
INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY
IN APPRENTICESHIPS: FOCUS
ON LONG-TERM MOBILITY
FRANCE



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CHAPTER 1.

Introduction

Vocational education and training are, by tradition, central public policy priorities in France. Thus, mentoring has existed since the Middle Ages, and apprenticeship since the 19th century. The initial training pathways that give learners the status of student consist of diploma courses, and are divided between general, technological and/or vocational education with specific programmes of studies. They are managed by the ministries concerned and mainly the Ministry of National Education and Youth.

Two tracks, both offering learners the status of employee, provide access to a qualification by alternating learning in a training centre and in a company and can be considered as apprenticeship schemes: the scheme offered under the framework of the apprenticeship contract and the scheme offered under the framework of the professionalisation contract. These two options aim to raise the general level of qualifications, reduce the number of young people entering the labour market without any qualifications, improve professional integration and meet the needs of companies ⁽¹⁾. In this report, the term ‘apprentice’ refers to learners in both schemes, although in the national context, the term is formally used only for the learners enrolled in the first scheme.

Apprenticeship under the apprenticeship contract is aimed at young people aged 16 to 29 who have left school and pursue their initial training ⁽²⁾. It includes general, theoretical vocational and practical vocational training to acquire a State diploma (level 3 to 8 in the National and European Qualification Frameworks - NQF and EQF respectively) or a professional qualification registered in the French National Registry of Vocational Certifications (RNCP, *Répertoire national des certifications professionnelles*) ⁽³⁾. During the apprenticeship contract, the young person is an apprentice, i.e. he/she is both a salaried employee and a student in an Apprentice Training Centre (CFA, *Centre de formation d'apprentis*). In most

(1) Appendix on vocational training of the draft budget bill 2019. https://www.performance-publique.budget.gouv.fr/sites/performance_publique/files/files/documents/jaunes-2019/jaune2019_formation_professionnelle-W.pdf

(2) Cf the cross-country classification elaborated by Cedefop: France apprenticeship system belongs to group B, “apprenticeship as a type of VET delivery”. Cedefop (2018). *Apprenticeship schemes in European countries - A cross-nation overview* https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4166_en.pdf

(3) Article L6211-1 and followings of the Labour code <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCode.do?idArticle=LEGIARTI000037385884&idSectionTA=LEGISCTA000006178183&cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006072050&dateTexte=20190708>

cases, the CFA is a private organisation managed by the professional branches or the chambers of commerce and industry. It can also operate in a vocational high school or university ⁽⁴⁾.

Apprenticeship under the professionalisation contract is accessible not only to young people under the age of 26 but also to jobseekers aged 26 and over. It makes it possible to acquire or complete a qualification (diploma, level 4 or more in the NQF/EQF vocational qualification registered in the RNCP, Professional Qualification Certificate) and is intended to be more flexible in its operation (duration, customisation, validation).

In 2016-17, young people undergoing apprenticeship training accounted for 4.9% of all young people aged between 16 and 25 ⁽⁵⁾. In 2017, more than 500 000 new contracts were recorded in the two apprenticeship schemes, of which 58% were apprenticeship contracts and 42% were professionalisation contracts. At the end of 2017, there were almost 419 800 learners under the apprenticeship contract across France and 241 400 under the professionalisation contract ⁽⁶⁾.

The vocational training and apprenticeship system was profoundly transformed by the “law for the freedom to choose one's professional future” of September 2018. The development of European and international mobility for learners in the two apprenticeship schemes is a political priority, integrated into the new provisions adopted. The Ministry of Labour has set a target of 15 000 learners in the two apprenticeship schemes to participate in European and international mobility by 2022 ⁽⁷⁾. A mission carried out at the end of 2017 by the MEP Mr Jean Arthuis, prior to the reform, made it possible to identify obstacles to the mobility of apprentices, and to issue recommendations for the development of “Erasmus Pro” ⁽⁸⁾.

⁽⁴⁾ Articles L6222-1 and followings of the Labour code

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCodeArticle.do?idArticle=LEGIARTI000037385936&cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006072050&dateTexte=20190708&oldAction=rechCodeArticle&fastReqId=576181393&nbResultRech=1>

⁽⁵⁾ Ministry of national education and youth (2018). *Repères et références statistiques sur les enseignements, la formation et la recherche 2018 [Benchmarks and statistical references on teaching, training and research 2018]*.

https://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/RERS_2018/22/8/depp-2018-RERS-chap-05_1018228.pdf

⁽⁶⁾ Appendix on vocational training of the draft budget bill 2019. https://www.performance-publique.budget.gouv.fr/sites/performance_publique/files/files/documents/jaunes-2019/jaune2019_formation_professionnelle-W.pdf

⁽⁷⁾ Ministry of Labour, press release <https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/actualites/presse/communiqués-de-presse/article/faire-decoller-l-erasmus-pour-les-alternants>

⁽⁸⁾ Arthuis, J. (2018). *Erasmus Pro, lever les freins à la mobilité des apprentis [Erasmus Pro, removing obstacles to the mobility of apprentices]*. https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/rapport_arthuis_-_18_janvier.pdf.

IGAS (2017). *La mobilité européenne des apprentis [European mobility of apprentices]* http://www.igas.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/2017-048R_.pdf

The European and international mobility of apprentices is already a reality, through long-standing projects led by apprenticeship stakeholders, and pilot projects conducted since 2016 at a European level to experiment with longer periods of mobility ⁽⁹⁾. However, it remains limited in scope, compared to the mobility of pupils and students. Thus, only 5 300 learners in apprenticeship schemes benefited from Erasmus+ mobility in 2016-17 (76.5% on apprenticeship contracts and 23.5% on professionalisation contracts). For upper secondary school apprentices, 69% were men and 31% women; approximately one third were preparing for a level 3 diploma and nearly two thirds were completing a level 4 diploma ⁽¹⁰⁾.

Data from the European Commission on the mobility of apprentices show that the French opt mainly for short periods of mobility (19 days on average) in countries bordering France ⁽¹¹⁾. Finally, the Erasmus+ agency specifies that the mobility periods of 3 months or more involving apprentices (14% of apprentices on mobility) mainly concerns those in higher education.

