

EAS seminar – What next?
A new deal for the future network activities and platform
Intervention UEAPME - Liliane Volozinskis - PARIS 06/06/13

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear partners

It is a great pleasure to be with you today and tomorrow for celebrating the mobility of apprentices, and its dedicated platform “Euroapprenticeship”.

It represents the achievement of 3,5 years of work dedicated to improving the **quality and quantity of learning mobility opportunities** for Apprentices in small companies and notably micro-companies.

Let me just go back to the genesis of EAS. UEAPME, the European employers organisation representing Crafts and SMEs in Europe, has been for years strongly committed to promote transnational mobility of young people in alternating VET and apprentices.

We started more than 15 years ago, acting and lobbying in favour of the learning mobility of young people in vocational education and training (VET).

The idea at the time was to create an “Erasmus-type” scheme for apprentices because we were and are still strongly convinced about the role of Learning mobility for young people in education.

It is also a matter of equity for young people in VET and of parity of esteem between VET and Higher Education.

No need to recall the added value of mobility. Today **Learning mobility is recognised** as an asset for **both employers and young people** at EU and national levels.

Traditionally European mobility schemes have been more popular for tertiary education students with the famous “Erasmus” programme.

It has been and still is less common for young people in VET and even less for apprentices. We well know the reasons behind despite the Leonardo da Vinci programme.

Our request for similar **transnational mobility periods for young people in VET** has been first heard by the EU Parliament.

I would like to pay a special tribute to Ms Guy Quint, Member of EP during 10 years until 2009. She has been the first one convinced by our request and she succeeded to mobilise EU funds.

The EP initiative has notably triggered the launching by the EU Commission, of an open call for proposal in 2009 and EAS is born.

In recent years many new initiatives have been taken at EU level to promote mobility of apprentices and YP in VET. Just to mention a few:

Youth on the Move with the objective of 20% of mobile youngsters in Europe in 2020, the Copenhagen process on VET, the EU Credit transfer system in VET, the Lifelong learning programme.

In the last months **a new impetus has been given at EU level to vocational education and training and notably to work-based learning and apprenticeship with** major new political initiatives supporting VET and mobility:

- **“Erasmus for all”** - the next EU programme for E&T for 2014-2020 – which puts mobility and sustainable partnerships as a high priority.
- **“Rethinking education”** which gives a strong recognition to the value of VET, work-based learning and apprenticeship
- The framework of actions on Youth Employment negotiated by the EU social partners and to be presented on 11 June
- and last but not least the **“European Alliance for Apprenticeship”**.

This tripartite initiative will be signed by UEAPME together with the EU social partners, the EU Commission and the Council in Leipzig on 02 July during the “World skills” event. **One of the key objectives of the Alliance is the promotion of apprenticeship.**

As UEAPME we will be proud to further promote **EAS** in this context.

And there I would like to particularly thank APCMA as leader and manager of the EAS project and its highly dedicated team for the tremendous work done:

Sabine Weger, Magdalena Cremonesi, Philippe Perfetti under the leadership of Jean-Patrick Farrugia. Without “the dream team” we would never have reached what we reached today.

As you are well aware **Euroapprenticeship – “THE” mobility web platform is currently focusing on 3 main dimensions:**

- a. **Informing: enterprises, apprentices and training centres** on the best ways and good reasons to be mobile, proposing a wide range of tools for organising this mobility.
- b. **Networking:** for facilitating sustainable partnerships between organisations composed of competent authorities and intermediate bodies for mobility of apprentices. These partnerships include a strong sectoral and regional dimension.
- c. **Promoting mobility** through quality by creating mutual trust via tools such as peer learning and last but not least **a EAS quality label** for small businesses involved in mobility.

Our final objective is to make **learning mobility** of apprentices **the rule and no longer the exception in Europe.**

This is where we stand today. The EU project as such will be over in June. But the end of the project should not mean the end of our activities.

I am strongly convinced that we are all willing to extend this work after June. Your sole presence today in this room is the best proof of your willingness to continue this journey together.

From now on, we could have considered 3 options:

1 – to stop today, taking stock of our achievements in line with the project terms defined by the Commission in 2009.

2 – to continue our work with the platform and network on the same basis, trying to promote as much as possible the learning mobility of apprentices with the tools we successfully fully or partly developed.

3 - to have a greater ambition, promoting further this learning mobility of apprentices while innovating and anticipating the evolutions. **Our choice has been definitively to turn to the future.**

Building on our very promising EAS results and taking into account the new political momentum for initial VET, we have to adapt our platform, our network and our activities to the diversity of systems and practices in Europe.

I very much hope that you are ready to join us to this new adventure.

All together we will build a unique community of practitioners and policy makers supporting the learning mobility of young people in initial VET including apprentices. Let's act again together for the future. I wish **US** a very successful seminar and hope to see you again in one year time for celebrating our next achievements.
