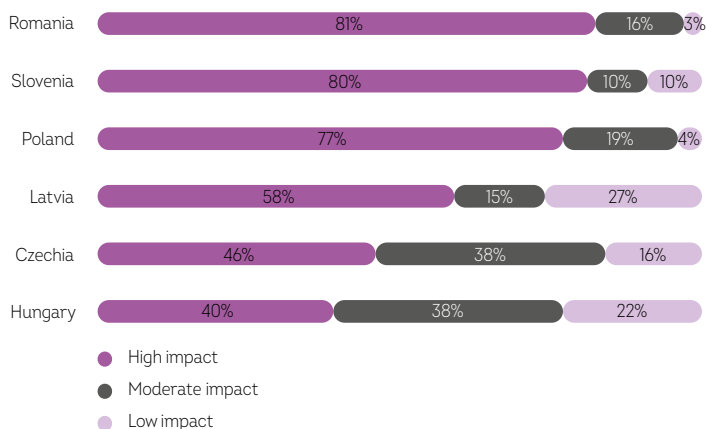
As with the other indicators, pronounced differences are also observed across countries in the values of the composite indicator reflecting the impact of mobility on teachers' foreign language competencies. The highest concentrations of *high impact* classifications are recorded in Romania and Slovenia (81% and 80%, respectively), followed by Poland (77%), indicating consistently elevated indicator values in these contexts. By contrast, substantially lower indicator values are observed in Hungary, Czechia, and Latvia, with particularly low levels in Hungary, where only 40% of cases fall into the *high impact* category. As with the other indicators, differences by country are statistically significant, as confirmed by the chi-square test ($\chi^2(10) = 125.77$,

$p < .001$), with effect size measures indicating a moderately strong association between country and indicator classification (Cramér's $V = .267$).



Figure 52.

Perceived impact on teacher's foreign language competencies by country



Source: own calculation $N=891$

The qualitative data help further specify the nature of the impact of mobility on teachers' foreign language competencies. Mobility has a generally positive effect that is primarily motivational rather than proficiency-driven. Rather than reporting substantial gains in language proficiency, interviewees highlighted increased confidence in communication, greater exposure to professional vocabulary, and, crucially, a strong motivation to continue learning.

In several countries, mobility acted as a catalyst for institutional support for language development, triggering a cycle of motivation for further learning. For instance, in Poland, some schools introduced formal mechanisms encouraging teachers to participate in language courses and take exams to improve their qualifications.



We purposefully applied for funding from another project to send teachers on language courses. A teacher signs an agreement with the headteacher and, after returning, must register for a state language exam, for example, from A2 to B1. They don't have to pass it, but they have to take it. (Poland_6)

Importantly, proficiency in the foreign language was both a skill gained during mobility and a factor that often limited participation from the outset. As mentioned earlier in the report, several interviewees pointed out that teachers are hesitant to engage in international mobility if they lack confidence in their language skills. This hesitation is sometimes addressed proactively: teachers begin learning or refreshing a foreign language before departure, either individually or through support provided by their institutions.

“When I was nominated for a mobility opportunity, I would take my notes and practise the language immediately so that I could communicate better. This is what motivates me. I believe other teachers share the same desire to improve their knowledge. (Latvia_5)

Other interviewees confirmed that schools themselves organise preparatory courses to support teachers in overcoming language barriers. This dual function of language – as both a prerequisite and an outcome of mobility – highlights the strategic importance of language support in maximising the impact and accessibility of mobility projects. While many teachers reported increased confidence and improved communication skills following mobility, language-related challenges remain a concern. Teachers, especially those with more limited foreign language experience, frequently described communication with international partners as stressful, underscoring the need for continued language training opportunities. Overall, the qualitative findings suggest that mobility serves less as a direct instrument for improving language proficiency and more as a trigger for language awareness, motivation, and action – both at the individual and institutional level.

Chapter 6. Impact of Erasmus+ mobility on schools

Organising mobilities through schools is important not only for the individual development of students and teachers, but also for its potential to impact the broader school environment. This chapter explores how the organisation of international placements contributes to the development of the school as a whole. Specifically, it examines the extent to which mobility experiences lead to knowledge transfer among teachers, influence the development of the school's educational offer – including curriculum changes and the introduction of pedagogical innovations – and contribute to the modernisation of school infrastructure.

6.1. Changes in educational offer, teaching and pedagogical innovations, and school infrastructure

In the quantitative study, teachers and school coordinators were asked how learner mobility affects the teaching process within their schools. The core question in this section of the questionnaire was: *How did the learners' placements impact the teaching process in your school? To what extent do you agree they had a positive effect on the following areas?* This section of the survey included statements on curricular and extracurricular impacts, teaching content and methods, knowledge-sharing among teachers, overall teaching quality, and the quality of teaching aids.

The highest-rated item in terms of the impact of mobility was *the sharing of knowledge by accompanying teachers with their colleagues after the mobility*, which received a mean score of 4.49 (standard deviation: .792). This result is notably higher than the others. The second-highest rated effect was mobilities' *positive effect on the quality of practical training*, with a mean score of 3.95 (standard deviation: .988), nearly a full point lower than the top-ranked response. The next five items – ranging from *improved teaching quality in classes* (3.70) to *implementation of new elements in curricula* (3.49) – received similar scores clustered around the 3.5 mark, with only slight variations of about 0.2 between them. This suggests that respondents assessed these impacts in a relatively uniform way. At the lower end of the rankings were the impacts on *equipment quality* (3.25), *curriculum modification* (3.20), and *infrastructural changes* (3.02). These aspects received noticeably lower mean ratings, suggesting that although some benefits in these areas were observed, they were not as widely perceived or as impactful as the pedagogical or collaborative outcomes.



Table 22.

The descriptives of the impact of mobilities on school

	Mean	Std. Deviation
The accompanying persons share their knowledge with other teachers after the mobility completion	4.49	.792
The mobility had a positive impact on the quality of practical training	3.95	.988
The mobility had a positive impact on the quality of teaching during classes	3.70	1.005
The mobility contributed to elaboration of new teaching material	3.69	1.079
The teachers implement extracurricular innovations into their teaching	3.66	1.017

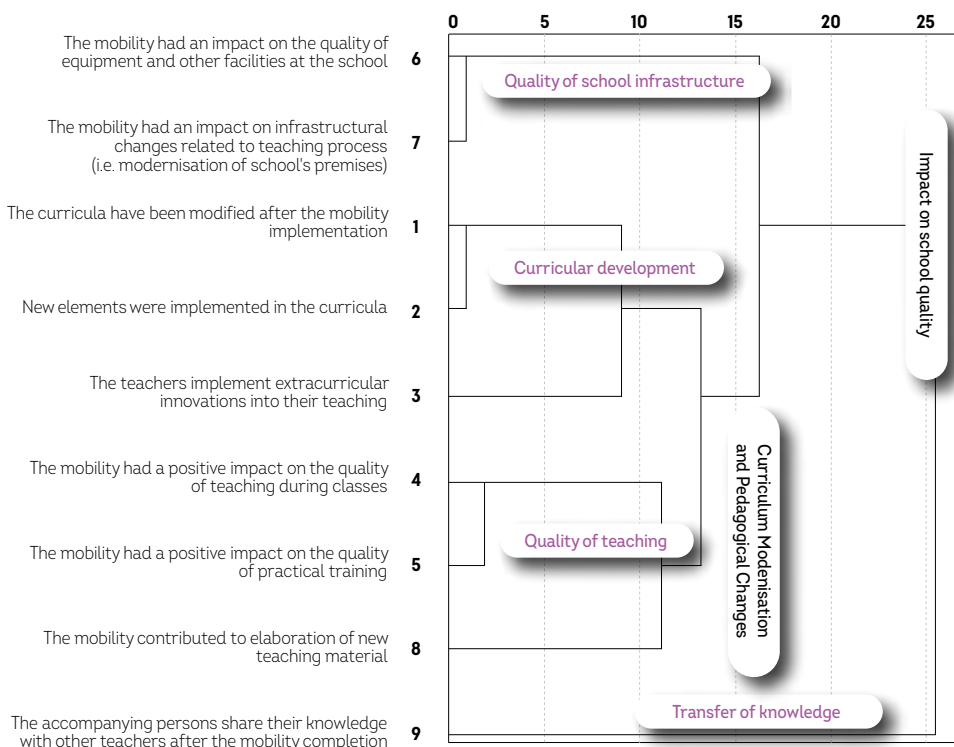
	Mean	Std. Deviation
New elements were implemented in the curricula	3.49	1.041
The mobility had an impact on the quality of equipment and other facilities at the school	3.25	1.290
The curricula have been modified after the mobility implementation	3.20	1.022
Impact on infrastructural changes related to teaching process (i.e. modernisation of school's premises)	3.02	1.276

Source: own calculation N=884

In order to enable further analyses and to present the impact items for schools in a more transparent and professionally meaningful way, the nine factors were grouped into thematic clusters using cluster analysis. There is only one factor that distinguishes it from conceptual groups covering different areas of quality, *the accompanying persons share their knowledge with other teachers after the mobility completion* (see Table 22). The other 8 factors are organised into 2 content groups (see Figure 53), which are separated into three branches.

Figure 53.

Dendrogram showing clusters of items related to the perceived impact of mobility on school, based on hierarchical cluster analysis



Source: own calculations, $N=884$

Table 23 presents the descriptive statistics for the four composite indicators derived from the 9 items. As in the previous analysis, these composite indicators were calculated by averaging the numerical values assigned to the responses (on a scale of 1-5). The means of these indicators range from 3.13 to 4.49, with standard deviations varying from .792 to 1.231, suggesting a moderate spread in the respondents' answers. It is important to emphasise the reliability of these indicators, as evidenced by the high Cronbach's alpha values for each cluster, ranging from $\alpha = .880$ to $\alpha = .901$. These values indicate very good internal consistency, further validating the robustness and reliability of the measurements.



Table 23.
The descriptives of the impact of mobilities on school

Clusters	N	Mini- mum	Maxi- mum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cron- bach's alpha
Transfer of knowledge	884	1	5	4.49	.792	n/a
Quality of teaching	882	1	5	3.77	.919	.880
Curricular development	884	1	5	3.45	.925	.885
Quality of school infrastructure	884	1	5	3.13	1.231	.901
Total	884					

Source: own calculation

The comparison of the four composite indicators reveals clear differences in how respondents perceived the impact of mobility activities on school, both in terms of central tendency (mean and median) and variability (interquartile range).

Mobility impact on transfer of knowledge stands out as the most positively perceived indicator, with the highest mean of 4.49 and a median of 5.00, indicating a strong consensus among respondents that *accompanying persons share their knowledge with other teachers after the mobility completion*. The narrow interquartile range (IQR of 1.00) further reinforces this, suggesting that most responses were tightly clustered around the top end of the scale, with minimal disagreement. The impact of mobilities on *quality of teaching* ranks next, receiving a mean of 3.78 and a median of 4.00. The IQR of 1.37 shows some diversity in the responses, with a majority of respondents perceiving an improvement in teaching quality, but with a wider spread of opinions compared to knowledge sharing indicator.

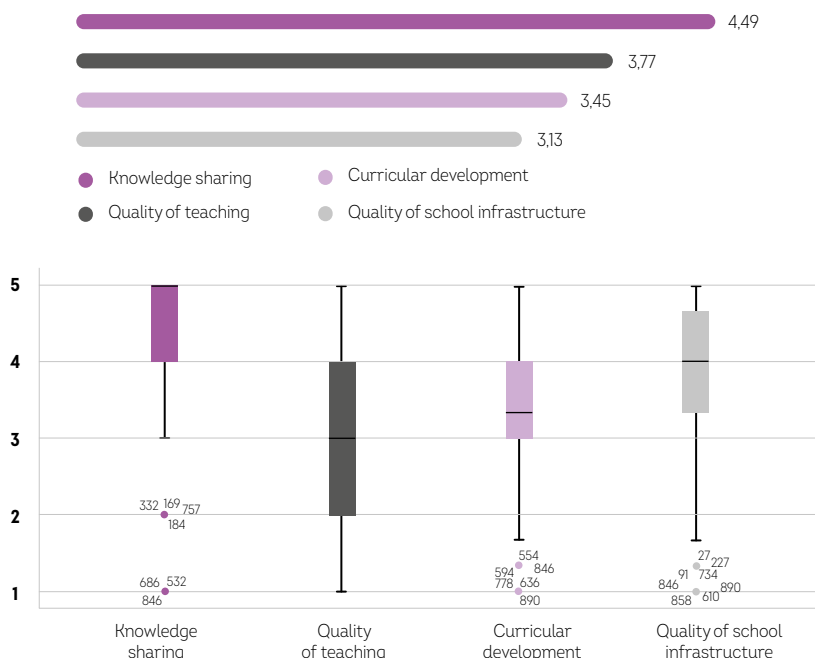
The third indicator is mobility impact on *curriculum development*, with a mean of 3.45 and a median of 3.33, reflecting a more neutral to slightly positive perception of the impact on curriculum changes in schools due to international placements. The IQR of 1.00 indicates that opinions were fairly balanced, with some respondents noticing improvements in the curriculum, while others saw little to no change. Lastly, impact on *school infrastructure* indicator had the lowest mean of 3.13 and a median of 3.00, suggesting that respondents were less convinced that mobility had a significant impact on school infrastructure. The wider IQR of 2.00 points to

greater variability in opinions, with some respondents believing the impact was minimal, while others perceived improvements in the school's physical facilities resulting from participation in VET placements.



Figure 54.

Comparison of four summary indicators based on mean scores and distribution of responses



Source: own calculation N=884

The analysis indicates that the strongest perceived impacts of mobility activities concern knowledge sharing and the enhancement of teaching quality, followed by contributions to curriculum development, whereas improvements in school infrastructure were considered least significant. This ranking suggests that mobility is primarily valued as a catalyst for pedagogical innovation and professional exchange among teachers. At the same time, its influence on more structural or material dimensions, such as infrastructure and curricular reform, appears less consistent and more context-dependent, reflecting variability across responders. In the following sections of the report, each of these indicators is examined in greater detail, with attention given to how their perceived impact varies in relation to other variables.

6.1.1 Knowledge transfer among teachers after mobility

In contemporary knowledge management approaches, increasing attention is being paid to the process of knowledge sharing as a key factor in enhancing organisational effectiveness, fostering innovation, and building intellectual capital. In an organisational context, knowledge is not only a resource to be collected but, more importantly, a resource to be shared – its value increases when it is accessible and usable by others within the community (Bagshaw, 2000).

Knowledge sharing is a relational process that takes place between individuals, and its effectiveness relies on interaction, trust, and openness. For teachers who accompany students during international internships, the knowledge gained through such experiences – whether practical, methodological, or cultural – represents not only an individual asset but also a potential collective one. When shared with other teachers, this knowledge can evolve from individual insights to group knowledge and, eventually, organisational knowledge (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000; Olivera, 2000). This process – known as knowledge externalisation – supports the development of a shared knowledge base within the educational institution. In this sense, the processes described above can also be understood through the lens of *networked learning*, which conceptualises learning as emerging through connections between individuals, their experiences, and their professional contexts (Evert & Stein, 2022). From this perspective, knowledge gained through mobility extends teachers' professional networks and is further developed through interaction and exchange within informal, practice-based networks embedded in everyday school life.

In the quantitative study, the indicator for knowledge sharing reached the highest mean among other indicators measuring the impact of mobilities on school. Figure 55 illustrates how respondents evaluated the extent to which VET placements contributed to knowledge sharing in school. A clear majority of respondents indicated that the *accompanying persons share their knowledge with other teachers after completing the mobility*, selecting either *a lot* or *completely* as their response. Only around 2% of respondents believed that knowledge sharing occurs *only a little* or *not at all*.

Figure 55.

Distribution of responses to the question "To what extent do you agree that VET placement had a positive effect on sharing the knowledge by accompanying persons with other teachers after the mobility completion"



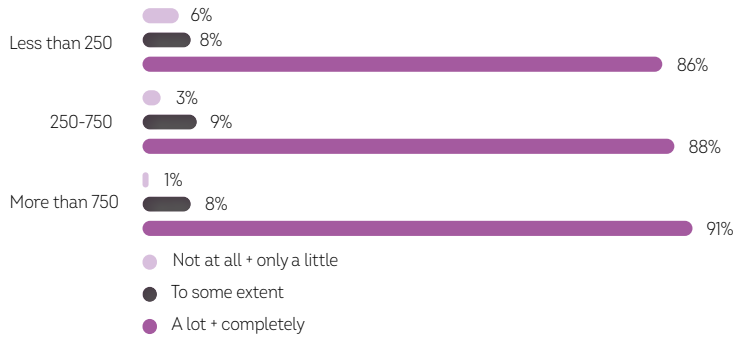
Source: own calculation N=884

The analysis of teachers' responses shows that knowledge sharing after completing a mobility is a widespread phenomenon, with some variation related to school size and more pronounced differences observed across countries.

Looking first at school size, the most positive responses come from the largest institutions. Among respondents from schools with more than 750 students, 91% agree either *a lot* or *completely* that the accompanying persons share their knowledge with colleagues after mobility completion. This percentage decreases by 3 percentage points (88%) in medium-sized schools (250-750 students), and by 5 percentage points (86%) in the smallest schools (less than 250 students). The chi-square test yielded a statistically significant result ($\chi^2(8) = 17.544$, $p = .025$), indicating an association between school size and the reported level of knowledge sharing by accompanying teachers after mobility. However, the strength of this association, as measured by Cramér's V, was weak ($V = .100$). Although the differences are relatively small (a 5-percentage-point gap between the smallest and largest schools), a pattern emerges: the larger the school, the more frequently intensive knowledge sharing is reported. This could reflect greater staff capacity, more formal organisational structures, or a stronger emphasis on disseminating good practices.

Figure 56.

Distribution of responses to the question "To what extent do you agree that VET placement had a positive effect on sharing the knowledge by accompanying persons with other teachers after the mobility completion" by the size of school

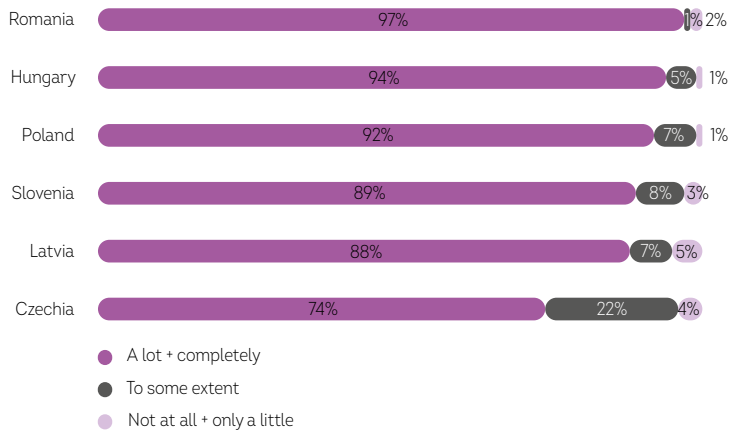


Source: own calculation N=884

When it comes to country differences, some variation can be observed, although overall levels of agreement remain high across all countries. In Romania, 97% of respondents agreed *a lot* or *completely* that accompanying persons share their knowledge with other teachers after mobility, followed by Hungary (94%) and Poland (92%). The lowest share of high agreement responses was observed in Czechia.

Figure 57.

Distribution of responses to the question "To what extent do you agree that VET placement had a positive effect on sharing the knowledge by accompanying persons with other teachers after the mobility completion" by the size of school



Source: own calculation N=884

6.1.2. Improving teaching quality through international mobility

The composite indicator impact of mobilities on *quality of teaching* ranked second among the four identified dimensions, with a mean score of 3.77 and a median of 4.00. This indicator comprises three items and shows good internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .880$), confirming the reliability of this construct.

Among the three items, the strongest agreement was observed for the statement *the mobility had a positive impact on the quality of practical training*, where 71% of respondents agreed *a lot* or *completely* with this statement. This result reflects the close connection between mobility and hands-on vocational instruction, and likely stems from the fact that vocational teachers often accompany students abroad and gain direct exposure to modern tools, workplace practices, and teaching methods. The second highest agreement was found in the statement that *the mobility had a positive impact on the quality of teaching during classes*, where 62% of respondents selected *a lot* or *completely*. Slightly more than 60% of respondents agreed *a lot* or *completely* that the mobility contributed to the elaboration of new teaching material. Meanwhile, 14% state that the mobility had no or *only a little* impact on this aspect. This result may point to practical challenges in transforming gained knowledge into concrete new teaching materials, which often requires additional time, institutional support, or collaboration within the school team.