⁽⁹⁾ Consortiums European Apprenticeship Ambassadors and European Apprenticeship Ambassadors – Go Further! https://www.euroapp.fr/apprentissage-europe_experimentations_european-apprenticeship-ambassadors.phtml

⁽¹⁰⁾ Data calculated by the French agency Erasmus + Education & training. Observatoire Erasmus + (2019). *Note n° 11 - L'alternance dans Erasmus + : un premier état des lieux* [Note 11 - The alternating training in Erasmus +: a first inventory of the situation]. http://www.agence-erasmus.fr/docs/2781_observatoire_11.pdf

⁽¹¹⁾ *Ibid*

CHAPTER 2.

Exogenous factors influencing mobility of apprentices at upper secondary level

2.1. Economic sectors and actors

The quality of its infrastructure, the excellence of “innovation” and scientific activities and the productivity of the workforce are structural assets for the competitiveness of the French economy. This one is characterised by its strong international outlook: in 2016, France was ranked 4th in the world for exports of services and 8th in exports of goods ⁽¹²⁾.

More than 40 000 French companies have operations abroad, with a preponderance of large multinational companies. 28 600 foreign companies operate in France, employing two million people. French manufacturing know-how attracts foreign investment in the industrial sector, and R&D support attracts those in the services sector ⁽¹³⁾.

Trade-based companies, even though they traditionally offer a local service anchored in a local or regional market, also have needs related to their integration into a wider international context: to comply to European standards and rules, to adapt to changes in consumer habits and expectations, and to speed up their development in connection with technological changes and digitisation.

A link between the internationalisation of operations and apprentices can be established for large multinational companies that have different branches/subsidiaries in Europe, and which deploy strategies for the internationalisation of training pathways for their employees-apprentices ⁽¹⁴⁾. Networks of large companies involved in promoting apprenticeships are

⁽¹²⁾ Business France (2018). Note on World Competitiveness Yearbook 2018
https://www.businessfrance.fr/Media/Default/PROCOM/Articles%20-%20News/IMD_EDL_2018.pdf

⁽¹³⁾ Business France (2018). *Bilan des investissements internationaux en France [Summary of international investment in France]*.
https://www.businessfrance.fr/Media/Production/PROCOM/Bilan_int_INVEST-FR-BD%202018.pdf

⁽¹⁴⁾ For instance: Airbus, Siemens, BASF, L'Oréal, ...

developing European apprenticeship programmes, such as the Apprenticeship Innovation Foundation (FIPA, *Fondation Innovations Pour les Apprentissages*)⁽¹⁵⁾.

Various professional sectors have set objectives to develop European apprenticeship pathways. Thus, the social partners in construction and public works have included an objective of 1 000 apprentice mobilities per year from 2020 in their strategic plan, which amounts to a tripling of the current numbers involved in the sectoral CCCA-BTP (committee for the cooperation and coordination of construction and public works apprenticeship, *Comité de concertation et de coordination de l'apprentissage du bâtiment et des travaux publics*) apprenticeship network⁽¹⁶⁾. The joint collecting body (OPCA, *Organisme paritaire collecteur agréé*) responsible for automotive services, the National Association for Automotive Training (ANFA, *Association nationale pour la formation automobile*) has been encouraging and supporting mobility within the sector for over 20 years⁽¹⁷⁾. The NETINVET network aims to promote mobility in Europe leading to formal qualifications for vocational training learners in the international trade, transport and logistics sectors⁽¹⁸⁾.

However, the link between the mobility of apprentices and the internationalisation (or not) of the operations of the companies that employ them is not automatic. Thus, some companies may have an international dimension but may not be open to developing the international mobility of their apprentices, where others will be, even though their location and/or activities are limited to the national sphere. Mobility has thus been developed also in small and medium-sized enterprises in trades and crafts (some with, some without international operations), by networks such as for instance the Permanent Assembly of Chambers of Trades and Crafts (APCMA, *Assemblée Permanente des chambres de Métiers et de l'Artisanat*), provided that these companies perceive that the development of specific skills abroad by their apprentices is in their interest (see 1.2 below).

⁽¹⁵⁾ Created in 2016 to promote alternating training programs under the impetus of the EDF Group, Fipa now gathers 13 major companies, including Thales, Total, Veolia, Sanofi, La Poste, la Société Générale, BNP Paribas, Air France. <https://www.fondation-fipa.net/>

⁽¹⁶⁾ CCCA-BTP (2018). Mobilité européenne : se professionnaliser et augmenter son employabilité [European mobility: professionalizing and increasing employability], *Hors-série CCCA-BTP n°12*, Education permanente, 2018-4. http://www.education-permanente.fr/public/articles/articles.php?id_revue=1753&id_article=2729#resume2729

⁽¹⁷⁾ <https://www.anfa-auto.fr/centres-de-formation/favoriser-la-mobilite-europeenne>

⁽¹⁸⁾ <https://www.netinvet.eu/fr/>

2.2. Dynamics of skills demand and supply at the medium level occupation level

The French labour market has been marked by polarisation since the 1980s: increase in employment in the most qualified professions in almost all sectors, decline in certain low qualified jobs in industry and agriculture; strong growth in certain low qualified jobs in the tertiary sector (personal services, household help and childcare assistants) ⁽¹⁹⁾.

Labour market segments with varied levels of qualification are divided into two subsets ⁽²⁰⁾:

- (a) one whose workforce is falling: “traditional industry undergoing restructuring”, (24% of private sector employees in 2010) and high and medium technology industry (7% of the workforce);
- (b) the other encompassing the employment sectors that rely heavily on a young workforce, with a high workforce turnover and relatively low wages: trades (21% of the workforce) and the casual service sector labour market involving individuals with low qualifications (17%).

There is a lack of research dealing with the links between trends in the employment market and intermediate qualification levels, and with the question of the international mobility of apprentices.

However, empirical findings can be drawn from the experience of existing stakeholders in the field and projects.

Given the need to invest in increasing the skills of their employees and managers, companies may see the international mobility of their apprentices as one method for developing specific advanced technical skills.

