



Welcome speech opening the EuroApprenticeship seminar, the 6th May 2013

JP Farrugia

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first tell you how pleased I am to welcome you at the premises of the Permanent Assembly of Skilled Craft Chambers. You are here at the House of Crafts, which you'll see is open towards Europe.

For those who remember, we had the first network meeting two years ago, we were about thirty people. Today, we are more than eighty, representing business or sector organisations, Chambers, LLP Agencies, Regions, Training providers,

Eighty people coming from all over Europe to work on a common perspective about enhancing European mobility for apprentices. Many thanks again for being here.

For many years APCMA was strongly involved in European exchange and mobility of apprentices. Let me tell you why.

For apprentices, transnational mobility is very important because it promotes the acquisition and exchanges of technical know-how, it promotes the acquisition of international skills and personal autonomy and in particular the spirit of entrepreneurship and taking initiatives that are necessary for business life.

For small business, the European mobility of apprentices is very important because it supports the changes and evolutions they are undergoing

- A growing number of craft enterprises are developed on a European and international markets;
- The introduction of new technologies, new production processes, new expectations of clients, needs them to adapt.
- Technical expertise is not in itself a guarantee of success, it must be accompanied by an ability to adapt and acquire new skills that enable action to change. And we know that the European experience can develop these skills and accelerate the development.

And finally for apprenticeship itself, European mobility is of the highest interest.

First in terms of attractiveness : being able to experience European pathways as an apprentice puts you in a parity of esteem with higher education students. Then in terms of quality : we can see every day the influence of European exchanges between the training centers, for the dissemination of best practices.

All these are reasons why APCMA and the network of Skilled craft Chambers are committed to European exchanges and mobility of apprentices.

As you may know, there are 130 Chambers in France, at local or at Regional Level. They are responsible for the vocational training and education of one hundred thousand apprentices. They are involved for many years in the implementation of learning mobility projects. And I would like to take the opportunity of this meeting to thank them again for the work that has been done.

APCMA is committed in this field together with UEAPME, with its European partners and of course, with all the organisations that are represented.

As you may know, it has been a hard work to convince the government to enforce and implement the right of apprentices to have the same possibilities as students to access Europe. The fact that we are here today is a direct outcome of this work.

The fact that the European Commission asked us three years ago to monitor and to manage a "network of networks" of European mobility of apprentices is the result of years of discussions to reach a mutual understanding about the fact that apprentice also should have their "Erasmus".

We have implemented within the European programs, a framework and the tools for the development of European exchanges and the construction of a genuine area of mutual trust for mobility in vocational training. I think particularly of the work we have done about ECVET and the European Qualification Framework.

Finally, for France, thanks to the work done daily by the Skilled craft Chambers, the Apprenticeship training centers and their European partners, with the support of regional and professional organizations, we have today 3 000 apprentices going abroad out of the 100,000 apprentices trained in our network. This represents an improvement of 70% compared to 2008.

And our ambition is to have 5,000 apprentices who are able to have a European experience until 2015.

As you can see we share a great ambition, which gives us a great responsibility towards companies and apprentices. I know that we share this ambitions together, and I thank you for having accepted our invitation to continue the activities of the EuroApprenticeship Project.

The first phase of our work is yet to the end, as our contract with the European Commission will stop next month. Together with the members of the steering committee and all the partners, we decided to continue.

We do have known to invent the next steps together.

I count on your commitment and you can count on the commitment and support of the team from APCMA.

I wish you a good work and a nice stay in Paris.