Table 24.

Response frequencies for items forming the indicator impact on quality of teaching. Responders were asked "How did the learners' placements impact the teaching process in your school? To what extent do you agree they had a positive effect on the following areas?"

Items	% Not at all + only a little	% To some extent	% A lot + completely
The mobility had a positive impact on the quality of teaching during classes	11	27	62
The mobility contributed to elaboration of new teaching material	14	25	61
The mobility had a positive impact on the quality of practical training	8	21	71

Source: own calculation N=882

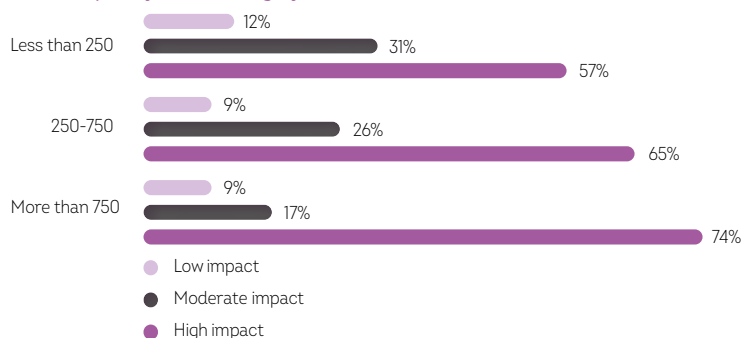
These findings suggest that international mobility not only enhances the professional development of teachers but also has a measurable impact on everyday teaching practices, particularly in vocational training settings.

In analysing the results of the group of questions related to teaching quality, we considered it essential to explore differences that may indicate unique patterns or statistically significant variations depending on institutional characteristics and contextual background factors. To enable a more detailed comparison in the next stages of analysis, the composite indicator quality of teaching was classified into three levels: *low impact* (≤ 2.5), *moderate impact* (2.51–3.5), *high impact* (> 3.51), based on the original 1–5 response scale.

The data suggest differences in the perceived impact of mobility on the quality of teaching depending on school size. In the smallest schools (less than 250 students), the value of the indicator for the *high impact* category reached 57%. In medium-sized schools (250–750 students), the indicator rises to 65%, with only 9% reporting a *low impact*. This upward trend continues in the largest schools (more than 750 students), where the indicator for *high impact* reaches 74%, while the percentage reporting a *low impact* remains at 9%. These results suggest that larger schools are more likely to experience or recognise stronger positive effects of VET placements on teaching quality. This may be due to more developed systems for knowledge transfer, greater institutional capacity to capitalise on mobility experiences, or stronger internal networks that facilitate the dissemination of new practices and innovations introduced by returning staff. A chi-square test further confirms an association between school size and the perceived impact of mobility on the quality of teaching ($\chi^2(4) = 14.63$, $p = .006$). However, the strength of this association is weak, as indicated by Cramér's V ($V = .091$).



Figure 58.
Impact on the quality of teaching by size of school



Source: own calculation $N=882$

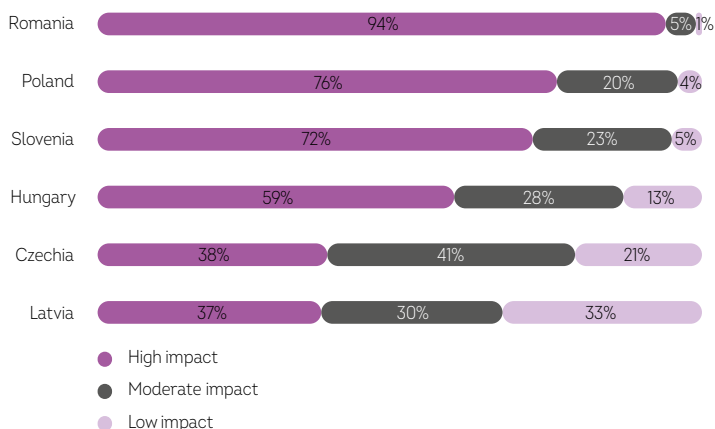
In addition to the distributionbased analysis, differences in mean values of the composite indicator measuring the perceived impact of mobility on the quality of teaching were examined by school size using a oneway ANOVA analysis of variance. Higher mean values are observed in larger schools. The results indicate statistically significant differences across categories of school size ($F(2, 879) = 4.74, p = .009$). However, the effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .011$). Full details are provided in Annex A (Table A4).

The analysis of the composite indicator measuring the perceived impact of international mobility on teaching quality reveals cross-country differences that follow a pattern similar to that observed for other dimensions of mobility impact. As in the case of these other indicators, the highest values are recorded in the same three countries.

Romania shows the strongest overall assessment, followed by Poland and Slovenia, where the majority of respondents report a *high impact* of mobility on teaching quality. By contrast, Hungary displays a more differentiated distribution of responses, while Czechia and Latvia report the lowest shares of high-impact assessments. The analysis indicates a statistically significant association ($\chi^2(10) = 170.02, p < .001$), with Cramér's V ($V = .310$) pointing to a moderately strong association.



Figure 59.
Impact on quality of teaching by country



Source: own calculation N=882

6.1.3. Changes in school curricula

Changes in curricula triggered by participation in international internships and placements appears to be a long-term and complex process, not always feasible for immediate implementation. It often requires broader institutional commitment, systemic support, and time to integrate meaningful curricular changes. The indicator of impact on *curricular development* ranked third among the composite indicators measuring the impact of mobility on schools, with a mean score of 3.45 and a median of 3.3. It was composed of three items, and the scale demonstrated high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .885$), indicating that the items reliably measured the same construct.

An analysis of item-level frequencies reveals an important pattern: while most respondents indicated that teachers are able to implement extracurricular innovations in their teaching (59% responded *a lot* or *completely*), more systemic forms of curricular change appear less common. The introduction of new elements into curricula as a result of VET placements was acknowledged by 49% of respondents (reporting *a lot* or *completely*), while an additional 36% indicated that such changes occurred *to some extent*. By contrast, the most demanding form of innovation appears to be the modification of entire curricula. Slightly more than one third of respondents agreed *a lot* or *completely* that curricula had been modified following the mobility, whereas 20% perceived little or no change.



Table 25.

Response frequencies for items forming the indicator impact on curricular development

Items	% Not at all + only a little	% To some extent	% A lot + completely
The curricula have been modified after the mobility implementation	20	44	36
New elements were implemented in the curricula	15	36	49
The teachers implement extracurricular innovations into their teaching	12	29	59

Source: own calculation N=884

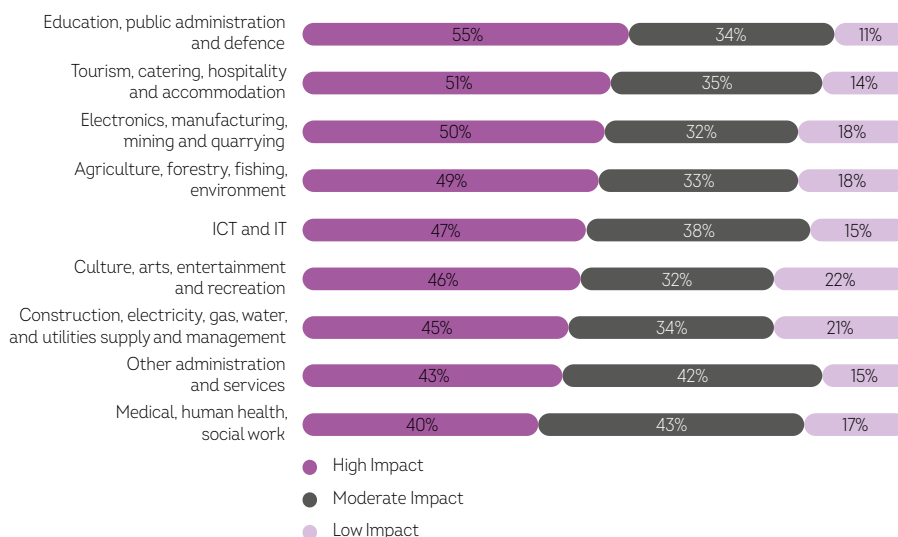
These findings suggest that teachers find it easier to introduce smaller-scale innovations inspired by foreign practices, while comprehensive curricular transformations remain relatively rare, possibly due to structural, administrative, or policy-related barriers. Similarly to

the previous indicator, the composite curricular development indicator was calculated as the mean of respondents' answers to three items and then divided into three categories based on the 1-5 response scale: *low impact* (≤ 2.5), *moderate impact* (2.51-3.5), and *high impact* (> 3.5).

Considering that the surveyed schools organise international internships for specific taught professions, we examined how the impact of these mobilities on changes in curriculum development varies across the vocational programmes in which schools organise mobilities. The analysis indicates that perceptions of mobility-related changes in curriculum development are broadly similar across vocational sectors, with only modest variation between fields. Analysis of the composite indicator measuring the perceived impact of mobility on curriculum development shows only modest variation across vocational sectors. Slightly higher shares of high impact assessments are reported in schools organising mobilities *in education, public administration and defence*, as well as in *tourism, catering, hospitality and accommodation* and in *electronics, manufacturing, mining and quarrying*. By contrast, schools in *medical, human health, social work* programmes display somewhat lower composite indicator values, with a comparatively higher share of *moderate impact* responses. It is important to note that the question regarding the vocational sectors was multiple-choice, allowing schools to select more than one sector. This methodological feature introduces some limitations in the interpretation: schools could report impacts across several sectors, leading to overlapping categories and non-independence of observations between groups.



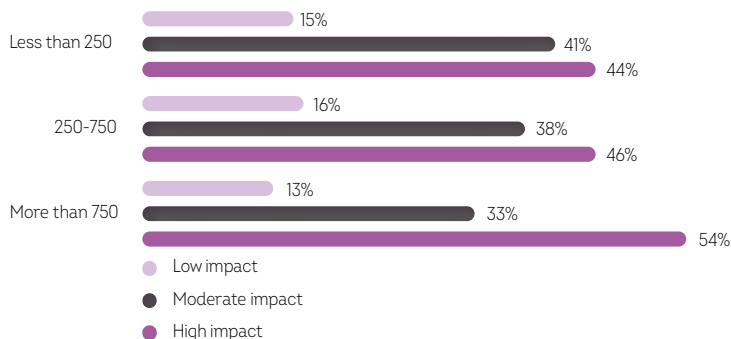
Figure 60.
Impact on curricular development by profession in which schools organise mobilities



Source: own calculation N=884

Findings also indicate that school size is associated with a higher perceived impact of mobility on curricular development. Among the smallest schools (less than 250 students), 44% of respondents assessed the impact as high. A similar pattern is observed in medium-sized schools (250-750 students), with 46% reporting a *high impact*. However, the proportion of those who perceive a *high impact* increases noticeably in the largest schools (more than 750 students) by 8 percentage points, where 54% of respondents assessed the impact as high. However, the chi-square test does not indicate a statistically significant association between school size and impact classification ($\chi^2(4) = 7.10, p = .131$).

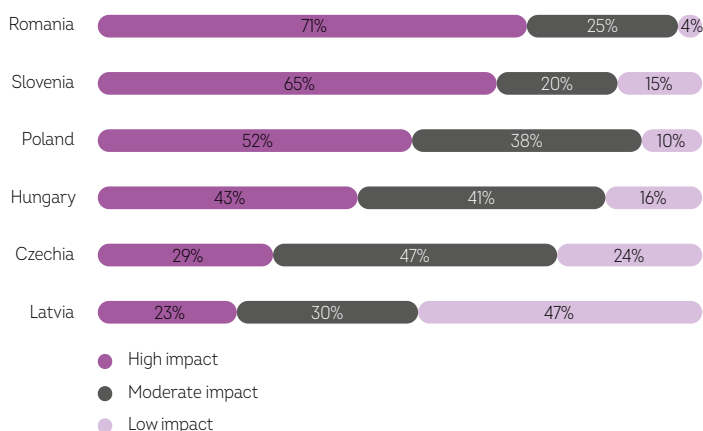
Figure 61.
Impact on curricular development by the size of school



Source: own calculation N=883

The analysis of the composite indicator measuring the perceived impact of mobility on curriculum development reveals clear cross-country differences, following a pattern broadly consistent with that observed for other aspects of mobility impact. The distribution of the indicator across three categories (*low*, *moderate*, and *high impact*) shows that the highest shares of *high impact* responses were observed in Romania (71%) and Slovenia (65%). Poland also exhibited relatively high levels of this indicator, although less pronounced (52%). Hungary presented a more balanced distribution, with similar proportions of *high* and *moderate impact* responses (43% and 41%, respectively). In contrast, the lowest shares of *high impact* responses were recorded in Czechia (29%) and Latvia (23%). In Latvia in particular, the indicator most frequently fell into the *low impact* category, accounting for 47% of cases. The results of the chi-square test confirm a statistically significant association between country and the distribution of the indicator categories ($\chi^2(10) = 116.95$, $p < .001$), indicating a moderately strong cross-country differentiation (Cramér's $V = .257$).

Figure 62.
Impact on curricular development by country



Source: own calculation N=884

As revealed in the qualitative interviews, the process of implementing changes in curricula triggered by experiences gained during international mobility is not only gradual but also highly context-dependent. The introduction of curricular innovations often depends on the autonomy of the school as well as the motivation of the principal and individual teachers. The potential for major changes in curricula remains limited due to rigid national curricula and institutional constraints.

Nothing can be changed in the curriculum. The programme is approved by the Ministry, and we have no influence over it. (Poland_2)

In all the countries studied, VET schools are obliged to base their programmes on national standards, with only a small portion of the curricula open to adaptation. For instance, schools in Poland and Slovenia can adjust roughly 20% of the curriculum to reflect labour market needs, while in Hungary recent reforms have reduced flexibility to around 10%. Similar restrictions are observed in Latvia, Romania, and Czechia. These limitations pose an obstacle to integrating international mobility into VET programming, an issue explored in Chapter 8.2.2.

In practice, this means that most changes take the form of modifications to existing content, the adjustments to existing modules, or the introduction of extra hours within the framework of the current curriculum. The most substantial changes, however, involve the creation of entirely new specialisations or subjects. Respondents in the interviews cited examples of new specialisations or subjects that emerged in schools as a result of inspiration from abroad.

Then a new specialisation, leisure activity animator for tourism, was introduced. Later, a teacher arrived with a specialisation in dietary catering. This was a specialisation brought from Sweden. This immediately translated into additional developmental classes, extra language lessons, and additional specialisations. (Poland_3)

At the moment, we have introduced, because the last project was [about] e-commerce, a new skill that can now be implemented within vocational education. Online trade skills have been made mandatory, including both the theory and practice of e-commerce. The specificity lies in building a website and managing it from the seller's perspective, which is a completely different type of selling. Every project we undertake leaves a mark. (Poland_13)

Where modular teaching is applied, changes often take the form of adding extra hours to existing modules.

For example, I will refer to the hotel technician programme. We introduced a few additional hours into one of the modules, because our school follows a modular teaching system. Specifically, we added more hours dedicated to the preparation and serving of breakfasts. It turned out that our students were not sufficiently skilled in this area, especially in serving beverages, as we had not put enough emphasis on teaching it. Therefore, we created a new unit focused on the preparation and serving of beverages. (Poland_6)

Generally, these curricular innovations are vocational in nature but also relate to English language learning. Many schools are following up traineeships by including blocks of vocational terminology in English that they had not taught before. Changes in curricula can also involve the introduction of entirely new subjects, leading to a shift that enriches the programme with practically oriented content while integrating language skills relevant to the profession.

Based on the traineeships abroad, we took one English lesson and made it Business English in the 2nd and 3rd year, knowing that would practise small talk, presentation skills, telephoning, etc. So it was a big change, a change in the curriculum as we introduced a new subject. (Czechia_1)

A substantial share of changes is also seen in the method of teaching, particularly among foreign language and vocational subject teachers. Teachers adapted their lesson content after observing authentic professional interactions abroad – such as hotel staff communicating with clients or kitchen staff using specific terminology. One teacher mentioned collecting English-language brochures during her placement to use them as authentic materials in class.

“For me as a vocational English teacher, these experiences were very important. I was able to integrate into my lessons the materials I had brought back, for example. [...] I had gathered a lot of tourism-related information on site – collected brochures from hotels and various other places. I was happily incorporating these materials into my teaching. I know that my fellow English teachers did the same. (Poland_23)

Interviewees reported adapting their teaching delivery and content based on insights from abroad. Sometimes the changes introduced after experience with international mobility are minor adjustments in teaching methods or observations of solutions that may prove effective in the local context. A notable example comes from logistics education, where schools restructured how lessons were organised, moving from classroom-only instruction to more practical experiences such as enabling older students to practise forklift driving, an idea directly inspired by Danish practices.

“When the logistics curriculum was changed, we started to implement it based on what the teachers had seen during their mobility abroad, for example the way the lessons were delivered (e.g., students with a driving test and 18 years of age could try driving a forklift truck). Previously, they were only taught in the classroom. (Slovenia).

“We observe other people’s ideas, how they do things. [...] And when we go somewhere else, to a different school or training institution, we can observe. Sometimes it is an entire working method, and sometimes it is just a different way of communicating; sometimes it is a small detail, which, as you said, can change the so-called culture of work organisation in the school. (Poland_19)

Interviewees point to a transfer of practices and resources across borders, but also to their adaptation in the local school context. They highlight the direct inspiration that comes from international cooperation: modification of teaching materials, development of skills in adapting

resources, and a methodological shift towards project-based and student-centred learning, reducing reliance on traditional frontal teaching.



We work with a school in Denmark. Teachers send us curricula, which give teachers ideas on what to teach and how to teach it. (Slovenia)



We have changed the teaching materials, we have learned how to adapt the teaching sheets and we have seen that it is not a problem. We have mainly moved towards project work and student-centredness, and there is less frontal teaching. (Slovenia)

In summary, the qualitative findings show that changes to curricula resulting from international experiences tend to occur on multiple levels. Small, practical adaptations, such as modifications to teaching methods, materials, or specific content blocks, are the most common and easiest to implement. Larger, systemic changes, including entirely new subjects or specialisations, are rarer and generally require sustained collaboration, institutional support, and time. International cooperation, particularly through the exchange of curricula and exposure to foreign practices, serves as a key catalyst, gradually enabling schools to adopt more substantial, context-sensitive innovations.

6.1.4. Changes in school infrastructure

Adequate infrastructure is particularly crucial in vocational education, as it enables the practical training. Proper technical facilities and equipment enable effective hands-on lessons and simulate real work environments, directly impacting the quality and effectiveness of vocational education. As mentioned earlier, organising international internships and placements allows vocational schools to access knowledge about new technologies, teaching methods, and best practices from abroad, which can be integrated into the school's infrastructure and curriculum. This exposure can help schools modernise their facilities and better prepare students for the demands of the global labour market. However, the study findings indicate that the impact of mobility on school infrastructure is limited.

Based on quantitative data, the composite indicator for mobility impact on *quality of school infrastructure* achieved the lowest mean score of 3.13 and a median of 3.0, based on two items with a high reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .901$).

Looking closer at the items, less than half of respondents (44%) agreed either *a lot or completely* that mobility had an impact on *the quality of equipment and other school facilities*, while 28%

reported little or no effect in this area. The impact of mobility on *infrastructural changes related to the teaching process* (i.e., *modernisation of school premises*) was rated even lower. Here, slightly over one-third of respondents stated that international mobility had little or no influence, while nearly the same proportion agreed *a lot* or *completely* that mobility had an impact on this aspect.