External mobility will thus be oriented towards the “tapping” of technical skills identified as specific to certain European countries: for example, woodworking professions in Nordic countries; automotive industries in Germany, Italy, Spain, arts; and art restoration professions in Italy, etc. The same is true for incoming mobility in France when it comes to the culinary arts, such as baking and pastry.

⁽¹⁹⁾ DARES (2015). *En 30 ans, forte progression de l'emploi dans les métiers qualifiés et dans certains métiers peu qualifiés de services [In 30 years, strong growth in employment in skilled trades and in some low-skilled service trades]*. <https://dares.travail-emploi.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/2015-028.pdf>

⁽²⁰⁾ Analysis carried out in 2016 based on the number of employees in the private sector in 2010. CEREQ (2016). *Typologie sectorielle des modes de gestion de la main d'œuvre [Sectoral typology of workforce management modes]*. www.cereq.fr/content/download/16701/134612/file/netdoc157.pdf

Mobility backed by the Trades and qualifications campuses ⁽²¹⁾ and linked to professions responding to the challenges of climate change, energy transition and digital technology are among the objectives set by the 19th Franco-German Council of Ministers ⁽²²⁾.

European mobility brings a set of secondary benefits, apart from the development of transversal skills and specific business skills. Thus, it is particularly rewarding for companies' apprentices and teams; and for companies with foreign customers, it is particularly interesting. It can also be a selling point in terms of the attractiveness and dynamism of the company.

The employer's perception of the potential benefits, in terms of skills and competitive advantage, of their apprentices' international mobility, is a key factor in the development of mobility. In fact, evidence from pilots reveals great benefits for learners and companies, especially from long-term mobility (See chapter 3).

2.3. Attitude of employers towards training

Company size is one of the main factors determining attitudes to training: overall, small companies are less active, in terms of training, than large ones ⁽²³⁾. In 2010, 76% of companies that did not carry out any training were very small enterprises (19 employees and fewer). These companies often needed support from their approved joint collecting body (OPCA, *Organisme paritaire collecteur agréé*) to manage their training budget. In addition to size, the higher the proportion of managers or intermediate professional levels in a company the higher the level of training tends to be.

Furthermore, only a quarter of private sector companies are actively involved in a structured skills management approach, with marked gaps depending on the sector of activity ⁽²⁴⁾. Thus, in sectors with high added value, investment in the skills of employees appears to be a necessary condition for coping with

²¹ The 'Trades and qualifications campus' label (*Campus des métiers et des qualifications – CMQ*) brings together secondary and higher education VET institutions, research centres and companies. Cf <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/france-excellence-vet-new-generation-trades-and-qualifications-campus>

⁽²²⁾ https://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/07_-_juillet/60/9/Feuille-de-route-France-Allemagne-Education-nationale-2017_899609.pdf

⁽²³⁾ CEREQ (2016). *Dispositif d'enquêtes sur les formations et itinéraires des salariés - Premiers indicateurs du volet entreprises [Survey on employee training and career development - First indicators of the investigation concerning businesses]*. www.cereq.fr/content/download/16720/134826/file/netdoc156.pdf

⁽²⁴⁾ CEREQ (2019). *Les déterminants de la gestion des compétences au sein des entreprises [The determinants of skills management in companies]*. <http://www.cereq.fr/content/download/22748/194699/file/WP7.pdf>

change. Another example is the increased use of jobs and skills planning management approaches (GPEC, *Gestion prévisionnelle des emplois et des compétences*) by companies in the extractive and energy industries sector, and in the high value-added tertiary sectors.

Very small businesses and crafts businesses, which use apprenticeships, are less well equipped than large companies in terms of managing their training, particularly when they do not have a dedicated human resources department. Including a training period abroad for their apprentices requires increased external support. In addition to the need to convince the company of the benefits it will derive from such training (see 1.2 above), this support involves several areas: administrative and financial support, training pathway engineering and pedagogical engineering. The required attention to detail (see 2.8 below) and the complexity of the procedures to be implemented necessitate a high degree of investment on the part of external parties carrying out these tasks.

The 2018 reform confirms the development of the European and international mobility of apprentices as part of the mission of apprenticeship training centres (CFA), with the appointment of a dedicated staff, possibly including “mobility advisors”. These will play a key role in informing and motivating partner companies ⁽²⁵⁾.

The attitude of employers towards training in regard with the companies’ size, suggests that mobility will be more easily implemented in larger companies.

2.4. International qualifications existence (and extent)

For NQF/EQF level 3 and 4 qualifications, some projects have been developed offering the possibility to obtain a sectoral qualification identical between different countries ⁽²⁶⁾. Other projects are promoting the development of sectoral European certificates ⁽²⁷⁾. However, these projects are not directly linked with mobility.

⁽²⁵⁾ Agence Erasmus + France Education & Formation et al. (2018). *Les compétences d'un(e) référent(e) mobilité européenne et internationale dans un centre de formation d'apprentis [The skills of a European and international mobility referent in an apprenticeship training centre]*. http://www.agence-erasmus.fr/docs/2731_guide_cfa_final.pdf

⁽²⁶⁾ For instance, the same training between France and Belgium in the construction and public works sector.

⁽²⁷⁾ For instance, in the area of hairdressing, the European association of national employers' organisations in hairdressing has developed European Hairdressing Certificates. http://www.euhaircert.eu/files/Signed_agreements_june_2009/signed_agreement_EN_Hairdressing_Certificates_18_June_2009.pdf

2.5. Any other relevant factors (e.g. level of interest in foreign language)

Foreign language proficiency can be a significant obstacle in terms of accessing international mobility. In particular, as part of the preparation of NQF/EQF level 3 and 4 qualifications, the short time spent studying languages increases the need for preparation courses ahead of periods of mobility. In the context of Erasmus+ mobility, some apprenticeship training networks have been obliged to provide this linguistic support out of their own funds. The need for a sufficient level of communication skills in a professional situation arises both for individuals in outgoing mobility and for the team members involved in incoming mobility. However, this foreign language skills barrier needs to be judged the context of the activity in question, as a lower level may be sufficient for activities requiring fewer language and customer-focused interactions - in an industrial setting, for instance.