Table 26.
Response frequencies for items forming the indicator impact on quality of school infrastructure

Items	% Not at all + only a little	% To some extent	% A lot + completely
The mobility had an impact on the quality of equipment and other facilities at the school.	28	28	44
The mobility had an impact on infrastructural changes related to teaching process (i.e. modernisation of school's premises).	35	27	38

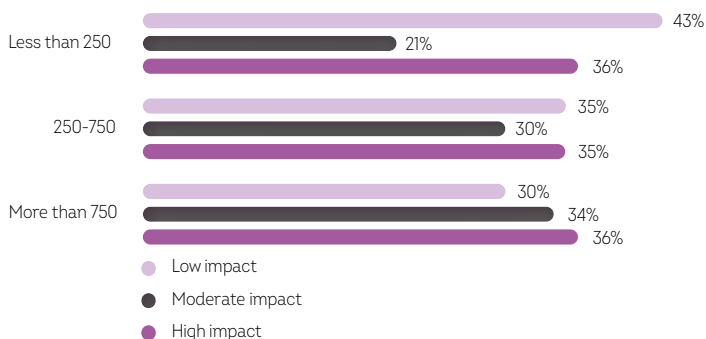
Source: own calculation N= 884

These findings suggest that while international mobility contributes to some improvements in infrastructure, such changes may require more time, investment, or institutional capacity to fully materialise. The practical nature of vocational education makes infrastructure crucial, but mobility's influence on this aspect appears more gradual and less immediate compared to other areas, such as improving teaching quality or curriculum development.

Similarly to the previous analysis, in order to identify factors that may be associated with a greater impact of mobility on changes in school infrastructure, we calculated the mean of items composing the infrastructure impact indicator and divided it into three categories: *low*, *moderate*, and *high impact*, based on the scale position (1-5).

No clear differences are observed in the composite indicator measuring the perceived impact of mobility on school infrastructure across school size categories, as the distribution of the indicator values remains similar in all groups, with *moderate* and *high impact* categories each accounting for 35–36%. However, in smaller schools (less than 250 students), the indicator more frequently falls into the *low impact* category (43%), suggesting that in these institutions mobility less often translates into noticeable infrastructural changes. In larger schools, the share of cases in the *low impact* category decreases (to 30% in the largest schools).

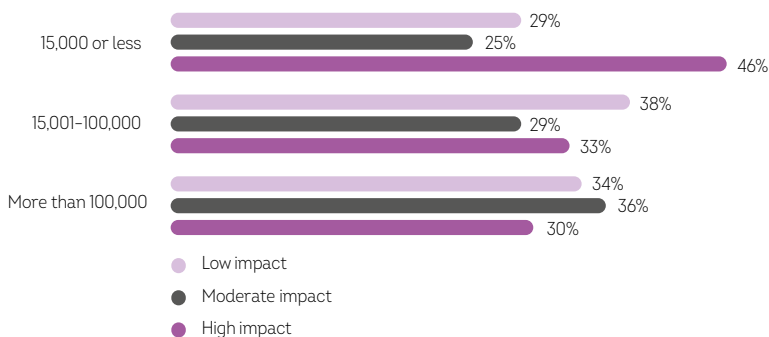
Figure 63.
Impact on changes in quality of school infrastructure by the size of school



Source: own calculation N=884

However, an interesting pattern emerges when considering the size of the municipality where the school is located. The share of the composite indicator falling into the *high impact* category is higher in schools located in smaller municipalities (15,000 inhabitants or less) (46%) compared to schools in towns with 15,001-100,000 inhabitants (33%) and those in municipalities with more than 100,000 inhabitants, where it drops by 16 percentage points.

Figure 64.
Impact on changes in quality of school infrastructure by the size of town where school is located



Source: own calculation N=884

Differences in mean values of the composite indicator measuring the perceived impact of mobility on school infrastructure were additionally examined by the size of locality using a oneway ANOVA. The analysis indicates statistically significant differences across locality size categories ($F(2, 880) = 5.82, p = .003$). However, the effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .013$), suggesting that while the differences are systematic, their practical significance remains limited. Slightly

higher mean values are observed in schools located in smaller towns. Detailed statistical results are provided in Annex A (Table A5).

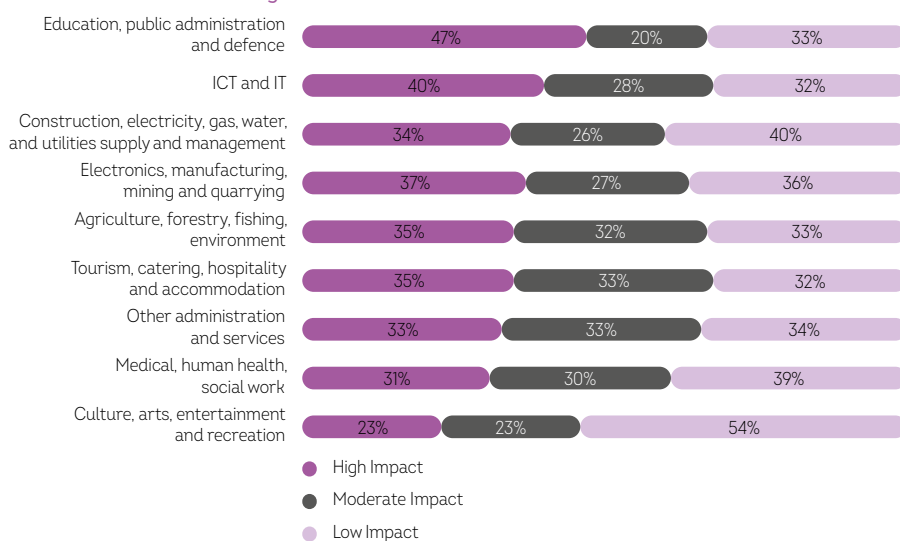
This suggests that in smaller communities, schools may receive more targeted support or have stronger incentives to leverage the benefits of international mobility to enhance infrastructure. Alternatively, the relative scale of changes in smaller settings may be more noticeable. In contrast, schools in larger municipalities might face more complex bureaucratic or funding challenges, which can make infrastructural improvements harder to implement or perceive as impactful.

The perceived impact of international mobility on the quality of school infrastructure differs across vocational sectors in which schools organise mobilities. Schools organising mobilities in *education, public administration and defence* report the highest proportion of *high impact* assessments (47%). The impact on infrastructure is also relatively high in schools that organise mobilities in sectors such as *ICT and IT* (40%), which may reflect the rapid technological advancements in this field and the greater potential for schools to integrate new technologies and digital tools gained through international mobility experiences. In contrast, sectors such as *culture, arts, entertainment and recreation* show less pronounced infrastructural changes. These sectors exhibit the largest share of *low impact* assessments (54%), suggesting that participation in mobility programmes leads to fewer tangible improvements in infrastructure.



Figure 65.

Impact on changes in quality of school infrastructure by occupational field in which school organises mobilities

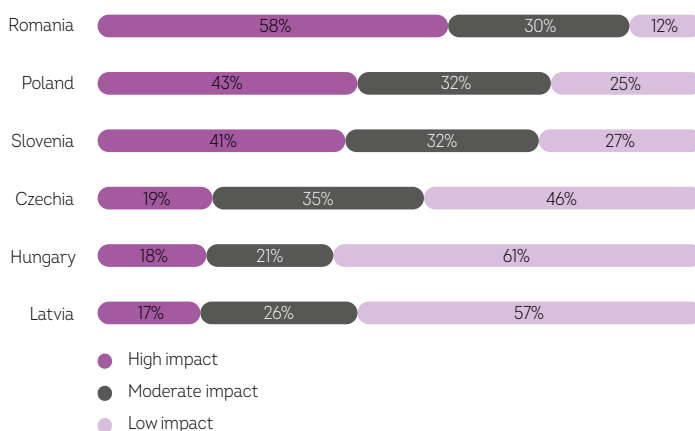


Source: own calculation N=884

The distribution of the composite indicator measuring the perceived impact of mobility on school infrastructure across the *low*, *moderate* and *high impact* categories reveals a pattern similar to that observed for other dimensions of mobility impact. Higher shares of *high impact* classifications are observed in Romania, Slovenia, and Poland, whereas in Latvia, Czechia, and Hungary the indicator is more strongly concentrated in the *low impact* category, indicating that mobility is more often perceived as having limited influence on changes in school infrastructure in these countries. The chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association between country and indicator classification ($\chi^2(10) = 137.41$, $p < .001$), with Cramér's V ($V = .279$) pointing to a moderately strong cross-country differentiation.

Figure 66.

Impact on changes in quality of school infrastructure by country



Source: own calculation N=883

As revealed through the interviews, teachers often return from mobility experiences abroad with fresh ideas about how to enrich their school's infrastructure, drawing directly from the solutions they observed in foreign schools or workplaces. These inspirations can range from modest technical upgrades to more complex spatial or equipment-related innovations. However, implementing such changes requires time, strategic planning, and financial resources. The scale and nature of these changes depend largely on the capacity and context of individual schools. The feasibility and impact of infrastructure improvements in vocational schools often depend heavily on the type of profession being taught. Certain fields, such as gastronomy, automotive engineering, or healthcare, require specialised, high-cost equipment and dedicated training spaces, making infrastructural upgrades more complex and resource-intensive. In contrast, vocational areas like administration or ICT may benefit from smaller-scale or flexible improvements, such as digital tools, modular furniture,

or multimedia equipment. Research indicates that professions with highly technical or safety-critical requirements face greater challenges in implementing infrastructural changes, as they demand strict standards, continuous maintenance, and often external funding or industry partnerships.

Based on the qualitative data collected, we can distinguish two main categories of infrastructure improvements:

Small-scale or symbolic improvements

Although modest in cost or scope, these upgrades can have a meaningful impact on teaching practices and student engagement. Examples identified particularly often in interviews from Poland and Czechia include: projectors and basic digital equipment (Poland), graphic tablets for photo editing (Czechia, inspired by Germany), interactive anatomy tools (Czechia, planned after mobilities to Slovakia), mobile hairdressing chairs (Czechia, inspired by training in Poland), flexible furniture enabling various teaching and learning setups (Slovenia).

Larger-scale or strategic infrastructure upgrades

These more substantial investments reflect a broader institutional commitment and often require external support. Examples include:

- Modern equipment for gastronomy training, such as baking pans, cauldrons, and vacuum sealers (Czechia, inspired by Italy)
- A custom-built platform for engine disassembly training (Czechia, modelled after a German partner school)
- Creation of a barista training workshop with a professional coffee machine (Poland)
- Project offices set up with enhanced digital equipment for teachers (Slovenia)
- "Erasmus corners" in schools: dedicated spaces for showcasing international cooperation and mobility opportunities (solutions that can be observed in schools in different countries)

Based on the mobility experience, we made spatial changes: we now have a classroom with flexible furniture, and one room has been turned into a project office with more digital equipment. (Slovenia)

Implementing these ideas also depends on funding and local governance. Across the countries studied, schools rely on different sources of funding for infrastructure upgrades. These typically include their own budgets, project funding (especially Erasmus+), and support from managing authorities, such as local government units (e.g., municipalities). Some interviewees

from Poland highlighted the possibility of collaboration with private companies, noting that businesses sometimes donate equipment or co-fund school workshops.

“Companies are very eager to help equip our workshops. The cooperation starts practically from the first day the student joins the school and continues as part of the Erasmus+ programme. (Poland_20)

While survey data suggest that the impact of mobility on infrastructure is rather moderate, qualitative findings show that international experience often triggers strategic thinking and action regarding infrastructure improvements. Even modest changes can notably enhance teaching quality, learner engagement, and the working conditions for teachers.

Chapter 7. Impact on school in local environment

Both qualitative and quantitative research results indicate that vocational schools participating in international mobility projects perceive these activities not only as a way to enhance the students' and teachers' skills and competences, but also as a strategic tool for strengthening their position within the local community. Schools that regularly organise international internships and placements regard these opportunities as valuable assets for boosting their prestige, as well as elements that differentiate them from other schools in the region. Mobility experiences become important factors not only in the student recruitment process but also in establishing and deepening cooperation with local employers and local government units.

This chapter explores how schools use mobility projects to build their brand and public image, what mechanisms contribute to increasing candidate interest in the schools' offer, how international experiences influence strengthening relationships with local businesses, and the role of local and regional authorities in this process.

7.1. Impact on school prestige in local environment

In the quantitative study, respondents were asked to answer the question: *To what extent do you agree that due to the learners' placements the school's prestige and positive image got increased in the town/region?* The question was measured on a five-point scale, where 1 = *not at all* and 5 = *completely*.

Overall, respondents evaluated this aspect positively. Nearly 90% stated that mobility increased the school's prestige and positive image in the town or region (combined share of responses *a lot* and *completely*), while only 3% reported no change or only a minor effect.



Figure 67.

Distribution of responses to the question "To what extent do you agree that due to the learners' placements the school's prestige and positive image got increased in the town/region?"



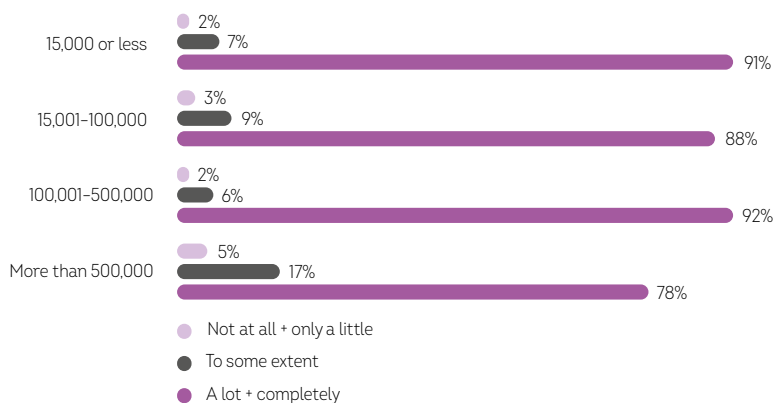
Source: own calculation N=884

Interestingly, in the largest cities (more than 500,000 inhabitants), the share of positive assessments of the impact of mobility on the school's reputation is the lowest. This share is even higher in smaller localities, exceeding largest cities by 13 percentage points (91%) in towns with 15,000 or less inhabitants and by 10 percentage points (88%) in towns with 15,001-100,000 inhabitants.



Figure 68.

Distribution of responses to the question "To what extent do you agree that due to the learners' placements the school's prestige and positive image got increased in the town/region?" by the size of town

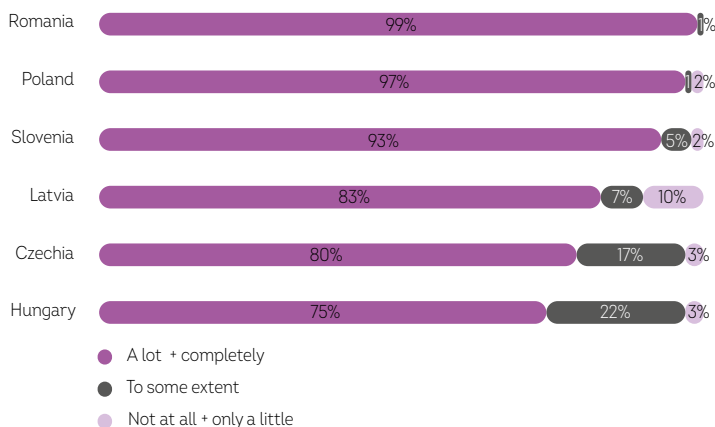


Source: own calculation N=884

Perceptions of mobility's impact on school reputation also vary by country. Respondents from Romania, Poland, and Slovenia reported the highest levels of strong impact, with 99%, 97%, and 93%, respectively, indicating that mobility increased the school's prestige and positive image *a lot or completely*. By contrast, the share of positive assessments was somewhat lower among respondents from Latvia (83%), Czechia (80%), and Hungary (75%).

Figure 69.

Distribution of responses to the question "To what extent do you agree that due to the learners' placements the school's prestige and positive image got increased in the town/region?" by country



Source: own calculation N=885

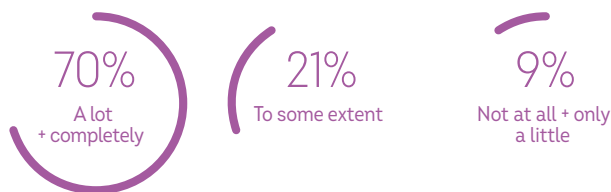
Raising the prestige of a school within the local community is particularly important for vocational schools, as it can directly contribute to greater interest from candidates during the recruitment process. Schools increasingly use the opportunity to participate in international mobility as a key promotional asset – informing prospective students that they will have the chance to take part in internships abroad during their studies. This increases the school's competitiveness compared to other educational institutions in the region.

The findings from quantitative study confirm the importance of this mechanism. In the survey, teachers and mobility coordinators were asked: *To what extent has learners' participation in mobility placements contributed to an increase in the number of candidates applying to the school?* Responses were given on a five-point scale, where 1 = *not at all* and 5 = *completely*.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents (70%) indicated that mobility either *a lot or completely* increased the number of candidates applying to the school, while 10% believed that mobility had little or no impact on this aspect.

Figure 70.

Distribution of responses to the question "To what extent has learners' participation in mobility placements contributed to an increase in the number of candidates applying to the school?"

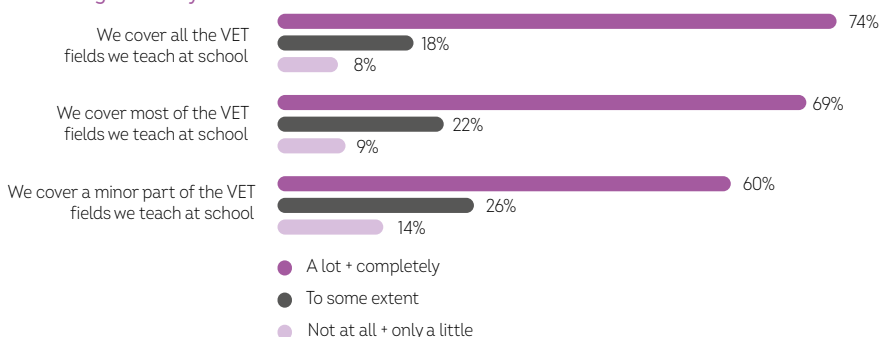


Source: own calculation N=884

Interestingly, the study indicates that a high scale of international mobility in schools – in the form of placements covering all VET fields – contributes to an increase in the number of candidates applying to the school. In schools where mobility covers all VET fields, as many as 74% of respondents confirmed that mobility *a lot* or *completely* contributed to a rise in applicants. This share decreases slightly to 69% in schools covering most VET fields, and drops more substantially, by 14 percentage points, in schools where mobility covers only a minor part of the VET fields. This suggests that the more comprehensive and wide-ranging the school's involvement in mobility programmes across different VET areas, the greater the positive effect on the school's attractiveness to potential candidates. The chi-square tests indicate a statistically significant but weak association between the two variables, with a value of $\chi^2=9.627$ ($p = .047$).

Figure 71.

Distribution of responses to the question "To what extent has learners' participation in mobility placements contributed to an increase in the number of candidates applying to the school?" by the scale of mobilities organised by school



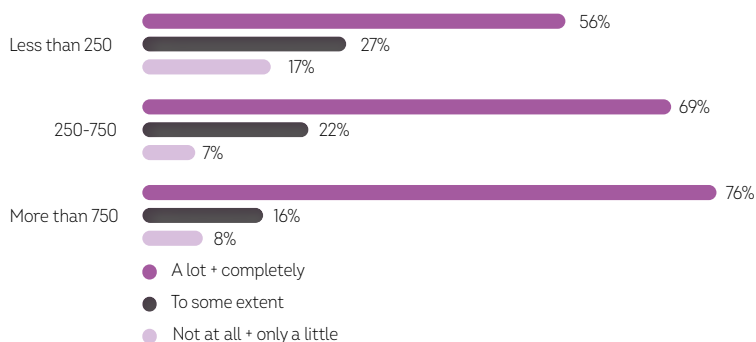
Source: own calculation N=884

Differences are also visible when considering school size. The larger the school, the stronger the perceived positive effect of mobility on the number of applicants. In schools with more than 750 students, 76% of respondents agreed *a lot* or *completely* that placements contributed to an increase in applicants. In medium-sized schools (250–750 students), the share of positive assessments drops by 6 percentage points to 69%, while in the smallest schools (less than 250 students) it falls by as much as 20 percentage points, reaching 56%. The findings indicate a statistically significant association between school size and the perceived impact of mobility on the number of applicants ($\chi^2(4) = 20.51, p < .001$), however, the strength of this association is weak, as indicated by Cramér's V ($V = .108$).