Finally, it should be noted that, due to their social characteristics, those involved in apprenticeship programmes are less at ease than other when it comes to such a “mobility culture”⁽²⁸⁾. The Erasmus + agency estimates that 61% of secondary vocational education learners in France have working class background, taking as criteria the fact of having two parents who are workers and/or employees and/or farmers and/or inactive. Among the factors that may hinder their availability for mobility, the Erasmus + agency cites health problems, educational difficulties, economic and geographical obstacles. Despite this situation, among the apprentices involved in Erasmus + mobility, 58% have a working-class background⁽²⁹⁾.

⁽²⁸⁾ Observatoire Erasmus + (2018). *Note n° 10 - Erasmus + : Vers une démocratisation et une inclusion renforcées ? [Erasmus +: Towards greater democratisation and inclusion?]*. http://www.agence-erasmus.fr/docs/2772_observatoire_10.pdf

⁽²⁹⁾ Taking into consideration the criteria: both parents are workers or employees or farmers or inactive.

Observatoire Erasmus + (2019). *Note n° 11 - L'alternance dans Erasmus + : un premier état des lieux [Note 11 - The alternating training in Erasmus +: a first inventory of the situation]*. http://www.agence-erasmus.fr/docs/2781_observatoire_11.pdf

CHAPTER 3.

The link between the apprenticeship scheme design and apprentices' mobility

3.1. Apprenticeship type (e.g. system or mode of delivery)

Apprenticeship in France corresponds to an alternative way to get a vocational qualification. All (several thousands) vocational qualifications registered in the national qualification register ⁽³⁰⁾ can be obtained through apprenticeship. This can be considered as a favourable factor for apprenticeship provision, in the sense that the training offer is widely open, and therefore an enabler of mobility in the sense that it can be applied in a wide range of apprenticeship programmes.

3.2. Apprenticeship governance (at strategic, decision-making level)

Different bodies of law determine the legal and regulatory framework applicable to apprentices involved in mobility: legislation specific to vocational training, labour law, education law (for vocational diplomas in the French National Education system), regulations specific to the certifications being sought and evaluation standards. Mobility involves a range of stakeholders: ministries, consular organisations, public or private apprenticeship training centres (for apprentices), training organisations (for professionalisation contracts), and employers in the commercial or non-commercial sector.

The law on the “professional future” of September 2018 brought together the mechanisms for implementing and financing the two apprenticeship schemes (under apprenticeship contracts and professionalisation contracts). The new

⁽³⁰⁾ RNCP, *Répertoire national des certifications professionnelles*. Around 8 000 vocational qualifications are registered, among them around 500 Professional Qualification Certificate (CQP, *Certificat de Qualification Professionnelle*). An exception concerns some of the Qualification Vocational Certificates developed by the professional branches that are not registered in the RNCP that cannot be obtained through apprenticeship.

provisions on the mobility of learners in apprenticeship schemes (laws of March and September 2018) establish similar conditions in terms of the main points intended to ease their access to mobility abroad.

The governance of the apprenticeship training system was substantially overhauled by the September 2018 reform ⁽³¹⁾.

The system is managed by the State (legislation and funding) and the social partners (definition of a national cost per apprenticeship contract – depending on the qualification prepared – and creation/management of apprentice training centres). The “*France Compétences*” agency fulfils a global financial regulation role: it thus makes recommendations concerning the cost of certifications undertaken through apprenticeship, based on the costs proposed by the branches. The declared state interest is a clear enabler, not because of the 2018 reform only, but also because of more tangible examples (presented in chapter 3). Regional Councils can provide additional funding to the CFA training centres.

Eleven skills operators (OPCO, *Opérateurs de compétences*) have been created by the social partners, according to a logic of coherence of sector, profession and skills. Their main missions are to promote the two apprenticeship schemes (apprenticeships and professionalisation contracts), to finance the related contracts, to provide technical support in terms of jobs and skills planning management to the member branches (GPEC, *Gestion prévisionnelle des emplois et des compétences*), and to make those services accessible at a local level for the benefit of small and medium-sized businesses (less than 50 employees).

Regarding the mobility of apprentices, the most decisive change concerns the role of the professional branches, which are at the centre of the apprenticeship system. New funding possibilities have been opened up for the OPCOs, managed by the social partners, when it comes to the mobility of apprentices. Their positioning on this subject, according to the priorities and strategic choices of the branches concerned (See chapter 1.1. for the branches historically involved to promote mobility) will be decisive for the development of longer periods of mobility. The prominent role of OPCOs in the VET/apprenticeship governance structure was already a potential enabler of mobility, as it allows a quite direct way to branches to promote mobility if they wish so. This potential role is further enabled now with the additional funding opportunities.

The reconfiguration of the role of the Regions, which no longer manage apprenticeship policy in their territory, will also have an impact, depending on the choices they make regarding the implementation of additional funding (for example

⁽³¹⁾ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/de/news-and-press/news/refernet-france-reforming-continuing-vocational-training-2018-bill>

grants) to support the mobility of apprentices. In the past, some regions were more active than others in promoting apprenticeship.

3.3. Duration of apprenticeship and of the company placement in particular

The length of an apprenticeship contract depends on the qualification being sought: generally, two years, although it may vary between one and three years (four years for disabled persons) and be even reduced to less than one year ⁽³²⁾. The duration of training in a training centre also depends on the qualification, involving at least 25% of the total duration of the contract. Longest duration is an enabler for mobility, whereas duration shorter than two years is less sufficient for mobility periods to be integrated.

The structure of alternation schedule (between the training centre and the company) may also vary: for example, two days at the centre/three days at the company, one week at the centre/one week at the company or two weeks at the centre/three weeks at the company.

The new legal provisions explicitly foresee that the apprenticeship contract may be partially executed abroad, for a period of not more than one year, provided that the length of time spent in France as part of the contract is at least six months ⁽³³⁾.

Furthermore, the skills acquired during mobility abroad may be recognised and the duration of the apprenticeship contract shortened to take them into account.

For periods of mobility not exceeding four weeks, a simplified procedure is provided for with an agreement between the apprentice, the employer in France, the training centre in France and the training centre abroad as well as, if applicable, the employer abroad.

⁽³²⁾ For example, to prepare a diploma of a level less than or equal to a diploma already obtained.

⁽³³⁾ Article L6222-42 of the Labour Code

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCodeArticle.do?idArticle=LEGIARTI000037385947&cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006072050&dateTexte=20190101>

Article 13 of the law of 5.9.18

https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/eli/loi/2018/9/5/MTRX1808061L/jo/article_13

Article 23 of the law of 29.3.18

https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?jsessionid=A23BE006B8364042A992D370124877BA.tplgr36s_2?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000036755446&idArticle=&categorieLien=id⁽³⁴⁾ Arthuis, J. (2018). *Erasmus Pro, lever les freins à la mobilité des apprentis* [Erasmus Pro, removing obstacles to the mobility of apprentices]. https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/rapport_arthuis_-_18_janvier.pdf

IGAS (2017). *La mobilité européenne des apprentis* [European mobility of apprentices] http://www.igas.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/2017-048R_.pdf

Experiments carried out in pilot projects to develop long-term mobility of apprentices have shown that problems arise when alternation rhythms between French schemes and those in certain countries are less compatible, as well as by some seasonal issues specific certain sectors. For example, for a carpentry company located in a region where winter is harsh, this period corresponds to a time of the year when it has fewer construction sites; it will then be easier for the company to accept the apprentice's mobility abroad at this time of the year.

3.4. Organisation of alternance

During the period of mobility abroad, the principle of alternation inherent in the contract no longer applies. This modification makes it possible to expand the training content during the mobility period.

It is therefore no longer mandatory to alternate between school-based teaching and periods of in-company training, so apprentices are now free to devote themselves solely to in-company training or to learning in a training organisation during their stay abroad.

3.5. Type of contract and status of apprentices

Learners on an apprenticeship or professionalisation contract are employees of their company and are paid by it.

The new provisions adopted to simplify mobility for apprentices suspend some of the conditions of the employment contract during periods of mobility longer than four weeks. They thus remove one of the main obstacles previously identified: the maintenance of employer obligations during mobility, which sometimes proved to be prohibitive ⁽³⁴⁾.

During the mobility of the apprentice, the employer is now exempt from the following obligations:

- (a) payment of wage and charges (including social security contributions) relating to the apprenticeship contract or professionalisation contract;
- (b) liability in the event of an accident at work or illness abroad; and
- (c) liability in the event of low quality training by the training centre or the company abroad.

⁽³⁴⁾ Arthuis, J. (2018). *Erasmus Pro, lever les freins à la mobilité des apprentis [Erasmus Pro, removing obstacles to the mobility of apprentices]*. https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/rapport_arthuis_-_18_janvier.pdf
IGAS (2017). *La mobilité européenne des apprentis [European mobility of apprentices]* http://www.igas.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/2017-048R_.pdf

During the period of mobility abroad, the host company or training centre is solely responsible for the conditions under which the apprentice's work is carried out, as determined by the legal and contractual provisions in force in the host country, regarding in particular:

- (a) health and safety at work;
- (b) compensation;
- (c) working hours; and
- (d) days off and public holidays.

The provision of work contract suspension addresses the insecurity of French companies regarding their responsibilities during international mobility of apprentices. Their security is supplemented by the following provisions aimed at guaranteeing the status of apprentices on mobility: limitation of the duration of the mobility period to one year and establishment of a contractual framework based on a national-level template agreement developed by the Ministry of Labour ⁽³⁵⁾. Based on the template, an agreement will be drawn up between the apprentice, the employer in France, the employer abroad, the training centre in France and, where applicable, the training centre abroad, making it possible to determine the distribution of responsibilities relating in particular to the conditions for implementing mobility (working conditions, leave, working hours, social insurance, organisation of training, apprenticeship mentor, etc.) and to financial aspects (compensation, payment of social security contributions, ancillary costs, etc.) ⁽³⁶⁾.

3.6. Remuneration

Experiments conducted as part of pilot projects for long-term mobility for apprentices have highlighted the need to establish an economic model to deal with the issue of the remuneration of apprentices abroad, in addition to covering travel and subsistence expenses.

The law of September 2018 provides that the “skills operators” (OPCOs) may cover costs resulting from the mobility of apprentices abroad:

- (a) all or part of the loss of human resources for the companies,
- (b) costs of any kind, including those corresponding to social security contributions (see 2.7),
- (c) remuneration,
- (d) ancillary costs.

⁽³⁵⁾ The template agreement was published by the Ministry of Labour in January 2020: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/eli/arrete/2020/1/22/MTRD2002357A/jo/texte>

⁽³⁶⁾ <https://www.senat.fr/questions/base/2018/qSEQ181107793.html>

⁽³⁷⁾ <https://www.senat.fr/questions/base/2018/qSEQ181107793.html>

These provisions may act as enablers for employer participation in mobility.

To prepare the mobility agreement (see 2.5), the training centre must send a request to the skills operator and get an indication of the costs borne by the apprentice during mobility that will be covered by the operator. The agreement will be made available to the skill operator after it is signed by the parties foreseen.

The regulations governing implementation of the law are currently being prepared and should make it possible to specify in detail the procedures by which the OPCOs will pay for the loss of resources and costs of any kind to be borne by the apprentice, as well as for the costs linked to mobility advisors in the CFA centres.

From the learner's point of view, the apprentice will be able to receive allowance or wage paid by the host company, an Erasmus grant or even payment by the skills operators on behalf of the employing company in France. It is still unclear to which extent OPCOs will in fact substitute the wage paid by the French company to a satisfactory level for learners.

The financial organisation requires the training centre to contact various parties to get assistance and funding: skills operators (each OPCO has its own rules and levels of funding), Erasmus+ national agency, regional councils; as well as those specific to bilateral mobility schemes (Franco-German Office for Youth "OFAJ", "Pro Tandem" also for Franco-German exchanges, Franco-Quebec Office for Youth "OFQJ"). The multiplicity of financing sources, each of one following its own rules, is a disabler for mobility as it does not contribute to a standardised, readable and simple framework. Two learners on the same apprenticeship qualification may have different funding for a similar mobility project.