Figure 72.

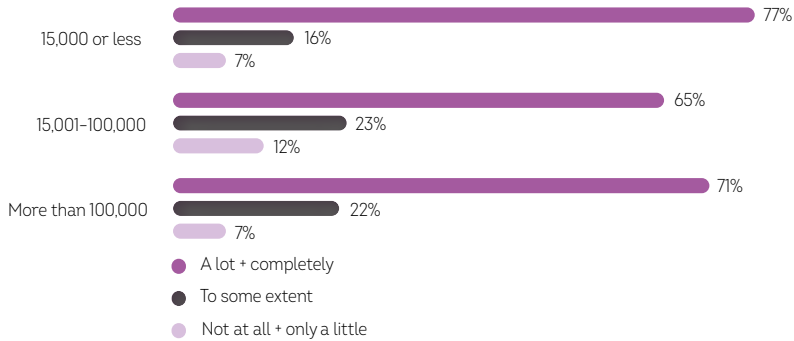
Distribution of responses to the question “To what extent has learners’ participation in mobility placements contributed to an increase in the number of candidates applying to the school?” by the size of school



Source: own calculation N=884

Interesting patterns are also observed when considering the size of the town or city where the school is located. The distribution of responses shows that schools located in smaller towns (15,000 inhabitants or less) report the highest percentage (77%) of respondents indicating that mobility programmes have *a lot* or *completely* increased the number of candidates applying. Differences observed in medium-sized towns (15,001 to 100,000 inhabitants) and larger cities (more than 100,000 inhabitants) are less pronounced, suggesting that the perceived recruitment effect of mobility is strongest in smaller local contexts. The chi-square test indicates a statistically significant but very weak association between the size of the locality and the perceived impact of mobility ($\chi^2(4) = 12.94, p = .012$; Cramér's V = .086), with no evidence of a linear trend across locality size categories.

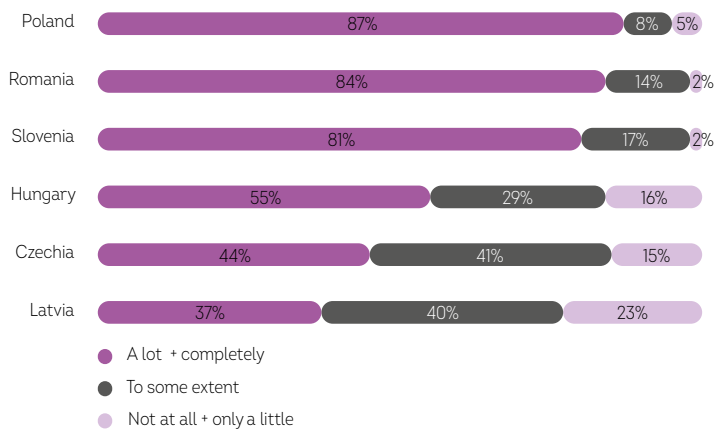
Figure 73.
Distribution of responses to the question "To what extent has learners' participation in mobility placements contributed to an increase in the number of candidates applying to the school?" by the size of town



Source: own calculation N=884

There are also much larger differences between countries in this regard. For example, the vast majority of respondents in Poland (87%) and Romania (84%) believe that mobility programmes *a lot* or *completely* increase the number of candidates. In Slovenia, this figure is slightly lower at 81%. However, in Hungary (55%), Czechia (44%), and Latvia (37%), notably fewer respondents share this view, with a higher proportion indicating only some or little impact.

Figure 74.
Distribution of responses to the question "To what extent has learners' participation in mobility placements contributed to an increase in the number of candidates applying to the school?" by the size of town by country



Source: own calculation N=884

Bivariate analyses reveal interesting patterns that may at first appear contradictory. The greater the range of international mobility opportunities offered by a school, the stronger its impact on attracting students, as the more students participate in these programmes, the more visible and resonant their benefits are within the local community, enhancing the school's appeal. This effect is most pronounced in larger schools, which, may be less able to offer mobility programmes across all vocational fields taught but can fully leverage the potential of the programmes they do provide thanks to better organisational resources. At the same time, schools located in smaller towns exhibit a particularly strong effect in attracting students, as mobility programmes serve as a distinctive feature in contexts of limited local competition, relatively increasing their attractiveness and drawing students from outside the town. In this way, mobility programmes serve both to enhance educational potential and as a tool for levelling opportunities, at least in peripheral regions.

Conclusions from in-depth individual interviews with school representatives indicate that across all participating countries, representatives of schools with extensive experience in mobility projects recognise that these initiatives are not only valuable experience for students and accompanying teachers but also serve as an effective marketing tool. Schools use mobility programmes to recruit new students and enhance their professional image within the local community. Promoting the outcomes of mobility projects, especially in primary schools, is an important part of their recruitment offer. Participation in mobility programmes increases the attractiveness of a school in the eyes of prospective students, which, according to respondents, has a real impact on the number of applicants.



It is a very important element for us, the one that works most effectively for us: promotion. Thanks to this, we are the largest school in the [district/region]. For years, we have barely had enough space in the school because there is very high interest. (Poland_1)

The statements of study participants help to further explain the patterns observed in the quantitative analyses: mobility programmes and international exchanges appear to have a particularly strong impact on schools located in smaller towns. These programmes contribute to enhancing the schools' prestige and attracting more applicants. In such contexts, mobility initiatives serve not only an educational function but also a strategic role in maintaining the schools' position within the local education system.

” They would have closed our school [without Erasmus+] because there wouldn’t have been enough applicants. A similar school in [location] was closed due to costs and other reasons, but our school hasn’t been closed because there is high interest during secondary school recruitment. (Poland_3)

” Thanks to such internships and trips, these district schools – schools located about 20 kilometres from [location] – substantially increase their prestige – and the perceived quality of their teaching. (Poland_5)

In the interviews conducted in Hungary, participants repeatedly referred to socioeconomic disparities between the capital city, larger rural towns, and small villages. Although Erasmus+ is primarily designed to support the development of professional competences, this objective is not always clearly perceived by the public. Many students and parents – particularly those from low-income or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds in smaller settlements – see these projects mainly as rare opportunities for international travel. For many, Erasmus+ mobility represents their only chance to go abroad.

” [without Erasmus+] We could only do the internship locally, which would be very sad. The majority of pupils are coming from disadvantaged communities who are themselves disadvantaged, too. Well, as you said, there are those who have not even set foot outside [location]. (Hungary_10)

In contrast, for families with higher socioeconomic status, such opportunities may be less appealing, as their children often have more access to travel independently. Interviewed coordinators highlighted the stark differences between schools operating in rural or disadvantaged areas and those in more central or urban settings. In less popular schools, or in those with weaker foreign language instruction, mobility projects can noticeably boost student interest and applications.

In Latvia, an institution’s participation in the Erasmus+ programme impacts its national and international visibility and, consequently, young people’s willingness to study there. Educational institution representatives acknowledge that their participation in the Erasmus+ enhances their visibility both on a national and international scale. This, in turn, impacts the inclination of the younger generation to pursue their studies in these schools. To emphasise this, schools highlight their provision of Erasmus+ mobility when engaging with prospective students. For example, one of the schools conducts a survey to gather insights on how students heard about

the school and what factors influenced their decision to apply, showcasing the influence of Erasmus+ in their decision-making process.

In Slovenia, the Erasmus+ programme greatly adds value to the school's activities, enabling individuals or groups to experience schooling, working, and living abroad for a shorter or longer period. The Erasmus+ equips individuals or groups with the opportunity to learn, work, and live in a foreign country for varying durations. During school open days, the participation of the school in the Erasmus+ often arises as a frequently asked question. A positive response unquestionably enhances the appeal and standing of the institution.

Foreign internships and placements attract young people to such institutions for several reasons. First, interviewees indicate that involvement in mobility programmes enhances a school's prestige by presenting it as a modern, open, and pro-European institution. Young people value international exposure, and the experience gained abroad is seen as important capital that increases competitiveness in the labour market and further education. This message resonates with students, parents, and employers alike. Some respondents also emphasised that Erasmus+ contributes to raising awareness of European values, which helps foster a more positive attitude towards European Union within local communities.



It does raise some awareness that the EU isn't such pure evil, for example. And there are people who, later on, became interested in other projects and, more broadly, in topics related to Poland's membership in the European Union. (Poland_23)

Second, schools that organise mobilities are perceived as offering better teaching quality, with students achieving higher results and gaining access to more attractive educational opportunities. This is particularly relevant in the context of vocational education, where well-organised foreign placements positively influence students' performance in vocational exams.

Schools promote their educational offer by highlighting mobility in various ways: through their websites, social media, and traditional media (especially local outlets), by organising meetings and open days for primary school students, through conferences for teachers, and by hosting Erasmus Days, informational events, and presentations that raise local community interest and support recruitment efforts.

Informal communication channels also play an important role. Word-of-mouth – information shared among siblings, friends, and peers – is often very effective in promoting mobility opportunities within the local environment.

SS *Because this leads to more students coming later. Their siblings come, their friends, acquaintances, even students from other towns further away.*
(Poland_1)

7.2. Impact of VET placements on school cooperation with local authorities

In most of the countries studied, local governments play a key role as the governing bodies of vocational schools. In Hungary, however, VET schools are overseen by the Ministry of Culture and Innovation, directly under the Vocational Centres. Local governments are responsible for financing the institutions, managing their operations, and maintaining the infrastructure necessary for vocational education. This gives local authorities influence over shaping the educational offer, cooperating with the local labour market, and organising internships and vocational training. In Poland, Czechia, Latvia, and Romania, regional or local governments serve as the main entities supervising and supporting the functioning of upper secondary vocational schools, which forms the foundation of an effective vocational education system that is responsive to labour market needs. In this context, organising mobility activities, which enhances the school's prestige, primarily serves to strengthen its visibility, attractiveness to students, and positioning within the educational system, rather than fostering cooperation with local authorities.

In the quantitative study, respondents were asked: *To what extent the organisation of international internships and placements by schools has positively influenced the attention paid by local authorities to the schools' internationalisation activities?* Responses were provided on a five-point scale, where 1 = *not at all* and 5 = *completely*.

Slightly over half of the respondents, those who selected *a lot* or *completely*, believe that these activities have a positive impact on increasing local authorities' attention to the schools' internationalisation efforts, while an additional 22% indicated that the impact exists *to some extent*.

Figure 75.

Distribution of responses to the question "To what extent the organisation of international internships and placements by schools has positively influenced the attention paid by local authorities to the schools' internationalisation activities?"

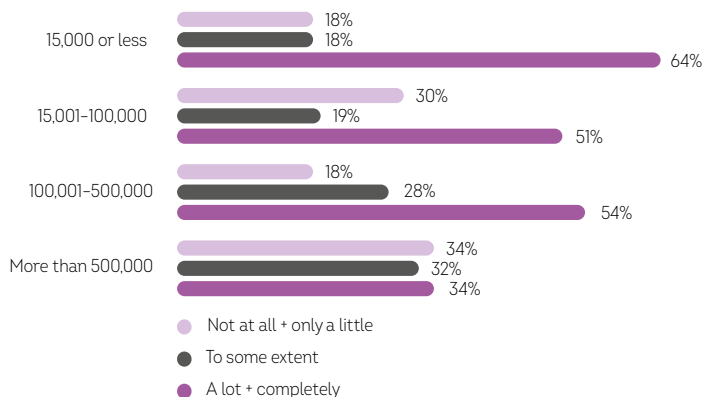


Source: own calculation N=884

In this case, opinions vary considerably depending on the school's location. The smaller the locality, the stronger the perceived influence of mobility on cooperation with local government. As many as 64% of respondents from schools located in towns with 15,000 inhabitants or less agree either *a lot* or *completely* that international placements have positively influenced the attention paid by local authorities to the schools' internationalisation activities. The share of positive responses decreases in larger cities: in towns with 100,001-500,000 inhabitants, it is 34%, 30 percentage points lower than in small towns. At the same time, the same percentage (34%) of respondents from schools in these larger cities believe that mobility programmes have no positive influence on the attention paid by local authorities to the schools' internationalisation activities, or that this influence is small. A chi-square test of independence indicates statistically significant differences in how local authorities respond to schools' internationalisation activities depending on municipality size ($\chi^2 = 38.54$; $p < .001$) with a small effect size (Cramér's $V = .148$).

Figure 76.

Distribution of responses regarding the extent to which local authorities pay more attention to schools' internationalisation activities as a result of learners' participation in mobility placements by the size of town where school is located



Source: own calculation N=884

Qualitative findings indicate that in smaller communities, school initiatives are more visible and can play a greater role in shaping relationships with local authorities. In contrast, in large cities, internationalisation is one of many educational efforts, and it may be harder for schools to attract direct attention or recognition from the local government. School representatives from various countries consistently emphasised that international engagement often translates into increased recognition and visibility – particularly from local communities and authorities. In some cases, this attention results in symbolic gestures, such as public acknowledgements or certificates, and even tangible support, such as additional funding.

This pattern was especially evident among interviewees from Poland, where a relatively dense network of vocational schools exists in smaller towns as well. Respondents from such schools noted that Erasmus+ activities often attract the interest of local officials – sometimes resulting in school visits, formal recognition, or greater institutional support. In one case, a school reported receiving a certificate from a local priest.



They kind of have to, because if there's a trip planned well in advance, then after it takes place, we organise presentations, certificates are handed out, and local authorities are invited to all school ceremonies. And of course, this echoes through our community because the mayor comes, the priest, since we are a Catholic parish, and also members of the municipal council. We show them the certificates, photos, and so on. (Poland_W14)

Interest in the Erasmus+ seems more prevalent in smaller towns, where interviewees tend to report more engagement with local authorities. In contrast, larger urban areas are often described as showing less initiative or interest, with municipal institutions perceived as relatively disengaged.

“As for the local authorities themselves, I notice that the school is treated differently because we carry out these projects and secure funding. They see the school as ambitious and are more willing to support our initiatives financially. We are regarded as leaders. (Poland_W22)

A representative from Latvia highlighted that the schools' reputation as an international institution benefits the municipality's image, even if cooperation can be administratively demanding.

“Our primary partner is the municipality and all its affiliated institutions. They view our partnership positively because it enhances their prestige. Our school positions itself as an international institution since we foster a collaborative environment where teachers and students exchange knowledge. However, there is also some jealousy, as we are required to report to the council for every new project and budget, necessitating coordination with various commissions, committees, and meetings. This additional workload impacts the council and their accountants. Despite these challenges, our school's involvement in Erasmus opportunities helps us attract students. (Latvia_2)

On the contrary, findings from Hungary show that, while municipal engagement is generally limited – likely because local authorities have no legal ties to VET schools – Erasmus+ still contributes to the public image and competitive standing of schools within the local educational landscape.

These perspectives reinforce the quantitative findings showing that schools in smaller municipalities are more likely to observe increased attention from local authorities. They also suggest that Erasmus+ enhances schools' visibility not only among students and parents but also within local governance structures, potentially laying the groundwork for stronger future partnerships. The question of whether increased interest from local authorities translates into tangible benefits for schools engaged in Erasmus+ activities is both relevant and justified. However, qualitative evidence does not conclusively demonstrate a systematic or consistent

link between heightened visibility and concrete institutional support. While Erasmus+ often enhance the reputation of vocational schools within their local communities, the resulting interest from local authorities is typically symbolic or promotional rather than financial or structural. Schools are sometimes showcased in local media, supported during public events, or recognised by municipal officials.



When we complete a project or a part of it, though most often it's after the entire project is finished, we typically organise a cultural event, something like a "Spanish Experience Day". We invite the entire local community: representatives from the county office, the city hall, other schools, parents, students, and so on. (Poland_9)

For instance, in Latvia, one school reported being seen by the municipality as a prestigious partner, helping to elevate the city's image. At the same time, this visibility comes with increased administrative demands, such as the need to coordinate every new project with municipal committees. In Hungary, only a small number of schools reported deeper cooperation with local authorities; for the majority, the benefit lies more in improved visibility and attractiveness than in direct support. Thus, while Erasmus+ mobility does not automatically lead to increased funding or structured collaboration, the prestige gained can lay the groundwork for more strategic and mutually beneficial relationships with local authorities in the future.

7.3. Impact of VET placements on school cooperation with local enterprises

In vocational education and training, collaboration with local employers is of fundamental importance. As emphasised in previous chapters, work-based learning is a core element of initial vocational education and training, ensuring that students acquire practical skills relevant to the labour market. Effective cooperation with companies enables schools to provide apprenticeships, internships, and on-the-job training opportunities that are closely aligned with occupational standards. In countries where the share of WBL participants is high – such as Latvia and Hungary – this collaboration is often well established. In other countries, where participation remains lower, strengthening partnerships between schools and employers is seen as a necessary step towards improving the relevance and effectiveness of VET. In this context, international mobility projects may serve as a catalyst for enhancing cooperation between schools and local businesses, either by raising the profile of the institution, improving the quality of training, or fostering new expectations regarding international standards and practices.

In the quantitative study, impact of mobilities on cooperation between schools and local enterprises was measured using two indicators. First, respondents (teachers and school

mobility coordinators) were asked: *How did the learners' placements impact school daily practices? To what extent do you agree that the cooperation with local enterprises got increased?* Second, the extent to which mobility projects are implemented with the involvement of local enterprises was assessed (*To what extent do you agree that the local enterprises are more involved in the mobility implementation?*). The responses were given on a five-point scale, where 1 meant *not at all* and 5 meant *completely*.

More than half of the respondents agreed with the first statement (i.e. selected *a lot* or *completely*), indicating that mobility activities have increased cooperation with local enterprises. Additionally, 27% of respondents felt that cooperation had increased *to some extent*. A minority (21%) reported little or no increase in cooperation.



Figure 77.

Distribution of responses to the question "How did the learners' placements impact your school daily practices? To what extent do you agree that the cooperation with local enterprises got increased?"

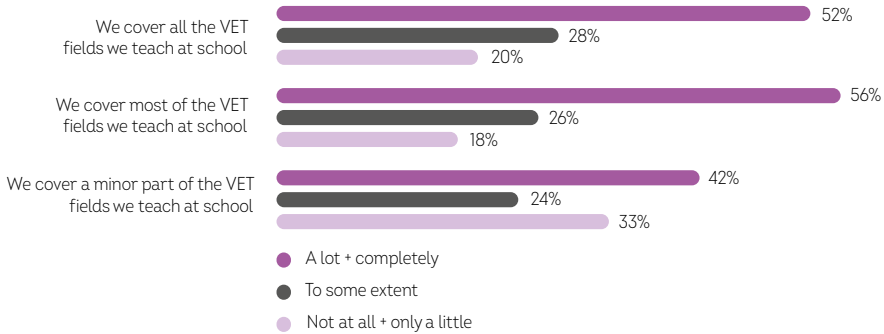


Source: own calculation N=884

The impact of mobility on cooperation with local enterprises appears to vary depending on the scale of mobility implementation within schools. Specifically, the perceived role of mobility as a catalyst for strengthening cooperation increases with the breadth of VET fields covered by mobility activities. Schools that organise mobility only in a minor part of the VET fields taught stand out with clearly lower assessments. In this group, only 43% of respondents indicated that mobility has increased cooperation with local enterprises *a lot* or *completely*. This share rises markedly in schools implementing mobility on a broader scale: 56% among institutions covering most VET fields and 52% among those including all VET fields in their mobility projects. The observed association between variables is statistically significant (Pearson's chi-square $\chi^2 = 14.088$; $p = .007$).

Figure 78.

Distribution of responses to the question "How did the learners' placements impact your school daily practices? To what extent do you agree that the cooperation with local enterprises got increased?" by the scale of mobilities

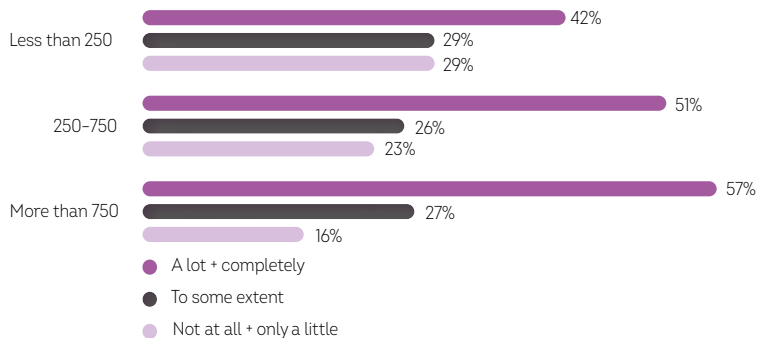


Source: own calculation N=884

School size also plays a role in how the impact of mobility on cooperation with local enterprises is perceived. Respondents from larger schools (more than 750 students) were more likely to agree that mobility had a strong positive effect on such cooperation: 57% selected *a lot or completely*. In contrast, in smaller schools (less than 250 students), this share was lower by 15 percentage points. Moreover, respondents from smaller schools were more likely to report little or no impact of mobility on cooperation: 29% selected *not at all or only a little*. This association between school size and the perceived impact of mobility on cooperation with local enterprises is statistically significant (Pearson's chi-square $\chi^2 = 12.515$; $p = .014$).

Figure 79.

Distribution of responses regarding the extent to which the learners' placements have a positive impact on increasing the cooperation with local enterprises by the size of school



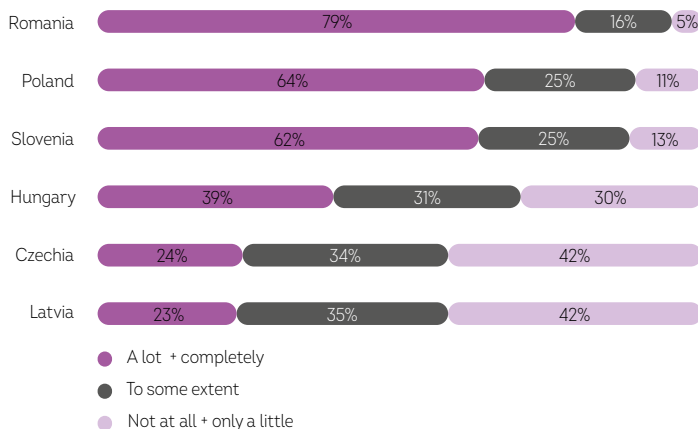
Source: own calculation N=884

There is considerable variation between countries in how the increase in cooperation with local enterprises is perceived. The most positive assessments were reported in Romania, where nearly four-fifths of respondents stated that mobility increased cooperation *a lot* or *completely*. Poland and Slovenia also displayed relatively high levels of perceived impact, with around two-thirds of respondents selecting the most positive responses. By contrast, respondents in Czechia, Latvia, and Hungary expressed more cautious views. In Czechia and Latvia, less than one quarter of respondents perceived mobility as having a strong positive effect on cooperation with local enterprises. A chi-square test of independence revealed a statistically significant association between the analysed variables ($\chi^2(10) = 152.59$; $p < .001$), with a moderate effect size as indicated by Cramér's $V (.294)$



Figure 80.

Distribution of responses regarding the extent to which the learners' placements have a positive impact on increasing the cooperation with local enterprises by country



Source: own calculation $N=884$

In the study, the extent to which local enterprises are involved in the organisation of international mobilities, as well as the nature of cooperation between schools and enterprises in this regard, was examined. In the online survey, respondents were asked: *To what extent do you agree that mobilities positively impact the involvement of local enterprises in the mobility implementation?* Answers were given on a five-point scale, where 1 meant *not at all* and 5 meant *completely*.

Just over one third of respondents (38%) strongly agreed (*a lot* or *completely*) with this statement. On the contrary, almost the same share stated that mobilities have no positive impact (*not at all*) or that their impact on the involvement of local enterprises is very limited (*only a little*).

**Figure 81.**

Distribution of responses regarding the extent to which the learners' placements have a positive impact on engagement of the local enterprises in the mobility implementation

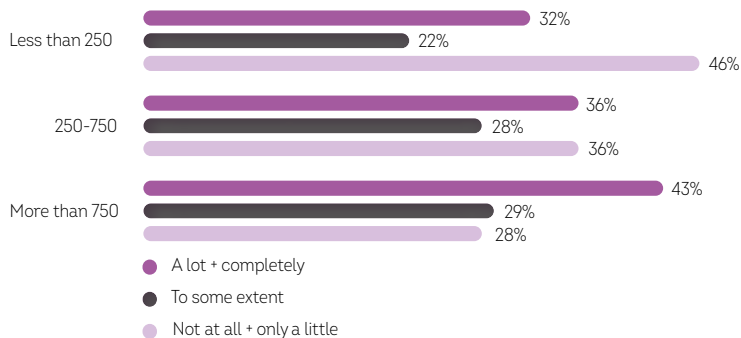


Source: own calculation N=880

There are differences noticeable depending on the size of the school. In the largest schools (more than 750 students), as many as 43% of respondents agree that mobilities *a lot* or *completely* contribute to greater engagement of local entrepreneurs in organising internships and practical training abroad. In medium-sized schools (250–750 students), this percentage is 36%, while in the smallest schools (less than 250 students) it is 4 percentage points lower (32%). Conversely, nearly half of the respondents from the smallest institutions (46%) indicate that mobilities have a little or no impact on increasing the involvement of local businesses. In medium-sized schools, this percentage is 36%, and it is the lowest in the largest schools (28%). Statistical analysis using the Pearson chi-square test ($\chi^2(4) = 13.395$, $p = .009$) confirms that these differences are statistically significant.

**Figure 82.**

Distribution of responses regarding the extent to which the learners' placements have a positive impact on engagement of the local enterprises in the mobility implementation by the size of school



Source: own calculation N=880

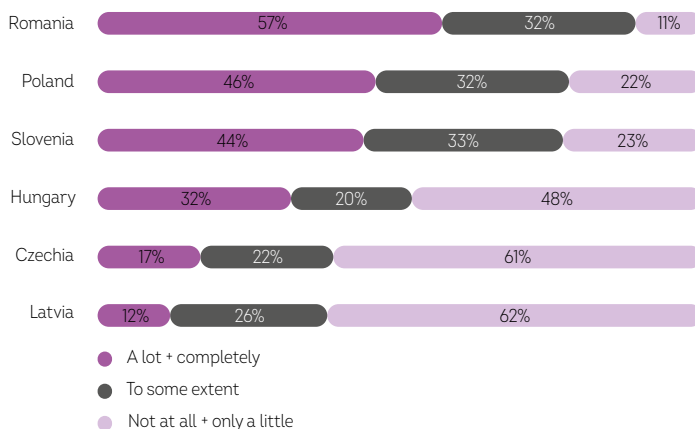
These findings suggest that in larger schools, mobilities indeed foster more active collaboration with local enterprises in the implementation of international internships and placements, which may be due to better resources and more extensive networks.

Analysing responses by country reveals statistically significant differences in how the positive impact of learners' placements on increasing the involvement of local enterprises in mobility implementation is perceived (Pearson's chi-square test: $\chi^2(10) = 152.59$; $p < .001$). The most favourable assessments are observed in Romania, where 57% of respondents indicate that mobilities have a positive impact on local business engagement, followed by Poland (46%) and Slovenia (44%). By contrast, respondents in Hungary, Czechia, and Latvia express much more cautious views. In these countries, only a minority agree *a lot* or *completely* that learners' placements contribute positively to increasing enterprise involvement, with particularly low levels observed in Czechia (17%) and Latvia (12%). At the same time, a substantially higher share of respondents report little or no impact of mobilities on local enterprise engagement, exceeding 60% in both Czechia and Latvia.



Figure 83.

Distribution of responses regarding the extent to which the learners' placements have a positive impact on engagement the local enterprises in the mobility implementation by country



Source: own calculation N=880

The analysis of interviews conducted with school representatives indicates that, while schools make efforts to inform local employers about students' participation in mobility projects and to disseminate this information to promote the school, actual collaboration with employers in the design, implementation, or direct participation in mobilities is largely absent. In most cases, the engagement of businesses in the mobility process remains very limited. Employers

are rarely involved in the operational aspects of international mobility – they typically do not take part in the planning, logistics, or coordination of placements. Nevertheless, in some cases, companies that had previously been engaged in internships and apprenticeships become involved in the recruitment process for mobility projects. Schools seek the opinions of company representatives regarding students, and enterprises sometimes support those who have previously completed internships in their organisations by preparing reference letters. This enables schools to select candidates for international mobility who have already received positive evaluations from local businesses.

” As for employers, they also see this as a great opportunity. We even sometimes encounter situations where employers write letters of intent for students who are applying to go abroad, in order to support them in the recruitment process, to state that they perform very well during their internships and that they will surely manage wherever we are currently sending them. Employers like this and they also value foreign experience. (Poland_11)

Across all countries, especially in Poland, Slovenia, and Czechia, in interviewees opinions employers view mobility participants as more valuable employees, who are independent, open-minded, professionally oriented, and possess foreign language skills.

” There is no doubt that the labour market in Silesia is definitely interested in such students. Relatively recently, maybe about six months ago, I spoke with several people employed in large stores, and contrary to expectations, even though it is an employee’s market, it is not so easy for students to get into higher-end stores, so to speak. It is easier for those from technical schools, but not so easy for vocational school graduates. They said that the documents and certificates these students provide really matter because they can see who is considered during recruitment. (Poland_13)

In some cases, schools do invite local business partners to join mobility activities abroad. In Hungary, for example, two local partners accompanied students on a trip to Turkey, supporting the mobility programme and providing additional incentives for students, such as seasonal tickets to local attractions. Nevertheless, these examples are exceptional.



We cooperate with local business partners to foster relationships to Turkey, for example, I will take two local business partners. They support our mobility programmes very much. The local government does not really interfere into our activities. The thermal bath in [location] usually gives season tickets to our students. (Hungary_11)

In general, interviewees underline the lack of real engagement from employers in mobility projects. While businesses acknowledge that students participate in international internships, they rarely become actively involved in supporting or co-creating such initiatives. Their primary focus remains on ensuring that students gain practical experience locally and are available as potential future employees.



As for employers, there is little interest. I think these are isolated cases. They focus more on ensuring that the student gains practical experience with them... they are interested in the student staying with them rather than going abroad. They may encourage the student to work in their office or company, and they put emphasis on the same student coming back again so that they can teach them as much as possible and later employ them as a graduate. This has changed over the past few years, because in the beginning, I think it wasn't like that. (Poland_16)

Employers recognise the value of such trips in terms of students' competencies, and that is an added value for them.



Of course, employers also know that our students go abroad. They often ask where you did your internship and what skills you gained, especially in fields that operate here in [location] – like gastronomy or mechanics. Local authorities, meaning the governing bodies, are supportive, and we can always count on them. (Poland_1)

Moreover, qualitative evidence from Poland and Slovenia provides illustrative examples of an interesting dynamic, in which local companies report learning from international trainees. Host organisations appreciate the new perspectives, ideas, and practices that foreign interns bring, even when their professional experience is limited. This highlights the potential of mobility projects as a tool for mutual knowledge transfer rather than a one-directional learning process.

Although many interviewees expressed positive views, some, particularly in Czechia, Hungary, and Latvia, voiced concerns about mobility. In sectors already facing national labour shortages, such as healthcare and engineering, mobility can be seen as a risk, as it may encourage young people to emigrate and worsen local staffing problems. According to interviewees, some employers worry about the temporary absence of trainees or employees during mobility periods. In Czechia, interviewees noted that foreign placements in the healthcare sector are sometimes met with hostility, as schools may be perceived as contributing to the outflow of qualified professionals.

” Our key partner is [regional hospital] and [seven local hospitals] and they know that we are involved in the Erasmus programme and I am quite cautious about mentioning it there, because then everyone will say, “you’re sending them abroad and then they go to work in Germany”, it has two sides instead of saying, “that’s great, they have a foreign experience”, I have to defend myself. (Czechia_9)

Chapter 8. Systemic changes

International internships and vocational placements can play an important role not only in enhancing the competences and skills of participants but also in inspiring system-level changes. The experiences gained through international exchanges create opportunities to reflect on the functioning of national vocational education and training systems and can contribute to the development of more flexible learning pathways and solutions that support the recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad.

In this chapter, the extent to which mobility is perceived by the surveyed schools’ representatives as having an impact on systemic changes, both at the local level (within schools and educational institutions) and at the national level, is examined. Particular attention is given to two issues that appear crucial for strengthening the organisation of mobility:

- **Facilitating the implementation of flexible learning pathways in vocational education** by developing mechanisms that allow schools to recognise the completion of international internships and placements by both students and teachers.
- **Introducing systemic solutions at the national level** (including legislative measures) that enable the formal recognition of achievements, skills, and competences gained through mobility.

The practices and solutions adopted in selected European countries in relation to mobility, particularly those supporting the implementation of flexible educational pathways and the recognition of learning outcomes, will also be explored, and consideration will be given to how these experiences might inform national reforms.

8.1 Perceived changes in vocational education and training at the local/regional level

In a quantitative survey respondents were asked: *To what extent do you agree that the organisation of international internships and work placements had contributed to systemic changes at the local and regional levels?* The impact of mobility activities was examined across four distinct areas: local government institutions, the enterprise sector, the organisation of vocational education, and practical training. Responses to each statement were provided on a five-point scale, where 1 indicated *not at all* and 5 indicated *completely*.

Overall, respondents relatively rarely perceived a strong impact of mobility activities on systemic changes at these levels, with most effects seen as limited or moderate. The analysis shows that the most commonly perceived positive impact was in the area of changes in practical training. In this regard, 27% of respondents agreed either *a lot* or *completely* that mobilities had a positive effect, while an additional 32% recognised such an impact *to some extent*. At the same time, however, 18% of respondents saw no impact at all, and 23% considered the effect to be only minimal.

Responses regarding the organisation of vocational education at the local and regional level followed a similar pattern. A total of 25% of respondents agreed either *a lot* or *completely* that mobilities had an influence in this area, while 30% acknowledged some impact *to some extent*. However, almost nearly half of respondents (45%) indicate that mobilities had little or no positive impact. The perceived impact on the enterprise sector and local government institutions was moderate. In the case of changes in the local enterprise sector, 33% of respondents agree that changes are visible *to some extent*, while 22% agree *a lot* or *completely* that mobilities have a positive impact. Still, nearly half (45%) reported either no or *only a little* positive impact.

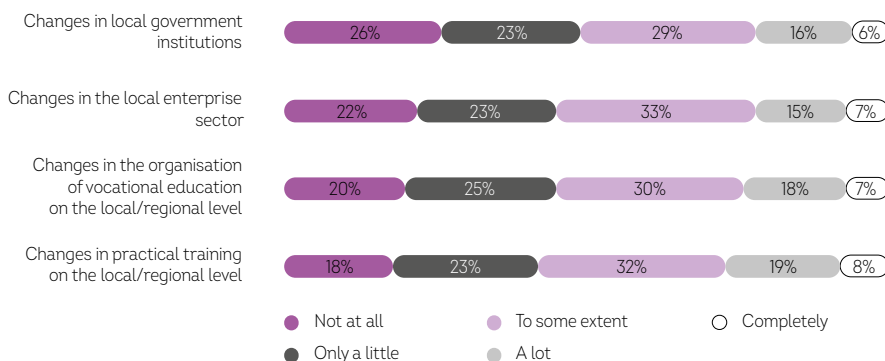
A similar pattern emerges regarding changes in local government institutions. Nearly half of the respondents (49%) did not perceive any noticeable change (answering *not at all* or *only a little*). Only 16% agreed *a lot* that mobilities had a positive impact on changes in local government institutions, while 6% answered *completely*.

It is also important to note that some respondents did not select any answer for certain areas. Although these cases did not constitute the majority, they may indicate difficulties in assessing the impact of mobility, a lack of access to relevant information, or limited visibility of systemic effects.



Figure 84.

Distribution of responses on the perceived positive impact of learners' placements on changes on different areas on the local/regional level



Source: own calculation N=859

In summary, the organisation of international internships and placements under the Erasmus+ programme is most often associated with an impact on practical training and the organisation of vocational education at the local and regional levels. However, the data reveals a varied perception of the strength and scope of this impact, and a significant proportion of responses point to a limited or absent influence, especially concerning cooperation with local government institutions and enterprises. An additional challenge in analysing the data is the presence of unanswered items, which may reflect uncertainty among respondents or the complex nature of systemic effects of mobility at the local level.

8.2 Perceived systemic changes on national level

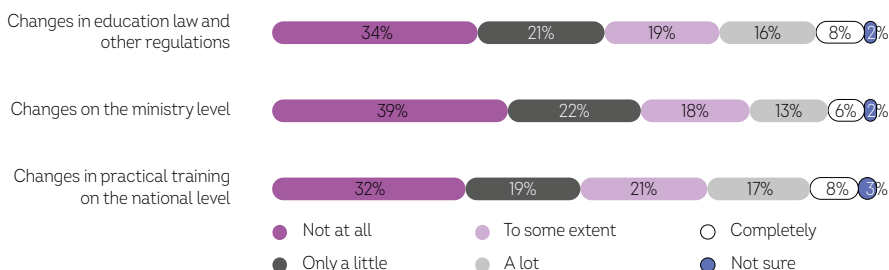
The survey explored the changes perceived at the national level as a result of organised practical internships and placements. Respondents were asked: *What was the broader impact of the placements on other institutions involved in shaping the VET education system?* They were asked to what extent they agreed that the placements had a positive impact on: changes in education law and other regulations, changes at the ministry level, and changes in practical training at the national level. Responses were given on a five-point scale, where 1 meant *not at all* and 5 meant *completely*.

The findings suggest that, in the eyes of the majority of respondents, Erasmus+ programmes have so far not been able to bring about any noticeable change in the legal or institutional framework of VET at the macro level. Specifically, over one-third of respondents did not perceive any impact of the placements either on changes regarding education law and other regulations or on practical vocational training at the national level, while around 20% reported that the impact was minimal (21% and 19%, respectively). An even higher proportion of respondents (39%) saw no impact of mobility programmes on changes at the ministerial level, with 22% indicating that changes were only minor. In contrast, a smaller share, around 25%, perceived *high impact* (either *a lot* or *completely*) on changes in these three areas. Additionally, a noticeable amount of missing data suggests that questions about such abstract and systemic changes were difficult for respondents to assess definitively.



Figure 85.

Distribution of responses on the perceived positive impact of learners' placements on changes on different areas on national level



Source: own calculation N=752

Qualitative interviews conducted with Erasmus+ coordinators, teachers, and stakeholders indicate that the impact of Erasmus+ mobility on macro-level systemic changes is perceived as limited and indirect. Interviewees from all countries agree that schools' mobility experiences do not have a direct influence on legal or institutional frameworks. The programme's effect at the system level is often mediated through knowledge, experience, and intellectual outputs generated by projects, particularly in KA2 projects, such as the development of professional modules or curriculum innovations. Schools emphasise that national institutions play an important role in shaping the system, and the broader impact of Erasmus+ depends on these institutions' willingness to incorporate lessons learned from mobility experiences.

Interviewees identified potential areas in which Erasmus+ could influence the national education system.

- **Modernisation of the education system:** experiences gained in foreign education systems showcase modern teaching practices, curricula, and student assessment methods, which can inspire reforms in the national vocational education system.
- **Flexibility and adaptability:** mobility supports the development of adaptive skills among students and teachers, which are increasingly valued in the labour market.
- **International cooperation:** Erasmus+ strengthens schools' participation in international projects, enhancing the global dimension of the national education system.
- **Teachers' professional development:** international mobility allows teachers to acquire new skills and enhance their qualifications, positively affecting teaching quality.

Despite these potential benefits, interviewees consistently emphasise that the influence of Erasmus+ on legislation and broader system functioning is uncertain and long-term. Many noted the lack of direct contact with decision-makers and the limited openness of national institutions to information derived from school mobility experiences. In Hungary, for example, local authorities have no legal ties to VET schools, which limits the programme's systemic impact. Interviewees from other countries also expressed scepticism about the extent to which experiences gained through Erasmus+ could be integrated into the national education system.