The stakeholders have all noted the complexity of the procedures of the Erasmus+ programme for VET, leading France to submit a request to the European Commission to align the procedures for vocational training with the procedures for higher education, in particular the package for grants, in the next programme ⁽³⁷⁾.

3.7. Provisions on occupational health, safety and social insurance

The new provisions relating to employer liability ⁽³⁸⁾ and support by OPCOs have repercussions in terms of the apprentice social insurance coverage during their

⁽³⁷⁾ <https://www.senat.fr/questions/base/2018/qSEQ181107793.html>

⁽³⁸⁾ "Bill for the freedom to choose one's professional future" of 5.09.18

period of mobility. For example, apprentices may pay their pension contributions for the period abroad (441 Euro per trimester) ⁽³⁹⁾, but not all apprentices are in a position to do so. Funding of such costs by OPCOs is a possibility, but depends on each OPCOs intention to cover, its rules and funding levels.

In the context of a short period of mobility (less than four weeks), the employer continues to pay the apprentice his / her salary, as well as the related expenses. The employer remains responsible for the social protection of the apprentice, in particular in terms of occupational accidents or occupational illness.

However, in cases where the period of mobility exceeds four weeks, there are three possible scenarios depending on the status of the apprentice in the host country:

- (a) When they have the status of employee or equivalent in the State in question, the apprentice is covered by the social security of the host State.
- (b) Conversely, when they do not enjoy the status of employee in the host country, French social security cover for students applies. In this second case, the training organisation or centre in France takes the place of the employer during the mobility period, i.e. regarding the payment of contributions relating to accidents at work and occupational diseases.
- (c) The third scenario concerns longer periods of mobility outside the European Union. In this situation, “cover may be provided in accordance with the provisions of international convention on social security and the social legislation of the host country, by means of voluntary insurance” (e.g. “*Caisse des Français de l'étranger*” or private insurance).

3.8. Curriculum Duration / training standards specification

The suspension of the legal definition of alternating training during mobility abroad (see 2.4) makes it possible to extend the content of the related training organised ⁽⁴⁰⁾.

All professional qualifications registered in the national register of professional qualifications (see 2.1) must contain an activity reference framework, a skills

⁽³⁹⁾ Annex II, part 3 of the decree by the Ministry of Labour in January 2020: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/eli/arrete/2020/1/22/MTRD2002357A/jo/texte>

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Article L6222-42 of the Labour Code
<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCodeArticle.do?idArticle=LEGIARTI000037385947&cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006072050&dateTexte=20190101>
Article 13 of the law of 5.9.18
https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/eli/loi/2018/9/5/MTRX1808061L/jo/article_13

reference framework and an assessment reference framework: these documents are the basis for the implementation of mobility in the context of the preparation of a certification. Very rarely these frameworks may explicitly include international mobility.

Furthermore, the agreement drawn up with a training organisation or an employer abroad must specify the planned content of the mobility period.

Experiments on long-term mobility for apprentices have highlighted the complexity of comparing and cross-referencing training standards due to widely differing approaches from one country to another. These differences relate to jobs, the description and evaluation of acquired skills, the interaction between technical skills and transversal skills, the educational organisation of alternance training, etc.

Practitioners emphasise the fine granularity of the process required for adjusting training programmes (pedagogical engineering), and consequently the need for a high level of time and expertise to be mobilised. The issue of human resources costs for such adjustment has been highlighted by those already involved in developing the European and international mobility of apprentices.

The law of September 2018, in connection with the mission entrusted to apprenticeship training centres (CFAs) to encourage mobility, foresees the appointment of dedicated staff for this purpose (mobility advisors), but its application varies across centres. The new possibilities for financing by the OPCOs (see 2.6) may cover the costs related to CFAs mobility advisors, with the operational provisions of this measure set to be specified in a forthcoming decree.

3.9. Use of validation in apprenticeships

New regulatory provisions aimed at promoting mobility and its recognition in the certification of vocational diplomas are currently being prepared by the Ministry of National Education:

- (d) a decree amending the provisions of the Education Code enabling international mobility as part of vocational diploma courses,
- (e) a Ministerial order establishing an optional mobility unit of learning outcomes and the MobilitéPro certificate as part of the vocational baccalaureate (*baccalauréat professionnel*); the vocational certificate (*brevet professionnel*) and the trade certificate (*brevet des métiers d'arts*); and
- (f) a decree creating an optional mobility unit and the “MobilitéPro” certificate as part of the vocational skills certificate (CAP, *Certificat d’Aptitude Professionnelle*).

The expected decree explicitly stipulates that periods of mobility may be carried out as part of a vocational qualification course.

Consequently, this transnational mobility can be simply for training that is not linked to formal qualifications or for training that is linked and has certification purposes. In the latter case, it may be assessed as part of one of the compulsory qualification units/tests; or it may also be assessed and recognised as part of an optional mobility test on the mobility unit of learning outcomes (see also chapter 3).

These provisions reflect the consideration of the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 establishing the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

In order to be able to take into account the evaluation of learning outcomes (a skills block corresponding to a diploma certification unit) during mobility in Europe, the apprenticeship training centre (CFA) is asked, prior to the period of mobility, to contact the authority issuing the diploma or qualification to ensure that all or part of a skills block can be assessed abroad in the context of mobility, and identify under what conditions this evaluation is possible. Apprentice training centres authorised to carry out continuous formative assessment must specify in the agreement signed with the foreign partner(s) (company and/or training centre) the following elements: training activities, skills to be acquired, learning outcomes to be assessed, evaluation procedures and grids and procedures for the transmission of results to the corresponding CFA that carries out the formative assessment.

The European Qualifications Framework is a tool that can be exploited to support the work of joint pedagogical engineering between the training organisation in the sending country and the training organisation and/or the company in the host country.

The implementation of mobility for certification purposes, based on the ECVET recommendation, requires the establishment of training pathway engineering and pedagogical engineering, with *ad hoc* support provided to the teams concerned. The structuring of qualifications into skills blocks, following the 2014 reform, is a factor that simplifies the implementation of mobility that leads to formally recognised qualifications. In this way, in the automotive services branch, the ANFA (National Association for Automotive Training) has developed short mobility projects for learners preparing a Professional Qualification Certificate (CQP, *Certificat de Qualification Professionnelle*)⁽⁴¹⁾. Learners go abroad for two weeks, and they validate a group of skills that are common to France and the host country (Germany, Spain). In the construction and public works sector, CCCA-BTP

⁽⁴¹⁾ A professional certification created by the branch

has a long-standing practice of mobility for certification purposes for short periods of mobility when it comes to trainings leading to a level 4 qualification.

CHAPTER 4.

Lessons learnt from existing policies, initiatives, projects (as applicable) of apprentices' mobility

The pilot projects carried out in recent years to test extended periods of apprentice mobility have demonstrated the usefulness and benefits of mobility for apprentices at multiple levels: for their employability and more broadly for the development of their future personal and professional career. These skills, be they strictly job-related or cross-cutting, are keenly appreciated by the young people concerned, and noticed by their employers, who value the maturity and autonomy they have developed ⁽⁴²⁾.

The benefits of mobility also extend to the CFA apprenticeship training centres concerned, which speak of “unexpected effects”: overhaul of teaching approaches and methods, professionalisation of teams, new momentum with companies, increased attractiveness for young people and their families ⁽⁴³⁾.

Regarding the need to convince employers of the benefits of apprentices' mobility, an effective strategy identified by the stakeholders on the ground consists of exploiting experiences of company teams and management, related to their participation in learning activities in the context of international mobility or exchanges. In this respect, the participation of company directors, managers, apprenticeship mentors, colleagues, in mobility schemes or exchange projects, makes it possible to demonstrate the usefulness of informal learning situations abroad or in an international context.

Empirical experience shows thought could be given to targeting business leaders who are more receptive to mobility, due to their own experience as a participant in European mobility schemes or exchanges, regardless of the context in which these activities have occurred place (current or past activities, initial training, Erasmus+ mobility projects or cooperation projects, European sectoral networks, etc.).

⁽⁴²⁾ CCCA-BTP (2018). Mobilité européenne : se professionnaliser et augmenter son employabilité [European mobility: professionalizing and increasing employability], *Hors-série CCCA-BTP n°12*, Education permanente, 2018-4. http://www.education-permanente.fr/public/articles/articles.php?id_revue=1753&id_article=2729#resume2729

⁽⁴³⁾ *Ibid*⁽⁴⁴⁾ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/fr/news-and-press/news/france-new-vet-reform-launched>

In addition to a “top-down” strategy that provides political support for the subject of LTM for apprentices, a “feedback” strategy deployed at the level of the professional branches by mobility technicians and experts makes it possible to demonstrate to the stakeholders and the social partners the usefulness of mobility, so that this support is validated and substantiated at the level of the decision-making bodies.

In connection with the IVET reform ⁽⁴⁴⁾, the French Ministry of National Education and Youth is promoting the development of European and international mobility for those involved in vocational training as one of the vectors for developing the attractiveness of VET and apprenticeship, and for positioning them as pathways to excellence. To support the sustainable integration of European and international mobility into school projects, a vademecum has been made available to heads of vocational high schools by the Ministry ⁽⁴⁵⁾.

The optional European mobility test, created on an experimental basis in 2014, has been extended beyond the vocational baccalaureate (see 2.9 above) to other diplomas. An assessment of this test was produced by the Erasmus+ agency at the end of 2017, which highlighted the growing popularity of the test: going from 4 000 candidates in the 2015 session to nearly 8 000 in 2018. It also showed the benefits of extending the target area of mobility internationally, outside the EU (in particular so that the overseas departments can benefit from it; for example, to promote mobility from French Guyana to South America).

The new campaign to accredit Trades and qualification Campuses (“*Campus des métiers et des qualifications*”) launched in 2019 also includes the development of international training courses among the accreditation criteria ⁽⁴⁶⁾.

In February 2019, the Ministry of Labour published two practical tool-kits dedicated to the European or international mobility of apprentices, to facilitate the steps to be taken by the apprenticeship training centres and the companies employing apprentices ⁽⁴⁷⁾. They present useful information in terms of

⁽⁴⁴⁾ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/fr/news-and-press/news/france-new-vet-reform-launched>

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Ministry of national education and youth (2019). *Vade-Mecum – Les mobilités internationales et européennes [Vade-Mecum – International and European mobility]*. https://cache.media.eduscol.education.fr/file/lycee_pro_2018/46/3/VM_Mobilitees_internationales_et_europeennes_1128463.pdf

⁽⁴⁶⁾ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/france-excellence-vet-new-generation-trades-and-qualifications-campuses>

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Ministry of Labour (2019). *Kits Mobilité européenne ou internationale des alternants [Kits European or international mobility of alternating trainees]*. <https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/demarches-ressources-documentaires/documentation-et-publications-officielles/guides/kits-mobilite-alternance>

consequences on the employment contract, financing of mobility, social security coverage and validation of the results of mobility periods.

A long-standing group of stakeholders have been involved in international mobility projects for apprentices. This group includes apprenticeship training networks (CCCA-BTP, *Les Compagnons du Devoir*), the Ministry of Agriculture, consular networks (Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Chambers of Trades and Crafts), Approved joint collecting bodies OPCA (i.e. National Association for Automotive Training ANFA), organisations managing Franco-German bilateral schemes (OFAJ, Pro-Tandem), as well as the Association of French Regions (*Association des Régions de France*), and ECVET experts.

Thus, the workers' association of the *Compagnons du devoir et du tour de France*, for whom travel is an integral part of the training process, has institutionalised formative mobility in all initial vocational training courses implemented, with 100% of apprentices in mobility since 2010, in a short or long form (over six months).