Nevertheless, this section focuses on several aspects at the systemic level where Erasmus+ suggests potential directions for change. Based on qualitative research data, including open-ended survey questions on systemic changes and findings from desk research, the ways in which educational mobility can inform or inspire systemic reforms were identified. Particular attention was given to the recognition of learning outcomes from foreign internships and vocational placements, both from the perspective of national frameworks and school-level practices.

The implementation of foreign internships and placements within mobility projects in the countries studied has contributed to the development of legislative measures and institutional practices that enable the formal recognition and validation of learning outcomes. This is a crucial element of systemic changes, allowing for the creation of more flexible and individualised learning pathways.

8.2.1. Mechanisms supporting the recognition of learning outcomes from foreign internships and apprenticeships

Based on the analysis of secondary sources and interviews with school representatives, specific legal and practical solutions enabling the recognition of mobility outcomes were identified – for both students and accompanying teachers.

In all analysed countries, National Europass Centres operate as part of a common European framework supporting the documentation and transparency of learning outcomes, including those achieved during international mobility. At the European level, recognition processes were also supported by the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET); however, according to the 2020 recommendations of the European Commission, the ECVET system was discontinued. This decision was taken because ECVET points, understood as a creditbased system for assessing learning outcomes, were rarely used in practice and their added value was not sufficiently demonstrated. Consequently, its key principles were integrated into more effective instruments, particularly those developed within the Erasmus+ programme and the renewed Europass platform.

At the national level, systemic legal solutions enabling the recognition of students' learning outcomes from international internships were identified only in selected countries. In Hungary, under the Vocational Education and Training Act (LXXX of 2019), international internships were formally included in VET programmes. In Poland, internships completed abroad may be recognised as compulsory vocational practice, provided that curriculum alignment, the required number of hours, and appropriate documentation are ensured. In Romania, the new education law adopted in 2023 introduced the possibility of recognising learning outcomes acquired through transnational mobility; however, these provisions entered into force after the implementation of the study, and the detailed recognition methodology approved by the Ministry of Education has been in place only since December 2024.

Recognition mechanisms for teachers follow a different logic and are embedded primarily in professional development systems. At the time the study was conducted, Hungarian teachers could receive up to 10 ECTS-equivalent credits for participation in Erasmus+ mobility within the national compulsory professional development framework. In 2024, this regulation was revised: teachers may now receive 15, 10, or 5 professional development credits for their own Erasmus+ activities (e.g., courses or training), while no credits are awarded for accompanying students. In Czechia, strategic documents from 2020 and 2022 emphasise the benefits of international mobility for teachers and pedagogical staff and encourage schools to systematically incorporate foreign internships and learning outcomes acquired abroad as a standard element of educational pathways, supporting their recognition within both professional development and formal education processes.

Solutions applied by schools in recognising the outcomes of foreign placements

Vocational schools participating in mobility programmes have developed a range of practices that enable the confirmation and recognition of learning outcomes achieved

during foreign placements. Although these activities are carried out within the framework of national regulations, in practice it is the schools that decide on the form and scope of mobility recognition.

In the survey, in an open-ended question, we asked school representatives: *How is the recognition of mobility outcomes carried out at your school?* The wide range of topics raised by respondents made it difficult to define clear categories for analysis. Respondents commented not only on whether foreign internships were recognised as mandatory, but also on the validation methods used, the tools applied, and the assessment of acquired competencies.

Recognition of international mobility programmes as mandatory vocational placements

Schools play a key role in recognising the outcomes of foreign educational mobility. These practices take various forms – from formal recognition of vocational internships, through grade recognition, to awarding certificates and symbolic prizes. Their effectiveness depends on the schools' engagement, knowledge of regulations, and willingness to use validation tools. Despite the lack of full uniformity, there is a growing awareness of the value of mobility and a drive towards its genuine recognition in vocational education.

The most common approach is to credit foreign internships and placements as mandatory vocational internships within the curriculum, and most surveyed schools apply this practice. Acceptance as practice was formulated as a legal possibility and a known fact for respondents. Differences arise regarding whether the entire placement or only part of it is recognised as national practical training.

“Three-week foreign internships were recognised as fulfilling the mandatory practical training for that year of study, whereas two-week internships were considered an additional student achievement (recorded in the grade book and on the certificate) (Poland, survey quote)

Whether foreign placements are recognised as covering the entirety or only part of the mandatory practical training mainly depends on their duration. Typically, internships lasting around a month are counted as fulfilling the mandatory requirement, whereas shorter ones are considered only a partial contribution to the mandatory practical training.

“Students go on two-week vocational internships abroad, which account for less than 10% of practical classes in the 2nd or 3rd year of vocational school (Poland, survey quote)

A large proportion of respondents indicated that foreign mobility experiences constitute an additional partial grade for vocational training or that participation in international mobility has an impact on students' grades in vocational subjects. A common way to validate mobility experiences is through official documents, particularly:

- Europass Mobility - the most frequently used document, mentioned by the majority of schools in the survey. It is often accompanied by a formal ceremony for awarding the documents.
- Certain elements of the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) - used less frequently, but present, for example, in Romania and Poland.

Although many schools use the same tools (Europass), the way these are applied can vary. In some schools, recognition of mobility is automatic. In others, a detailed comparison of documentation with the curriculum is required: practice diaries, validation sheets, supervisors' opinions.

Awards, distinctions, and symbolic recognition

Some schools opt for additional forms of symbolic recognition of mobility, including:

- school principal's awards
- special commendations (counted towards marks in the professional module, a specialisation subject, practical training, or a foreign language)
- extra points on exams
- prestigious entries in school records

In most countries surveyed, respondents referred only to the recognition of students' mobility outcomes. The exception is Hungary, where both surveys and interviews indicated systemic solutions for teachers – it is possible to earn up to 10 credits as part of mandatory professional development. However, critical voices also emerged:



In the Hungarian teacher professional development system, such mobility is worth only 10 credits, whereas other teachers receive the same amount for a five-day training. (Hungary, survey quote)

In 2024, the regulations on awarding ECTS credits to teachers within Erasmus+ were changed, although this does not apply to accompanying teachers in student mobility activities, as mentioned earlier in the report. Although this aspect did not emerge clearly in the survey, teachers in Slovenia can receive credits for their professional development in accordance with the applicable regulations.

8.2.2. Changes in national curricula and educational systems resulting from mobility experiences

Based on data from the national desk research reports (2023) and interviews conducted within its framework, the direct impact of educational mobility on vocational education systems is not uniform across all countries. However, some states have introduced important legislative changes that facilitate the integration of mobility into formal education structures.

Examples of systemic reforms

Hungary

In 2019, legislative changes modernised the vocational education curricula. Instead of rigid content frameworks, schools gained access to centrally developed learning outcome descriptors, enhancing alignment with European standards. This also facilitates the recognition of experiences gained through mobility.

Slovenia

According to regulations on the evaluation of school principals' work, educational mobility can be formally incorporated into the curriculum (IVET). One-fifth of the curriculum is an "open curriculum" whose content schools can shape independently in cooperation with local partners. Within this framework, formal recognition of mobility is possible.

Czechia

In Czechia, vocational schools design a portion of their curricula (approximately 20%) with flexibility, ensuring alignment with occupational standards. They work closely with local and regional social partners, industry representatives, and professional associations. This collaborative approach allows schools to adapt part of the programme to meet the actual demands of the labour market, giving students the opportunity to gain practical skills that employers value. Respondents do not report direct legislative impact of mobility but acknowledge the inspirational potential of the Erasmus+ programme. Student and teacher experiences abroad may influence modernisation of curricula, development of new teaching methods, cooperation between schools and businesses, and flexibility of assessment systems.

Latvia

Changes are rather indirect and selective. Although most respondents do not observe clear systemic reforms linked to mobility, some highlight its connection with recognition of learning outcomes and transition to a modular approach. Teachers agree that experiences gained abroad have influenced the evolution of vocational education over the last 15 years. In the qualitative study, interviewees pointed to a limited but potentially growing influence of mobility

on education systems. Interviewees from Hungary pointed out that no direct regulations allow the accreditation of mandatory vocational practice through foreign mobility (though local practice can be flexible). Teachers emphasise that Erasmus+ could be a tool for implementing vocational practices, especially in challenging sectors (e.g., IT), where dual partners are lacking. Changes are seen as possible but long-term and dependent on the openness of public authorities.

Interviewees from Czechia and Latvia note that Erasmus+ programme may inspire greater flexibility and openness in the education system. Respondents see potential in transferring good practices to the national level but believe this is not yet reality changes are fragmented and gradual.

Conclusions and recommendations



Chapter 9. Challenges and policy pointers

The table below presents the barriers and challenges related to the organisation of international placements for students, identified based on the study. These are issues raised both by respondents in qualitative interviews (IDI) and in the open-ended questions of the online survey. It should be noted that respondents referred to experiences from the previous funding period, so not all issues may still be relevant. Where possible, it has been indicated if any solutions have been implemented in the meantime. These problems occur at different levels – from minor difficulties that can be addressed at the school level, through regulatory issues within the Erasmus+ programme, to systemic challenges related to the functioning of national education systems. In the table, the identified problem, its elaboration, the recommendation (policy pointer), and the addressee who could be responsible for implementing the recommendation are indicated.

Table 27.
Challenges and policy pointers

Problem category	Identified problem (detailed description)	Country	Policy pointer	Responsible authority
Challenges related to the administration and management of mobility projects in vocational schools				
Administrative and bureaucratic burden on schools The process of preparing project applications, handling administrative and financial tasks, and preparing reports is overly bureaucratic and time-consuming. EU laws and procedures (IT tools, documentation), along with specific requirements from National Agencies and school managing authorities (e.g., local government units / local authorities) simultaneously create a high level of bureaucratic complexity.	Systems and documents imposed by the EU (e.g., e-Forms, Mobility Tool (currently Beneficiary Module) are often problematic and constantly evolving – which in itself is burdensome and requires continuous learning. Furthermore, the Erasmus+ application form itself is overly complex, which poses a significant challenge, particularly for new or less experienced institutions.	All countries	Ensure earlier publication of the application form to allow sufficient time for quality proposal development. Provide ongoing technical support for digital tools users: • Establish a fast and efficient helpdesk dedicated to Erasmus+ platform users in National Agencies. • Implement a ticketing system to track and manage issue resolution. Provide clear instructions, video tutorials, and FAQs tailored to different user groups. Streamline the application form for KAI.	European Commission National Agencies European Commission

Problem category	Identified problem (detailed description)	Country	Policy pointer	Responsible authority
	Mismatch between EU project procedures and school managing authorities (e.g., local government units / local authorities, Vocational Centres) accounting rules increases administrative complexity for schools. Schools must comply simultaneously with EU reporting tools and local financial procedures imposed by school managing authorities. This includes internal accounting requirements, approval processes, and different documentation standards, which increases workload and limits flexibility.	Reported especially by respondents from Czechia and Poland (CAWI, IDI)	Simplify and digitalise financial documentation procedures. Reduce paperwork by streamlining and digitalising required reports and forms. Align financial and reporting deadlines with the school calendar. Ensure that grant disbursements and deadlines match the academic year to reduce time pressure on schools. Harmonise and standardise financial reporting rules and procedures across school managing authorities and schools: - Develop clear, unified guidelines for budgeting and financial reporting of Erasmus* projects, applicable across all school types and school managing authorities. - National Agencies should collaborate with school managing authorities to align methodologies and reduce conflicting expectations. Strengthen project management capacity within school managing authorities. It is recommended to establish and support dedicated project coordination units within school managing authorities (e.g., local government units / local authorities). These specialised units would enhance the efficiency and quality of international project implementation, including Erasmus*.	School managing authorities (e.g., local government units / local authorities, Vocational Centres) are encouraged to adopt and apply simplified and digitalised financial and administrative procedures for Erasmus* projects, in line with national regulations. National Agencies are encouraged to support the development and dissemination of simplified procedures. School managing authorities (e.g., local government units / local authorities)

Problem category	Identified problem (detailed description)	Country	Policy pointer	Responsible authority
Delays in grant disbursement	These are mainly administrative issues occurring before the mobility activities begin. The school managing authorities (e.g., local government units / local authorities) often causes difficulties that slow down the prompt use of the allocated grant for project implementation. Delays in grant disbursement may also result from an application calendar and project implementation schedule that are not aligned with the operational realities of institutions.	Reported especially by respondents from Poland	Ensure that funding decisions are communicated early enough to allow alignment with the school calendar , including consideration of the summer holiday period, as well as the time required for administrative procedures within local government authorities. Additionally, project timelines should be adapted to the operational realities of participating institutions.	National Agencies

Problem category	Identified problem (detailed description)	Country	Policy pointer	Responsible authority
Timely submission of reports by students	The necessity for students and teachers to complete administrative tasks after mobility, such as filling out reports, work diaries, and evaluation surveys. Students are often reluctant to complete Individual Mobility Reports, frequently doing so via their phones, which results in lower quality responses. The very detailed and extensive questions in final reports for short-term mobility projects under the Erasmus+ are also problematic.	Reported especially by respondents from Hungary and Poland (CAWI)	Strengthen students' responsibility for post-mobility reporting through clear commitments and incentives: • Ensure that the existing participant agreement clearly specifies the required post-mobility tasks and that schools consistently enforce these obligations. • Encourage students to begin administrative tasks (e.g., individual reports) during the stay abroad or immediately upon return. Link the disbursement of the final portion of the individual support grant to the timely submission of required documents. Building on existing tools developed by National Agencies under the TCA (Training and Cooperation Activities) framework, such as the toolkit supporting youth participation in projects – a dedicated version tailored for the VET sector should be developed. This version would guide users through the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of international vocational training placements. Such a toolkit could support: • active involvement of learners in planning their mobility experiences; • better organisational and pedagogical preparation for internships abroad; • reflection on skills and competences gained; • the integration of mobility results into school development and students' career paths.	Schools (coordinators, school's teachers accompanying students during mobility) National Agencies

Problem category	Identified problem (detailed description)	Country	Policy pointer	Responsible authority
Lack of sufficient resources in schools – both in terms of staff numbers and their competencies necessary to efficiently and smoothly manage project implementation.	Lack of qualified staff to manage projects and their financial reporting, which causes difficulties in project financial settlements.	All countries	Promote strategic leadership and project management capacity within schools: • Provide training for school principals on how to use Erasmus+, including how to provide a clear vision and connect the dots, helping them see the bigger picture and understand how different elements fit together. Involve groups of experts (“VET experts”) experienced in organising VET programme in training school principals and coordinators to enhance their capacity in project development and management. • Promote training and workshops on how to plan and manage Erasmus+ projects for (potential) applicants and beneficiaries, for example through National VET Teams. Such activities are already implemented successfully in some countries (e.g., by the Czech NA in cooperation with the National VET Team), where practical workshops for project coordinators have proven particularly effective. • Establish systems of mentors in countries where they do not yet exist (currently operating, for example in Romania, Poland and Hungary). These systems support VET institutions in effectively utilising the Erasmus+, enhance staff competencies, and strengthen cross-sectoral cooperation, resulting in higher quality vocational education and greater benefits from international mobility. Reinforce administrative capacity at schools by hiring support staff using organisational support funds: • Allocate part of the organisational support budget to employ administrative assistants, such as: • teacher trainees from universities (internships in project administration); • former Erasmus+ participants as peer supporters; • international volunteers through relevant programmes.	National Agencies School leaders School managing authorities (e.g., local government units / local authorities)

Problem category	Identified problem (detailed description)	Country	Policy pointer	Responsible authority
	The organisation of international mobilities in schools often relies on volunteering teachers, who are overloaded with additional duties. Overtime spent on working on project applications, preparing, and implementing international trips is not compensated.	All countries	Introduce compensation mechanisms for teachers involved in Erasmus+ project coordination: Establish a system for remunerating overtime related to project tasks, including application writing, mobility preparation, and reporting.	School leaders
	Insufficient foreign language skills among teaching staff.	All countries	Provide accessible foreign language training tailored to the needs of teaching staff, especially for those involved in international mobility. At the same time, consider institutional measures such as including project coordination tasks in teachers' job descriptions and reducing their direct teaching duties, in order to create sufficient space for professional development and mobility-related responsibilities.	National Agencies / school leaders

Problem category	Identified problem (detailed description)	Country	Policy pointer	Responsible authority
Challenges in maintaining school functioning during student mobilities	Schools struggle with the high cost of hiring replacements, especially for specialist VET teachers compounded by the shortage of available teachers and low motivation among substitutes to take on these assignments.	Reported especially by respondents from Czechia and Slovenia (IDI, CAWI)	Increase awareness of existing options to cover substitute teachers during Erasmus+ mobilities: • Provide clear guidance to schools on how the costs of substitute teachers can be covered from Erasmus+ organisational costs, in line with national regulations. • Include this information in guidance documents such as the Go International guide and the Impact Handbook to ensure school coordinators are aware of the possibilities. • Encourage schools to plan and budget for substitute teaching when preparing mobilities, making full use of existing mechanisms. Optimise mobility planning to reduce substitution needs: • Plan group mobilities for the same period to minimise disruption (e.g., 30 students + 3 teachers at once). • Limit the duration of accompanying persons' stay abroad (e.g., present only at departure and return). • Schedule mobilities during less intensive periods of the school year, where possible. This is considered good practice – some Czech schools deliberately choose mobility dates to coincide with fall or spring breaks to avoid the need for substitute teachers. • Allow and encourage the involvement of other responsible adults – such as non-teaching school staff, university teacher trainees, or trusted volunteers – to act as accompanying persons during mobilities, instead of full-time teachers. • Facilitate access to mobility for employees in the field of VET. Provide and develop the platform for collaboration, sharing good practices. • Enable experience exchange within training of project coordinators. • Promote international opportunities in recruitment through advertising teaching positions by highlighting opportunities for international mobility (e.g., Erasmus+ projects, job shadowing, training abroad), as this is particularly attractive to young and motivated candidates. • Emphasise candidates' prior international experiences (e.g., Erasmus+ study or internship periods) during recruitment, as these make them more likely to value and engage in mobility opportunities.	National education policymakers and school managing bodies (e.g., regional governments or local municipalities) National Agencies are encouraged to raise awareness among school principals and managing authorities about existing support options and good practices Schools (school leaders and coordinators)
	High costs of securing substitute teachers for staff participating in mobility activities			Schools and National Agencies School leaders

Problem category	Identified problem (detailed description)	Country	Policy pointer	Responsible authority
Difficulty in catching up on missed schoolwork by students	Some students struggle to make up for the learning gaps caused by their absence from regular classes. Interruptions in schooling lead to adaptation challenges upon return and result in knowledge deficits due to missed instruction. This situation creates tensions between students and teachers of general subjects, with some educators questioning the educational value of the educational value of internships and external mobility compared to the learning losses incurred.	Reported especially by respondents from Poland, Hungary, and Czechia (CAWI)	Integrate mobility periods into the calendar of mandatory vocational internships, so participants go abroad while their classmates complete internships domestically. Allow extended time for students to catch up on missed lessons or introduce a system of remote learning to support them.	School leaders School teachers

Problem category	Identified problem (detailed description)	Country	Policy pointer	Responsible authority
Challenges concerning matching international placements to school needs	This problem is especially visible in technical, construction, and medical professions. There are also sectors where placing students or finding companies and partner schools is less successful or particularly difficult: for example, in engineering or electrician VET sectors, where foreign workplaces are often reluctant to take responsibility for students, or in healthcare, where facilities are hesitant to host learners.		Create an international database, similar in spirit to the former Leonardo or Comenius projects. It could take the form of a platform where schools register, share their profiles, and recommend trusted partners to others. Such a tool would support trust-building and reduce the time and effort needed to identify reliable mobility partners. Enhance the visibility and user-friendliness of existing platforms (such as EPALÉ) that support partner search and networking for mobility. This could include: - targeted outreach and promotion among VET schools - providing user guides, tutorials, or webinars on how to use the tools effectively; - offering facilitated partner-matching services or live networking sessions (e.g., online speed-dating events); - integrating feedback and trust indicators (e.g., ratings, recommendations) to help schools identify reliable partners. Encourage schools to use the support and networks of experienced VET providers when looking for international mobility partners. Schools can also cooperate with their social partners that are very often international companies and can communicate with their mother organisation or branches seated in different countries. Introduce targeted support schemes for sectors facing placement shortages.	European Commission
			Create dedicated initiatives to help schools and intermediary organisations connect with companies in industries where apprenticeships are hard to arrange.	National Agencies, European Commission
			Provide financial or non-financial incentives to companies that host VET students. Encourage employers to participate in mobility projects by compensating for their time, effort, or resources (e.g., through grants, public recognition, or simplified administrative procedures).	National Agencies, businesses
			Introduce targeted support schemes for sectors facing placement shortages. Create dedicated initiatives to help schools and intermediary organisations connect with companies in industries where apprenticeships are hard to arrange.	European Commission

Problem category	Identified problem (detailed description)	Country	Policy pointer	Responsible authority
Difficulties in finding and maintaining reliable international partners	One of the main reasons why vocational schools find it difficult to identify partners for learner mobility is the lack of long-term, systemic cooperation between schools and companies, both at the national and international levels. In many cases, such partnerships are incidental in nature, based on individual contacts or short-term projects. There is a lack of stable, institutional mechanisms to support and sustain these collaborations. Some schools have had negative experiences in the past. Issues include partners being unresponsive, cancelling cooperation on short notice, and companies not providing meaningful learning experiences for students.	All countries		

Problem category	Identified problem (detailed description)	Country	Policy pointer	Responsible authority
Challenges related to ensuring the sustainability of the outcomes gained from mobility for the school	One of the obstacles to integrating international mobility into VET programming is the inflexibility of national curricula, which severely limits schools' ability to adapt their infrastructure and schedules to accommodate student and teacher exchanges. While VET school autonomy varies, it remains highly constrained by rigid core-programme requirements. Implementing more comprehensive changes to curricula also require effective collaboration within the school community, including consensus-building among teachers and school leadership. Resistance among teachers can pose a substantial barrier. Not all teachers are willing to engage with or support projects, and some may be reluctant to adopt innovations introduced by colleagues who have participated in mobility activities.	All countries	Develop and align VET curricula based on a Learning Outcomes (LO) approach to ensure better recognition and integration of competences acquired during international mobility. Promote inclusive and participatory approaches to curriculum change by actively engaging teachers and school leadership: • Facilitate collaborative planning and consensus-building within the school community to support the introduction of new modules or specialisations. • Provide training and support to teachers to reduce resistance and foster openness to innovations, especially those arising from staff mobility and international projects. • Ensure availability of adequate resources (time, funding, professional development) to enable smooth and effective implementation of curriculum changes.	National education policymakers School leaders

Problem category	Identified problem (detailed description)	Country	Policy pointer	Responsible authority
Lack of funding to implement experiences gained from mobility, such as equipping laboratories or purchasing software programs, which could improve the quality of vocational classes.	Many schools experience difficulties in securing adequate financial resources, which hinders the implementation of planned investments and infrastructure improvements. This may be because they do not know about the available funding sources or how to combine them, which further limits the potential for infrastructural development within the framework of educational mobility.	All countries	Organise training and workshops for school principals and management staff. Trainings should cover the funding opportunities available through the Erasmus+ programme as well as other national and EU funding sources. Encourage combining different funding sources, including Erasmus+ (KAZ), EU structural funds (ERDF), national and local programmes, and public-private partnerships. Diversifying funding sources increases the potential for implementing comprehensive modernisation activities.	National Agencies National Agencies
	Lack of vision, strategic planning, and leadership within the school.			

Problem category	Identified problem (detailed description)	Country	Policy pointer	Responsible authority
Accessibility and inclusiveness of international placements for students Challenges in organising mobility placements for all interested students	There is a noticeable and growing interest in international internship and mobility projects among students. Organising such activities attracts candidates to schools and enhances their prestige. However, schools do not have sufficient funds to provide mobility opportunities for all interested students. The growing number of interested students requires more staff for preparation, coordination, and supervision.	All countries	Leverage the potential of internationalisation at home. While not all students can participate in physical mobility abroad, every student can be involved in preparatory activities, virtual exchanges, and intercultural learning components delivered within the school environment. To address this, schools should: • Implement elements of virtual mobility and international online collaboration to engage more students. • Involve all students in mobility preparation activities (e.g., language training, intercultural workshops, project-based learning), regardless of whether they travel abroad. • Organise international-themed events at school, such as Mobility Days, presentations by returnees, or cultural showcases of partner countries. Becoming a hosting organisation: • Schools should also consider acting as hosting institutions for incoming students, trainees, or staff from partner countries. Hosting mobility participants not only enhances the school's international profile but also creates international experiences "at home" for the entire school community. Increase the budget allocation for Key Action 1, as the current grants do not adequately meet the demand from VET institutions.	School leaders European Commission National Agencies
	Schools are not fully leveraging the potential of internationalisation at home as a way to include a broader group of students in international experiences.	All countries	Develop mentoring and coaching programmes for less experienced institutions, helping them navigate mobility project planning, implementation, and follow-up. • Create structured opportunities for the exchange of best practices, including model documents, toolkits, and successful case studies from other countries. • Organise joint training events or webinars for project coordinators and school leaders, facilitated by multiple NAs.	

Problem category	Identified problem (detailed description)	Country	Policy pointer	Responsible authority
Insufficient inclusion of students with fewer opportunities Although efforts to move towards more inclusive selection practices are evident, academic performance remains a prominent criterion in mobility selection in school.	One of the underlying reasons for the under-representation of students with fewer opportunities in mobility is that project teams are often not fully aware of alternative, inclusive selection methods. As a result, students from disadvantaged backgrounds, who could benefit most from such opportunities, are often underrepresented.	All countries	Promote and implement inclusive selection methods to increase participation of students with fewer opportunities in international placements: • Provide training and guidance for project teams on alternative, inclusive selection criteria and procedures. • Develop and disseminate clear guidelines and best practices to ensure fair access for disadvantaged learners.	National Agencies
	Another contributing factor is organisational convenience. Schools and project teams, often operating with limited time and staff, may tend to select students who are more independent, academically strong, and require less support. This pragmatic approach, while understandable, can unintentionally disadvantage students who face greater social, economic, or personal challenges, even though they may benefit the most from international mobility.	All countries	To increase the inclusion of students with fewer opportunities in mobility projects, National Agencies should provide concrete, practical support to project teams by: • developing and sharing clear guidelines and examples of inclusive selection processes that go beyond academic criteria and incorporate socioeconomic background, motivation, and personal circumstances; • offering training sessions, workshops, or webinars focused on equity-based recruitment and best practices for selecting diverse candidates; • creating toolkits or templates that schools can easily adapt to their context, including interview questions, evaluation rubrics, and reflection checklists.	National Agencies

Problem category	Identified problem (detailed description)	Country	Policy pointer	Responsible authority
Lack of clear and transparent procedures for selecting students for mobility, leading to confusion and feelings of unfairness	The absence of well-defined criteria and a transparent recruitment process causes competition and frustration among students who are not selected to participate. This often results in conflicts not only between students but also between students and teachers, driven by jealousy and misunderstanding of the selection process.	All countries	Ensure transparency in the student selection process. To foster trust and prevent misunderstandings or negative reactions within the school community, it is essential to maintain clear and transparent communication about Erasmus+ opportunities and selection criteria. Schools should: • openly communicate the goals of the Erasmus+ programme and explain how participants are selected; • publish the selection criteria in accessible formats (e.g., posters, school website, parent meetings); • ensure that the process is fair, consistent, and well-documented, including clear justifications for decisions; • involve multiple staff members or committees in the recruitment process to avoid bias and enhance credibility; • provide feedback to students who were not selected, emphasising motivation to reapply in the future.	Schools (school leaders, project teams)

Problem category	Identified problem (detailed description)	Country	Policy pointer	Responsible authority
Accessibility and inclusiveness of Erasmus+ for schools	Certain sectors, such as the arts, music, or other creative disciplines, face specific challenges in aligning with Erasmus+ priorities – particularly in areas like digitalisation and inclusiveness – as these concepts may not fully translate into their everyday educational practice. Additionally, - a lack of comprehensive understanding within the project team regarding the full range of Erasmus+ opportunities and how to tailor them to their sector further limits their ability to adapt effectively.	All countries	Provide sector-specific guidance and support within the Erasmus+ programme framework – including tailored training, good practice examples, and flexible interpretation of priorities. This should build on existing national initiatives, such as the Czech National Recovery and Resilience Plan, which has already supported schools (including art schools) in updating their curricula in the area of digitalisation and in reducing the digital gap.	National Agencies

Problem category	Identified problem (detailed description)	Country	Policy pointer	Responsible authority
	Bigger schools often perceive the current Erasmus+ accreditation framework as unfavourable to their scale and needs. Since funding rules apply uniformly – regardless of the number of students or staff – accredited schools with a larger population may receive proportionally less financial support than they did before accreditation. This limits their ability to organise mobility activities at a scale that reflects their organisational capacity, reducing the number of students and staff they can send abroad despite having sufficient resources and infrastructure to manage larger projects.	All countries	Revise the budget allocation system for accredited applicants to better reflect the diverse needs and capacities of schools. Instead of applying uniform funding rules, allocate budgets based on factors such as school size (number of students and staff). This approach would ensure a fairer distribution of funds, enabling all accredited schools to effectively implement Erasmus+ mobility activities in line with their specific circumstances.	European Commission

Problem category	Identified problem (detailed description)	Country	Policy pointer	Responsible authority
Limited accessibility of Erasmus+ for schools without prior experience	Schools without previous participation in Erasmus+ projects often lack the general know-how needed not only to prepare strong applications but also to organise the entire mobility process effectively. This knowledge gap creates significant barriers and perpetuates unequal access to international mobility opportunities.	All countries	Starting with smaller projects. Schools without previous experience should start with smaller-scale initiatives e.g., with Key Action 2 (e.g., KA210) and eTwinning projects, which can be easier to manage initially. This step-by-step approach helps build confidence and institutional capacity over time. Enable access for small organisations. Ensure that even small schools and organisations with limited resources can apply, by adapting eligibility or selection criteria to their scale and capabilities. Simplify the application process for Key Action 1. Streamline the application form and reduce documentation requirements for completely new applicants under Key Action 1, to improve their chances of receiving funding and lower the entry barrier into the programme.	First-time applicant schools European Commission

Source: own elaboration

Conclusions



Vocational education and training plays a key role in shaping a skilled, flexible, and future-oriented workforce in Europe. According to the priorities of the European Union, VET should be flexible, inclusive, and of high quality, while being strongly linked to the labour market through practical training and apprenticeship systems. Updating curricula in the direction of digital and green transformation, while simultaneously developing key and transversal competences, is intended to prepare students for the evolving needs of the economy and society. These efforts are inextricably linked to the development of the European Education Area and the objectives of the EU's Union of Skills initiative (2025), which emphasises the importance of equipping learners with digital, green, and core competences to foster a future-ready workforce across Europe.

However, despite the important role of VET in preparing young people for the labour market, this type of education struggles with low prestige and is often regarded as a “second-choice option” (Cedefop, 2017; OECD, 2023a). Educational inequalities remain evident – IVET students typically achieve lower results in skills assessments and often come from less privileged backgrounds (OECD, 2023b). In this context, international mobility can become a tool not only for competence development but also for enhancing the attractiveness of IVET in the eyes of students, parents, and employers. However, there is a lack of strategies for systematically harnessing this potential in the countries of the region. Transnational learning mobility is often implemented to strengthen both the theoretical knowledge and practical skills of participants. However, research findings show that mobility in the examined countries is not limited solely to individual impacts on students or accompanying teachers but has a much broader range of functions and objectives. Its impact is multidimensional and depends on numerous factors. Mobility serves as a multidimensional tool for participant development. Research findings confirm that international placements have the greatest impact on the development of competencies aligned with labour market needs. Foreign placements largely achieve their primary objectives, enabling students to acquire and enhance vocational competences that are subsequently developed in further education and applied in the labour market. Similarly, mobility contributes to the development of intercultural and transversal competences. Aspects such as communication, flexibility, collaboration, and the ability to learn independently are particularly important, as they are essential in the context of lifelong learning and a knowledge-based economy. Mobility also strengthens European identity, tolerance, and cultural awareness, aligning with EU priorities related to promoting common values.

Despite high ratings in professional areas, the impact of mobility on digital competences is weaker. Since mobility rarely focuses on ICT development, teachers tend to assess its impact in this area as limited. Meanwhile, digitalisation and technological transformation are becoming

key challenges for vocational education, making this gap an important area for further action and the integration of digital content into mobility projects.

The relatively weak impact of mobility on digital competences reported by teachers should be interpreted with caution. First, the study relied on teachers' assessments of students' competence development rather than on direct measurement or participants' self-assessment, which constitutes an important methodological limitation. Second, existing research on teacher perception and observation-based assessment suggests that educators' evaluations are strongly shaped by their assumptions about what a given measure or intervention is intended to capture, with greater attention typically paid to outcomes that align with the expected or dominant functions of the intervention (Rubie-Davies & Hattie, 2024). In the case of international mobility, professional, language-related, and transversal competences are widely recognised as core outcomes, while digital competences – often developed indirectly and not explicitly targeted – may receive less attention and be less readily identified.

Regarding the recognition of foreign placements, schools use varied methods, most often relying on Europass documentation. Mobility projects are generally designed to be recognised as equivalent to domestic internships. This demonstrates that foreign internships are treated as a carefully planned educational activities, forming an integral part of the vocational curriculum, whose achievements can be transferred and applied in different contexts.

According to teachers, mobility has a transformative character for many students – it not only strengthens specific competences and skills but also enhances a positive attitude towards the profession, school engagement, and identification with the chosen career path. The changing nature of mobility primarily stems from the perception of these experiences as exceptional events, often a reward for high achievement. The process begins with demanding selection, includes intensive experiences and challenges during the stay abroad, and concludes with follow-up activities that further consolidate acquired competences and attitudes.

Accompanying teachers – usually vocational and language instructors – also benefit from international mobility. Research shows that the most significant changes are observed in their attitudes towards internationalisation and in the development of international contacts. Participation in mobility also supports professional development: teachers become more innovative, proactive, and motivated, often overcoming signs of occupational burnout. Improvement in language competences is also noticeable, mainly through increased confidence in communication and motivation for further language learning. Importantly, teachers are often willing to share new knowledge and experiences upon returning, which strengthens the

potential of the entire school, although this practice is more frequently observed in larger institutions. These outcomes reflect the EU's focus on continuous upskilling of educators, recognising that well-supported teachers are crucial for implementing innovative pedagogies and enhancing the quality of vocational training.

The organisation of international mobility also has the potential to equalise educational opportunities and promote social inclusion. Most teachers confirm the positive impact of mobility on students' educational and career paths, with this effect being particularly emphasised by educators in smaller towns. In their view, foreign placements often serve as a "gamechanger", opening up opportunities that students might not have locally. The greatest benefits are seen among young people from less privileged backgrounds, with lower socio-economic status or weaker initial competences.

This effect is also observed in the assessment of mobility's impact on teachers' language and professional competencies – particularly among educators in smaller towns. In both cases, this reflects the well-documented "catch-up effect" (Boeren et al., 2010), which indicates that individuals with lower initial opportunities benefit proportionally more from educational activities, as they have greater potential for development. Even minor educational interventions or international mobility result in substantial improvements in skills and competences. At the same time, access to foreign placements can be more difficult for students from vulnerable groups.

Therefore, a key challenge is to strengthen schools towards more inclusive student recruitment for mobility projects, ensuring that foreign placements are not treated merely as rewards for top-performing students or those with no behavioural issues, but serve as genuine tools for supporting those who can benefit most. This objective resonates with the Union of Skills' goals of ensuring equitable access to high-quality training for all learners, particularly those from less privileged backgrounds, promoting inclusivity within European vocational education systems.

The individual impact of mobility is clear and well documented: research consistently confirms benefits for participants, both students and teachers, across all analysed countries, although the magnitude of these effects varies to some extent between national contexts.

However, at the institutional level, mobility also has broader and more complex effects on schools themselves. Schools utilise international trips not only to support the development of students and teachers but also to build prestige and strengthen their competitive position in

the educational market. Schools in smaller towns, threatened by depopulation and declining enrolment, benefit the most. For them, organising mobility can genuinely help them stand out, attract candidates, and sometimes even prevent closure.

Changes in curricula resulting from organising foreign internships are rarer and often isolated – they concern new modules, additional hours, or the introduction of new specialisations. Implementing more systemic changes faces legislative constraints, rigid national programmes, infrastructural requirements, and also demands determination and motivation from teachers and school management. Schools' assessments of mobility-related curriculum changes show some contextual variation, with larger institutions more often reporting noticeable effects, potentially reflecting differences in organisational capacity and internal resources.

The impact of mobility on infrastructure changes is assessed much less positively than other aspects – it usually involves minor modifications rather than major investments. Interestingly, in schools located in smaller towns, these assessments are more favourable, possibly reflecting better contact with managing authorities, local businesses, or a greater perception of change due to lower initial capacities.

Across almost all analysed dimensions – including the perceived impact of mobility on students, teachers, and schools – clear cross-national differences emerge. Countries such as Romania, Poland, and Slovenia consistently report higher assessments of mobility outcomes, whereas lower evaluations are more frequently observed in Hungary, Czechia, and Latvia. Although these differences are statistically significant, their interpretation requires caution. As highlighted in classical comparative research, crossnational surveys are inherently sensitive to differences in how concepts are defined, interpreted, and operationalised across national contexts, even when identical instruments are used (Rokkan, 1968; Pokropek, 2012). As a result, responses may not be fully comparable in terms of their substantive meaning, reflecting not only differences in experiences but also in perception, evaluation standards, and cultural frames of reference. This suggests that cross-national variation in reported mobility outcomes may be shaped not only by institutional conditions, but also by nationally embedded patterns of interpretation and assessment. Consequently, the consistent pattern of ratings across countries indicates that observed differences are likely to be influenced more by cultural context than by actual variations in mobility impact, making it challenging to draw definitive conclusions about cross-country disparities.

The study also outlined the main challenges and barriers faced by schools participating in mobility, which may be difficult for new entrants to overcome. These primarily include administrative and bureaucratic burdens (preparing project applications, handling

administrative and financial tasks, and compiling reports is excessively time-consuming and complex) as well as financial and management requirements. Other challenges include finding and maintaining foreign partners and effectively using cooperation networks.

Successful mobility organisation requires mobilising resources, staff competences, and, most importantly, strong leadership – typically provided by a principal who not only manages administrative processes but also transforms mobility experiences into lasting effects, including increased student and teacher competences, innovative modules, new specialisations, and infrastructure improvements. Small schools may face greater difficulties due to limited staff, lack of experience in organising mobility, higher costs, or challenges in providing substitutes for teachers.

As mobility grows in popularity, more students are interested in participating, but resources – primarily financial and staffing – are insufficient to ensure access for all. While mobility fulfils its primary role, its broader impact potential can grow with the scale of participation by both schools and students in a given country. Participation in mobility in vocational schools remains limited. Therefore, ensuring broader participation of schools and students in international placements is crucial. This can be achieved by simplifying procedures (especially for schools without prior experience), increasing funding, and strengthening schools' institutional capacity to organise mobility on a larger scale.