In terms of the Erasmus+ programme, the Erasmus+ France Education & Training agency is highly involved in supporting the ambitious French and European objectives of developing European and international mobility for apprentices. It has teamed up with the stakeholders mentioned above on several recent initiatives: publication of a skills reference framework for European and international mobility experts in apprenticeship training centres ⁽⁴⁸⁾, organisation of the Territorial Conference for the Mobility of Apprentices, which was held for the third time in May 2019 ⁽⁴⁹⁾.

The Erasmus+ Agency also carried out a survey to measure the mobility of apprentices more accurately. The results were presented in a report published by the Erasmus+ Observatory in May 2019 ⁽⁵⁰⁾.

Stakeholders appear to be rather divided between the various institutional networks (Ministry of National Education, stakeholders involved in apprenticeships and training centres rather targeted at small and medium-sized enterprises and which use Erasmus+ funding opportunities), and the sphere of large companies

⁽⁴⁸⁾ Agence Erasmus + France Education & Formation et al. (2018). *Les compétences d'un(e) référent(e) mobilité européenne et internationale dans un centre de formation d'apprentis [The skills of a European and international mobility referent in an apprenticeship training centre]*. http://www.agence-erasmus.fr/docs/2731_guide_cfa_final.pdf

⁽⁴⁹⁾ http://www.agence-erasmus.fr/docs/agenda/496_programme.pdf

⁽⁵⁰⁾ Observatoire Erasmus + (2019). *Note n° 11 - L'alternance dans Erasmus + : un premier état des lieux [Note 11 - The alternating training in Erasmus +: a first inventory of the situation]*. http://www.agence-erasmus.fr/docs/2781_observatoire_11.pdf ⁽⁵¹⁾ The EuroApp association was created in 2016 by members of the "European Apprenticeship Ambassadors" consortium to promote European mobility actions for young apprentices. <https://www.euroapp.fr/>

and multinationals that are internationalising their training pathways for their apprentices internally, mostly outside the Erasmus+ programme.

In order to more thoroughly capitalise on the experiences and lessons learned, it would be necessary to articulate these two spheres of stakeholders.

CHAPTER 5.

Conclusion

Pioneering initiatives to develop long-term mobility for apprentices have revealed the scale of the obstacles that need to be removed. The members of the European Apprenticeship Ambassadors consortium involved in the EuroApp association ⁽⁵¹⁾ have thus counted no less than 60 obstacles, revealing the extent of the problems of compatibility between the various national apprenticeship training schemes.

Regarding social protection issues, some of the organisations that participated in the pilot projects expressed the need for operational clarification while recognising the extreme complexity of this issue, which is due to the lack of European harmonisation when it comes to social legislation.

In his “manifesto for a Europe of apprenticeship”, published in June 2019, MEP Jean Arthuis emphasises that access to healthcare was one of the recurring difficulties encountered by mobility apprentices in the context of the pilot project. He warned of the obstacle posed by the fact that the European Health Insurance Card was not accepted by several health professionals in Europe. He calls for the establishment of a special status for European apprentices as the way to put an end to the legal and insurance gaps faced by apprentices who are training in another European country, by enrolling apprentices involved in European mobility programmes in a European insurance scheme like CIGNA, which is used for participants in European voluntary service.

Regarding the validation of learning outcomes achieved through mobility abroad, the lack of formal recognition is one of the most frequently cited obstacles by the CFA apprenticeship training centres involved in experiments of long-term mobility for apprentices.

The question of trust is a central issue when it comes to the promotion of mobility in programmes that lead to formal qualifications, in a context that is very different from that of higher education. Thus, we can mention the need for mutual information and contacts prior to mobility between the CFAs and the authorities that issue the qualifications. Tools such as the frequently asked questions developed by the “*Compagnons du devoir*” in conjunction with the General Directorate of School Education of the Ministry of National Education and Youth should contribute to this.

⁽⁵¹⁾ The EuroApp association was created in 2016 by members of the “European Apprenticeship Ambassadors” consortium to promote European mobility actions for young apprentices. <https://www.euroapp.fr/>

Pilot projects to develop long-term mobility for apprentices have shown that compatibility, or incompatibility, between different apprenticeship schemes varies depending on a range of factors; in particular the status accorded to apprentices in the hosting country (or lack thereof), and the way in which the alternance schedule was organised. In addition, seasonality in certain activities may also define “windows” in the calendar, limiting when apprentices can be released. The training pathway engineering of outgoing or incoming mobility programmes is thus highly dependent on the degree to which the French apprenticeship schemes “match up” with the one(s) of a given country.

The development of reciprocal mobility is a possible method for construction close partnership relations between a given training centre in France and a host organisation abroad, and for promoting mutual cooperation when it comes to joint pedagogical engineering. However, it should be noted that these compatibility factors do not in fact automatically mirror each other when it comes to incoming mobility: the fact that it is easier to send a French apprentice to a certain country does not necessarily mean that the hosting of an apprentice from the same country in France is more straightforward.

The September 2018 reform has fundamentally changed the legal framework applicable to training mobility for apprentice, in a way that is favourable to its development. From 2019, the various stakeholders concerned will be able to exploit the vast range of new opportunities that have opened up in this area.

In particular, the role of the social partners, who are now at the centre of the apprenticeship system, in terms of the new opportunities open to OPCOs to finance the international mobility of apprentices, will be a decisive factor.

These new opportunities are likely to stimulate both short-term mobility (which is currently predominant) and long-term mobility. A complementary approach between the two forms of mobility may be sought, in which short-term mobility will help to promote the development of longer stays.

The systemic transformation of the apprenticeship system will have wider effects, in terms of the number of learners, training centres and qualifications pursued, and this may also impact the expected increase of European and international mobility of apprentices.

The operational implementation of the measures taken to this end is thus a response to high and broadly-shared expectations among the actors and stakeholders involved in apprenticeship. Their ongoing evaluation will make it possible to measure the effectiveness of the new framework designed to develop longer periods of mobility abroad for apprentices.

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- CCCA-BTP, *Comité de concertation et de coordination de l'apprentissage du bâtiment et des travaux publics* [Committee for the coordination and coordination of construction and public works apprenticeship]
- Compagnons du devoir et du tour de France

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