References



- Bagshaw, M. (2000). Emotional intelligence: Training people to be affective so they can be effective. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 32(2), 61–65. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00197850010320699>
- Boeren, E., Nicaise, I., & Baert, H. (2010). Theoretical models of participation in adult education: The need for an integrated model. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 29(1), 45–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370903471270>
- Brandenburg, U., Taboadela, O., & Vancea, M. (2016). Mobility matters. In *Global and local internationalization* (pp. 117–120). Brill.
- Brown, J. S., Collins, A., & Duguid, P. (1989). Situated cognition and the culture of learning. *Educational Researcher*, 18(1), 32–42. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X018001032>
- Brown, L. (2009). The transformative power of the international sojourn: An ethnographic study of the international student experience. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 36(3), 502–521. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2009.03.002>
- Bulkowski, K., Dobosz-Leszczynska, W., & Kaźmierczak, J. (2023). *Umiejętności polskich piętnastolatków: Najważniejsze wyniki badania OECD PISA 2022*. Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych.
- Cankar, G. (2020). *Pravične možnosti izobraževanja v Sloveniji*. Državni izpitni center.
- Cedefop. (2017). *Cedefop European public opinion survey on vocational education and training* (Cedefop research paper No. 62). Publications Office. <https://doi.org/10.2801/575587>
- Cedefop. (2024). *Vocational education and training statistics and indicators: Data insight – June 2025*.
- Cedefop, & Educational Research Institute (IBE). (2023). Vocational education and training in Europe – Poland: system description. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2024). *Vocational education and training in Europe: VET in Europe database – detailed VET system descriptions* [Database]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/poland-u3>
- Cedefop, & Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI). (2023). Vocational education and training in Europe – Slovenia: system description. In Cedefop & ReferNet, *Vocational education and training in Europe: VET in Europe database – detailed VET system descriptions* [Database]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/slovenia-u3>
- Cushing, D. F., Pennings, M., Willox, D., Gomez, R., Dyson, C., & Coombs, C. (2019). Measuring intangible outcomes can be problematic: The challenge of assessing learning during international short-term study experiences. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 20(2), 203–217. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787417732259>

- Dolga, L., Filipescu, H., Popescu-Mitroi, M. M., & Mazilescu, C. A. (2015). Erasmus mobility impact on professional training and personal development of students beneficiaries. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 191, 1006–1013. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.235>
- European Commission. (2014). *Erasmus+ programme guide* (Version 3). Publications Office of the European Union. https://2014-2020.erasmusplus.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/erasmus-plus-programme-guide_en_2014.pdf
- European Commission. (2025). *Union of Skills*. https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-competitiveness/union-skills_en
- Eurostat. *Employment rates of young people not in education and training by sex, educational attainment level, years since completion of highest level of education and country of birth*. http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=edat_lfse_32&lang=en
- Evert, K., & Stein, K. C. (2022). Teachers' networked learning participation communities: Does collective matter? *Teaching and Teacher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tatep.2022.100009>
- Finch, D. J., Hamilton, L. K., Baldwin, R., & Zehner, M. (2013). An exploratory study of factors affecting undergraduate employability. *Education + Training*, 55(7), 681–704. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ET-07-2012-0077>
- Gupta, A. K., & Govindarajan, V. (2000). Knowledge flows within multinational corporations. *Strategic Management Journal*, 21(4), 473–496. [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1097-0266\(200004\)21:4<473::AID-SMJ84>3.0.CO;2-I](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1097-0266(200004)21:4<473::AID-SMJ84>3.0.CO;2-I)
- Lannert, J., & Holb, É. (2020). Jó pap holtig tanul, avagy a PIAAC felnőtt írásbeliség vizsgálat tanulságai. In: T. Kolosi, I. Szelényi, & I. G. Tóth (Eds.), *Társadalmi Riport 2020* (pp. 221–243). https://www.tarki.hu/sites/default/files/2020-10/221_243_Lannert_Holb_web.pdf
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press.
- Murphy-Lejeune, E. (2003). *Student mobility and narrative in Europe: The new strangers*. Routledge.
- Nada, C. I., & Legutko, J. (2022). "Maybe we did not learn that much academically, but we learn more from experience" – Erasmus mobility and its potential for transformative learning. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 87, 183–192. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2022.03.002>
- Nada, C. I., Montgomery, C., & Araújo, H. C. (2018). "You went to Europe and returned different": Transformative learning experiences of international students in Portugal. *European Educational Research Journal*, 17(5), 696–713. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474904118765334>

- National desk research reports. (2023). *Czechia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovenia* [Unpublished internal reports prepared within the Erasmus+ LTA VET project].
- Nowakowska-Siuta, R. (2014). *Pedagogika porównawcza: Problemy, stan badań i perspektywy rozwoju*. Impuls.
- OECD. (2023a). *PISA 2022 results (Volume I): The state of learning and equity in education*. OECD Publishing.
- OECD. (2023b). *Spotlight on vocational education and training: Findings from Education at a Glance 2023*. OECD Publishing.
- Olivera, F. (2000). Memory systems in organisations: An empirical investigation of mechanisms for knowledge collection, storage, and access. *Journal of Management Studies*, 37(6), 811–832. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.00205>
- Otten, M. (2003). Intercultural learning and diversity in higher education. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 7(1), 12–26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10283153022501>
- Pachocki, M. (2018). *Is mobility the key to a successful career? Tracer study report on vocational learners with transnational mobility experience*. Foundation for the Development of the Education System.
- Pieńkosz, J., & Maj, M. (2024). Kwalifikacje a potrzeby uczących się dorosłych. Perspektywa wnioskodawców w Zintegrowanym Systemie Kwalifikacji. Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych.
- Pokropek, A. (2012). Porównania międzynarodowe. In H. Domański (Ed.), *Metodologia badań nad stratyfikacją społeczną*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar.
- Robles, M. M. (2012). Executive perceptions of the top 10 soft skills needed in today's workplace. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 75(4), 453–465. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1080569912460400>
- Rokkan, S. (1968). *Comparative research across cultures and nations*. Walter de Gruyter.
- Rubie-Davies, C., & Hattie, J. (2024). The powerful impact of teacher expectations: A narrative review. *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand*, 55(2), 343–371. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03036758.2024.2393296>
- Sigalas, E. (2010). The role of personal benefits in public support for the EU: Learning from the Erasmus students. *West European Politics*, 33(6), 1341–1361. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2010.508912>
- Váňová, M. (2006). Pedagogika porównawcza. In: B. Śliwerski (Ed.), *Pedagogika* (Vol. 2, *Pedagogika wobec edukacji, polityki oświatowej i badań naukowych*, pp. 49–105). GWP.
- Zabłocka, E., & Stasiowski, J. (2023). *The impact of VET placements on national education in Central and Eastern Europe: Desk research report* [Non-public document].
- Zimmermann, J., & Neyer, F. J. (2013). Do we become a different person when hitting the road? Personality development of sojourners. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 105(3), 515–530. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033019>

Annexes



Annex A: Additional statistical data



Table A1.

Results of one-way ANOVA: differences in teachers' relationships in school by size of town where school is located

Descriptive statistics

Size of town	N	Mean
15,000 or less	252	4.18
15,001-100,000	364	3.91
More than 100,000	271	3.93

One-way ANOVA

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between groups	12.570	2	6.285	7.835	< .001
Within groups	710.707	886	0.802		
Total	723.277	888			

Effect size

Measure	Value
Eta squared (η^2)	.017

Note. Post hoc tests were not interpreted. Effect size indicates a small magnitude of differences.



Table A2.

Results of one-way ANOVA: differences in teachers' professional development by the size of town where school is located

Descriptive statistics

Size of town	N	Mean
15,000 or less	252	4.09
15,001-100,000	362	3.88
More than 100,000	268	3.88

One-way ANOVA

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between groups	7.695	2	3.848	4.826	.008
Within groups	702.396	881	0.797		
Total	710.092	883			

Effect size

Measure	Value
Eta squared (η^2)	.011

Note. Effect size indicates a very small magnitude of differences. Post hoc tests were not interpreted.

**Table A3.**

Results of one-way ANOVA: differences in teachers' foreign language competencies by the size of town where school is located

Descriptive statistics

Size of town	N	Mean
15,000 or less	254	4.01
15,001-100,000	364	3.69
More than 100,000	271	3.71

Robust test of mean differences (Welch ANOVA)

Statistic	df1	df2	F	Sig.
Welch ANOVA	2	-	8.76	< .001

Effect size

Measure	Value
Eta squared (η^2)	.019

Note. Welch ANOVA was applied due to unequal variances. Effect size indicates a small magnitude of differences. Post hoc tests were not interpreted.

**Table A4.**

Results of one-way ANOVA: differences in quality of teaching indicator by school size

Descriptive statistics

School size	N	Mean
Less than 250 students	108	3.57
250-750 students	466	3.76
More than 750 students	307	3.88

One-way ANOVA

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between groups	7.952	2	3.976	4.742	.009
Within groups	737.067	879	0.839		
Total	745.020	881			

Effect size

Measure	Value
Eta squared (η^2)	.011

Note. Effect size indicates a very small magnitude of differences. Post hoc tests were not interpreted due to unequal group sizes.

**Table A5.**

Results of one-way ANOVA: quality of school infrastructure by the size of town where school is located

Descriptive statistics

Size of locality	N	Mean
15,000 inhabitants or less	253	3.36
15,001-100,000 inhabitants	360	3.05
More than 100,000 inhabitants	269	3.03

One-way ANOVA

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between groups	17.454	2	8.727	5.815	.003
Within groups	1320.569	880	1.501		
Total	1338.023	882			

Effect size

Measure	Value
Eta squared (η^2)	.013

Note. Effect size indicates a small magnitude of differences. Post hoc tests were not interpreted due to unequal group sizes.

Annex B Questionnaire: English version

Introduction

This survey concerns the outcomes of Erasmus+ vocational placements. It aims to determine how vocational schools employ the Erasmus+ VET mobility of learners in the teaching process. It also explores to what extent the gained knowledge and experience from abroad translates into schools' daily practices and functioning in the local education market and the national education system.

This international research project is carried out in vocational schools implementing KA1 VET Erasmus+ projects in calls for proposals launched between 2014-2020. Your feedback is essential to us and will help us improve the quality of our projects in the future.

School particulars

1. How many learners are in your school?

- Less than 250
- 250-500
- 501-750
- 751-1,000
- More than 1,000

2. How many residents live in town/city/village where your school is located?

- Less than 3,000
- 3,000-15,000
- 15,001-100,000
- 100,001-500,000
- More than 500,000

3. Please select the closest match below to the industry or occupational area in which you carry out your placements /multiple choice question/

- Agriculture, forestry, fishing, environment
- ICT and IT
- Electronics, manufacturing, mining and quarrying
- Construction, electricity, gas, water, and utilities supply and management
- Tourism, catering, hospitality and accommodation
- Education, public administration and defence
- Other administration and services
- Medical, human health, social work
- Culture, arts, entertainment and recreation
- Other (please specify)

4. What is the scale of VET fields covered by organised mobilities?

- We cover all the VET fields we teach at school
- We cover most of the VET fields we teach at school
- We cover a minor part of the VET fields we teach in school

5. Please indicate the number of Erasmus+ VET learners' placements carried out in the following calendar years.

Year	Less than 20	20-50	51-100	More than 100
2014	☐	☐	☐	☐
2015	☐	☐	☐	☐
2016	☐	☐	☐	☐
2017	☐	☐	☐	☐
2018	☐	☐	☐	☐
2019	☐	☐	☐	☐
2020	☐	☐	☐	☐

Mobility individual impact

6. How do VET placements affect the knowledge, skills and attitudes of learners who took part in the training abroad? To what extent do you agree they positively impact the following areas?

- Improving communication in a foreign language
- Broadening the knowledge of foreign language general vocabulary
- Broadening the knowledge of foreign language professional vocabulary
- Expanding vocational skills
- Increasing team-working skills
- Increasing ICT skills
- Increasing awareness of the characteristics of individual workplaces
- Enhancing ability to work in an international environment
- Increasing motivation towards learning in general
- Increasing motivation towards learners' VET field
- Increasing motivation towards foreign language learning
- Increasing communication skills
- Increasing independence in the learning process
- Enhancement of relations with other learners at your school
- Enhancement of relations with their teachers at your school
- Enhancement of intercultural skills
- Enhancement of relations with your school community
- Increasing tolerance attitudes
- Increasing cultural awareness
- Increasing positive impact on educational and career pathways of VET graduates

Response scale for all statements:

☐ Not at all ☐ Only a little ☐ To some extent ☐ A lot ☐ Completely

7. How do VET placements affect the knowledge, skills and attitudes of learners who DID NOT take part in the training abroad? To what extent do you agree they positively impact the following areas?

- Improving communication in a foreign language
- Broadening the knowledge of foreign language general vocabulary
- Broadening the knowledge of foreign language professional vocabulary
- Expanding vocational skills
- Increasing team-working skills
- Increasing ICT skills
- Increasing awareness of the characteristics of individual workplaces

- Enhancing ability to work in an international environment
- Increasing motivation towards learning in general
- Increasing motivation towards learners' VET field
- Increasing motivation towards foreign language learning
- Increasing communication skills
- Increasing independence in the learning process
- Enhancement of relations with other learners at your school
- Enhancement of relations with their teachers at your school
- Enhancement of intercultural skills
- Enhancement of relations with your school community
- Increasing tolerance attitudes
- Increasing cultural awareness
- Increasing positive impact on educational and career pathways of VET graduates

Response scale for all statements:

☐ Not at all ☐ Only a little ☐ To some extent ☐ A lot ☐ Completely

8. How do the learners' placements impact the teaching staff? To what extent do you agree they positively impact the following areas?

- Improving communication in a foreign language
- Broadening the knowledge of general vocabulary
- Broadening the knowledge of professional vocabulary
- Applying new teaching methods
- Increasing the involvement towards schools' internationalisation
- Increasing tolerance towards other cultures, attitudes, and worldviews
- Increasing the involvement in the school community
- Enhancing the quality of contacts with learners
- Enhancing the quality of contacts with teachers and other colleagues
- Increasing contact with schools and other organisations from abroad
- Increasing contacts with foreign colleagues
- Increasing the job motivation
- Overcoming professional burnout
- Increasing the involvement in the school's daily work
- Increasing innovativeness
- Increasing proactiveness

Response scale for all statements:

☐ Not at all ☐ Only a little ☐ To some extent ☐ A lot ☐ Completely

9. Who accompanies the learners during their placements abroad? /multiple choice question/

- Language teachers
- Vocational teachers
- Other teachers
- Other non-teaching staff
- Nobody

Mobility organizational impact

10. How did the learners' placements impact your school daily practices? To what extent do you agree they positively impact the following areas?

- Learners have more contacts with their peers from different classes.
- Learners are more tolerant towards people of other cultures.
- The school's prestige and positive image got increased in the town/region.
- Parents of our learners are more interested in our school's project activities.
- Parents are more involved in the school's daily work.
- The number of candidates applying to the school got increased.
- Learners are more eager to participate in Erasmus+ projects.
- Erasmus+ mobility is built into vocational curricula.
- The placements have an overall impact on human capital development at the school.
- The placements have an impact on teachers.
- The placements have an impact on other staff.
- The cooperation with local enterprises got increased.
- The local enterprises are more involved in the mobility implementation.
- The local authorities pay more attention to the school internationalisation activities.

Response scale for all statements:

☐ Not at all ☐ Only a little ☐ To some extent ☐ A lot ☐ Completely

11. How did the learners' placements impact the teaching process in our school? To what extent do you agree they positively impact the following areas?

- The curricula have been modified after the mobility implementation.
- New elements were implemented in the curricula.
- The teachers Implement extracurricular innovations into their teaching.
- The mobility affected the core and content of domestic practical training.
- The learners' participation in vocational education and skills competitions and excellence events got increased.
- The learners' outcomes got improved after their mobility completion.

- Other learners' outcomes got improved thanks to the mobility implementation.
- The mobility had a positive impact on the quality of teaching during classes.
- The mobility had a positive impact on the quality of practical training.
- The mobility had an impact on the quality of equipment and other facilities at the school.
- The mobility had an impact on infrastructural changes related to teaching process (i.e. modernisation of school's premises).
- The mobility contributed to elaboration of new teaching material.
- The accompanying persons share their knowledge with other teachers after the mobility completion.

Response scale for all statements:

☐ Not at all ☐ Only a little ☐ To some extent ☐ A lot ☐ Completely

Mobility systemic impact

12. What was the learners' placements impact on other institutions with which our school cooperates on daily basis? To what extent do you agree they positively impact the following areas?

- Changes in other schools' teaching practices and methods
- Changes in other schools' daily practices (i.e. organisation of teaching and learning, supervision, monitoring)
- Changes in other institutions with which the school cooperates on daily basis
- Changes in local government institutions
- Changes in local communities
- Changes in the local enterprise sector
- Changes in the organisation of vocational education on the local/regional level
- Changes in practical training on the local/regional level

Response scale for all statements:

☐ Not at all ☐ Only a little ☐ To some extent ☐ A lot ☐ Completely

13. What was the placements' broader impact on other institutions involved in shaping the VET education system? To what extent do you agree they positively impact the following areas?

- Changes in education law and other regulations
- Changes on the ministry level
- Changes in the organisation of vocational education on the national level
- Changes in practical training on the national level

Response scale for all statements:

☐ Not at all ☐ Only a little ☐ To some extent ☐ A lot ☐ Completely

14. To what extent do you agree that the Erasmus+ placements...

- ... play an important role in our school.
- ... play an important role in our local education market.
- ... play an important role in enhancing vocational skills of our learners and staff.
- ... play an important role in enhancing key competencies and transversal skills of our learners and staff.
- ... play an important role in enhancing intercultural skills of our learners and staff.
- ... play an important role in enhancing foreign language skills of our learners and staff.
- ... play an important role in the teaching quality assurance.
- ... play an important role in preparing our learners for vocational and skills excellence competitions.
- ... helps our learners in achieving high positions during vocational and skills excellence competitions.
- ... attract the attention of local media to the school activities.

Response scale for all statements:

☐ Not at all ☐ Only a little ☐ To some extent ☐ A lot ☐ Completely

15. Did you notice any broader impact of the Erasmus+ placements on systemic and/or national level? To what extent do you agree that the Erasmus+ placements...

- ... play an important role in national VET education.
- ... play an important role in shaping the curricula in our country.
- ... play an important role in the national strategic approach towards VET quality assurance.
- ... play an important role in shaping the quality of practical training in our country.
- ... lead to recommendations for VET stakeholders and decision-makers.

16. What are the obstacles and challenges regarding the broader organisation and positive systemic impact of Erasmus+ placements?

- Learners are not willing to use the knowledge and skills gained abroad.
- Learners are not likely to share the gained knowledge with their peers.
- Teachers do not speak the foreign language sufficiently.
- Teachers are not motivated enough to travel abroad with learners.
- Teachers face family obstacles to travel abroad with learners.
- Teachers have financial problems to travel abroad with learners.
- It is difficult to implement changes regarding teaching practices in our school.
- It is difficult to implement changes regarding other daily practices in our school.
- Teachers do not share their knowledge sufficiently.

- Other teachers are not willing to use the gained knowledge
- Other institutions are not interested in the results achieved by our school

Response scale for all statements:

☐ Not at all ☐ Only a little ☐ To some extent ☐ A lot ☐ Completely

17. How the recognition of mobility outcomes is carried out at your school?

(Open-ended question)

18. Are the Erasmus+ VET placements' outcomes recognised at national level? If yes, how such the recognition is carried out?

(Open-ended question)

19. Have you noticed any negative impact of Erasmus+ placements on learners or on your school in general?

(Open-ended question)

20. What other challenges and problems does your school face after the placements' completion?

(Open-ended question)

21. What actions can be undertaken to avoid or solve the abovementioned problems?

(Open-ended question)

22. What other impact have the mobilities had on the broader socioeconomic environment of schools and local communities?

(Open-ended question)

23. Do you have any other comments regarding the impact of VET placements on national education in Central and Eastern Europe?

(Open-ended question)

This report presents the findings of the transnational study *Impact of VET Placements on National Education in Central and Eastern Europe*, carried out by the Erasmus+ National Agencies in six countries: Czechia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia. Drawing on quantitative and qualitative research, it provides a cross-country analysis of the effects of Erasmus+ mobility projects under Key Action 1 at multiple levels. In addition to analysing the impact of mobility on the competences and attitudes of participating students and teachers, the report examines its effects on vocational schools, their organisational development, and cooperation with local stakeholders. It also addresses broader systemic issues, highlighting the policy and institutional conditions that enable mobility and support the integration of international experience into national education systems.

The report offers valuable insights into the factors that contribute to stronger mobility outcomes and the role of Erasmus+ in enhancing the quality and internationalisation of vocational education and training.

Foundation for the Development of the Education System (FRSE) operates since 1993. It is the Polish National Agency of the Erasmus+ Programme and the European Solidarity Corps for 2021-2027, also implementing projects of the European Funds for Social Development (FERS). The Foundation is responsible for other European educational and informative initiatives in Poland, such as eTwinning, Eurodesk, Eurydice, Europass, Euroguidance, EVET and EPALE. It supports cooperation with countries in the East via the Polish-Lithuanian Youth Exchange Fund, the Polish-Ukrainian Council of Youth Exchange, SALTO-EECA Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre.