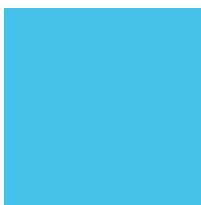


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INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY  
IN APPRENTICESHIPS: FOCUS  
ON LONG-TERM MOBILITY  
**GERMANY**

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Author: Adrienne Huismann

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## CHAPTER 1.

# Introduction

Germany is one of the European countries in which learning on the job is a traditional component of the education system: the apprenticeship system at upper secondary level (so-called “dual system”, with two learning venues: 70% of learning time in company and 30% of learning time in vocational school) is the main pillar of initial vocational education and training (IVET). In Germany, the term “apprenticeship” is used exclusively for this “dual system” at upper secondary level <sup>(1)</sup> and corresponds to the Cedefop definition <sup>(2)</sup>. The duration of apprenticeship programmes varies between two and 3.5 years, but most programmes last three years. Almost one in two learners chooses a vocational path at upper secondary level after completing lower secondary school. Of those, two-thirds (68.4%) opt for the apprenticeship system and one-third (31.6%) choose fulltime school-based VET programmes <sup>(3)</sup>. In addition, graduates of general upper secondary programmes increasingly consider apprenticeship as an alternative to tertiary education. In total, there were more than 1.3 million registered apprentices on 31.12.2017 <sup>(4)</sup>.

Progression is possible through various regulated VET programmes provided at post-secondary and increasingly at tertiary level. The German apprenticeship system is regulated since 1969 by the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz BBiG*) and the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code

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(1) Hippach-Schneider, U.; Huisman, A. (2019). *Vocational education and training in Europe: Germany*. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports 2018. p 14.

(2) - Cedefop (2014). *Terminology of European education and training policy (Second edition) – A selection of 130 key terms*. Luxembourg: Publications Office, p 25.

*“Systematic, long-term training alternating periods at the workplace and in an educational institution or training centre. The apprentice is contractually linked to the employer and receives remuneration (wage or allowance). The employer assumes responsibility for providing the trainee with training leading to a specific occupation. (Source: Cedefop, 2004)”.*

- Cedefop online database on apprenticeship schemes, 2016.

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/country-fiches/germany>

(3) BIBB Datenreport 2019, p 94.

(4) BIBB Datenreport 2019, p 108.

(*Handwerksordnung HwO*). The Vocational Training Act was reformed in 2005 <sup>(5)</sup> and a new reform is on its way, coming into force in 2020. The apprenticeship system is based on cooperation between state, companies and social partners, who set together national standards and training regulations (for both learning places), leading to highly regarded vocational qualifications <sup>(6)</sup>, allowing for a smooth transition to the labour market and a low youth unemployment.

Since 2005, the Vocational Training Act supports explicitly international mobility as part of the apprenticeship. National and regional targets have been set (10% of all IVET-learners <sup>(7)</sup> shall have cross-country mobility experience by 2020). The National Agency at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (NA at BIBB) is implementing the Erasmus+ programme for VET, following the Leonardo da Vinci programmes. The NA at BIBB is also monitoring the overall international mobility of IVET-learners in Germany. On its behalf, two research studies were carried out on the status of mobility in 2010 and 2017 <sup>(8)</sup>, allowing to follow the consistent growth trend: while in 2010, approximately 17 000 IVET-learners had a stay abroad (mobility rate of 2.4%), more than 30 000 IVET-learners did so in 2017, reaching a new mobility record of 5.3% of all IVET-learners.

Most stays abroad (over 85%) lasted up to one month. There were hardly any stays of over three months. So long-term mobility according to the EU definition (6 to 12 months) is really a niche phenomenon. Nonetheless, the aim of this article is to identify enablers and disablers of outgoing and in-coming (long-term) mobility of apprentices in Germany at framework level (Chapter 1), system level (Chapter 2) and implementation level (Chapter 3).

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<sup>(5)</sup> [https://www.bmbf.de/upload\\_filestore/pub/The\\_2005\\_Vocational\\_Training\\_Act.pdf](https://www.bmbf.de/upload_filestore/pub/The_2005_Vocational_Training_Act.pdf)

<sup>(6)</sup> Huismann (2018). *Cedefop European Public opinion survey on vocational education and training, country overview: Germany*. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.

<sup>(7)</sup> IVET-learners = apprentices in the dual system + learners in fulltime school-based IVET programmes at upper secondary level.

<sup>(8)</sup> - 2010 Mobilitätsstudie: Friedrich, W.; Körbel, M. (2011). *Verdeckte Mobilität in der beruflichen Bildung*.

- 2017 Mobilitätsstudie: NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Auslandsaufenthalte in der Berufsbildung 2017*.

## CHAPTER 2.

# Exogenous factors influencing mobility of apprentices

The following analysis proposes a reflection on the framework conditions of IVET transnational mobility, and if these enable or not in-coming and outgoing mobility of apprentices.

### 2.1. Economic sectors and actors

Economic sectors and actors in Germany are de facto open to the international and EU context, as underlined by Berthold Hübers (NA at BIBB), when introducing the research study on “Transnational mobility in initial vocational education and training in 2017” (Study on Mobility):

“Over 70% of the German GDP is generated through foreign trade. This internationality has a direct impact on employment. These days, foreign language skills are required in over half of the jobs demanding for a formal initial vocational education and training (IVET) – with upward tendency. Globalisation is leading to a constantly growing internationalisation at work. The German economy’s competitiveness is to quite some extent based on its ability to operate globally, explore markets and engage in cross-border collaborations in an economy where splitting tasks is becoming increasingly common. Vocational education and training (VET) has to contribute considerably to preparing prospective qualified personnel for globalisation. Conveying international vocational competence is becoming more and more important. Foreign language skills, intercultural competence, key qualifications like the ability to work in a team as well as independently will gain in significance. Engaging in transnational mobility for learning contributes to developing these competences.”<sup>(9)</sup>

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<sup>(9)</sup> NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Transnational mobility in IVET in 2017 – Study on Mobility*. (English version, p 1).

## 2.2. Dynamics of skills demand and supply

In 2017, around 2.4 million people from other EU countries were employed in Germany. This was 60% more than in 2007 (1.5 million), and accounted for 6% of all employed persons in 2017. The number of workers from non-EU countries, at around 2.2 million or 5.5% of the total workforce, was similar <sup>(10)</sup>.

According to the BIBB-IAB qualification and occupational field projections <sup>(11)</sup>, shortages of skilled workers in medium level occupations will persist despite a growth in the population. Shortages can continue to be expected in “healthcare occupations” and “technical occupations” (examples in Part III Section 3.3.2). A new aspect is that such bottlenecks are now also looming in “construction occupations” and in “woodworking, plastics manufacture and processing occupations”. On the other hand, labour supply will grow more strongly than demand in “office and commercial services occupations” <sup>(12)</sup>.

Against the background of demographic changes and already skilled labour shortage in certain sectors, Germany needs skilled workers from Germany, EU and non-EU countries. Skilled workers (or staff) are both university graduates and employees with qualified vocational training. As part of the “skilled workers strategy”, the aim of the “Law on the immigration of skilled workers” is to facilitate the immigration of skilled workers as well as (prospective) apprentices and students, to ease the access to the training and labour market and to offer good perspectives to skilled workers from non-EU countries. This law provides access for skilled workers from non-EU countries - without restriction to bottleneck occupations; further measures for the recognition of foreign professional qualifications, and permanent residency after two years for skilled workers with a German qualification (four years for those with a foreign qualification). The corresponding law was drafted in December 2018 and will come into force on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 <sup>(13)</sup>.

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<sup>(10)</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt (2018). *Arbeitsmarkt auf einen Blick – Deutschland und Europa*. p 18.

<sup>(11)</sup> <https://www.bibb.de/de/11727.php>

Hippach-Schneider, U.; Huismann, A. (2019). *Vocational education and training in Europe: Germany*. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports 2018, p 44-48.

<sup>(12)</sup> <https://www.bmas.de/DE/Themen/Arbeitsmarkt/Fachkraeftesicherung/daten-und-fakten.html>

<sup>(13)</sup> <https://www.bmas.de/DE/Presse/Meldungen/2018/fachkraefteeinwanderungsgesetz.html>  
[https://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav#\\_\\_bgbl\\_\\_%2F%2F\\*%5B%40attr\\_id%3D%27bgb119s1307.pdf%27%5D\\_\\_1572360217443](https://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav#__bgbl__%2F%2F*%5B%40attr_id%3D%27bgb119s1307.pdf%27%5D__1572360217443)  
<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/>



Given this context, the country could also benefit from European apprentices and skilled staff with long-term mobility experience in Germany.

### 2.3. Attitude of employers towards training

For many German companies, it is a tradition and a matter of course to provide and to carry most of the costs for apprenticeship at upper secondary education level: in 2017, 20% (427 227) of 2.16 million companies (total number in Germany) offered training to 1.6 million apprentices <sup>(14)</sup> – this share even reaches 36.6%, if only considering the companies authorised to provide training <sup>(15)</sup>. Employers are motivated to train young people, because in their view, investing in apprenticeship pays off in the long term. Here are some benefits seen by employers: custom-fit training with company-specific know-how, training period as best recruitment selection, productive and innovative contributions of apprentices (allowing 70% of costs to be refinanced), avoiding future shortage of skilled staff, better employee loyalty, participation in defining company-based training content and development of standards, and finally, improving their image (CSR) <sup>(16)</sup>.

However, the readiness to provide apprenticeship has been declining in the last decade (in 2007, 24.1% of companies vs 19.8% in 2016), especially among the smallest companies (one to nine employees). This development is in keeping with the increasing difficulties that the smaller and smallest companies have in filling the apprenticeship places they offer. The proportion of vacant apprenticeship places tends to be higher in companies with a small number of employees. One possible explanation for this is that larger companies may be more attractive to young people as training providers. Indeed, they have more funds available for recruiting measures and provide a larger range of job opportunities after the apprenticeship programme.

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<https://www.bmas.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2018/fachkraefteeinwanderungsgesetz.html>

<sup>(14)</sup> BIBB Datenreport 2019, p 208-209.

<sup>(15)</sup> Not every company is authorised to offer training. According to IAB Establishment Panel data for 2017, more than half (54 %) of companies were permitted by a chamber (according to the conditions in the Vocational Training Act, BBiG, Section 1) to provide training. (BIBB Datenreport 2019, p 210 and [http://doku.iab.de/arbeitsmarktdaten/Ausbildungsbeteiligung\\_2006-2017.pdf](http://doku.iab.de/arbeitsmarktdaten/Ausbildungsbeteiligung_2006-2017.pdf) p 2).

<sup>(16)</sup> BIBB Datenreport 2019, p 269 and BIBB Datenreport 2015, p 279-290.

In principle, employers providing apprenticeship placements have a positive attitude towards sending their apprentices abroad, as shown in the Study on Mobility (17). There are some differences depending on the size of the company (an apprenticeship in a bigger company tends to increase the relative chance of a mobility abroad, especially a long-term one) and depending on the occupational branch (highest number of Erasmus+ apprentice mobility in 2015 among industrial salespersons) (18). According to the study, training companies sending their apprentices abroad are very aware of the positive impacts of such an experience in terms of personal competences, knowledge and professional skills of the returnee, even after only several weeks abroad (average length of stay in Erasmus+ programme for IVET mobility is five weeks).

## 2.4. International qualifications

Unlike at tertiary education level, there is no apprenticeship programme at upper secondary level leading to international qualifications. However, there is a growing number of apprenticeship programmes offering (optional) additional international qualifications, as detailed in the German country fiche of the Cedefop ReferNet Mobility Scoreboard (19).

The Erasmus+ VET Mobility Charter (20) encourages the internationalisation of IVET curricula in organisations, as this accreditation (121 accredited learning venues in 2018 (21)) creates space for further content developments in the curricula. As a result, more and more schools and federal states offer additional international qualifications, as extra modules on top of the national qualification. Here are three examples:

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(17) NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Transnational mobility in IVET in 2017 – Study on Mobility*. (English version, p 11, 13, 16-18).

(18) BWP 4/2018, BIBB, Bonn, Schröder, U. p 4-5 [www.bibb.de/bwp-4-2018](http://www.bibb.de/bwp-4-2018).

(19) Wiethölter, F., Huismann, H. (2019). *German country fiche - Cedefop ReferNet Mobility Scoreboard 2019*.

(20) “The Erasmus+ VET Mobility Charter aims to encourage organisations with proven track records of organising high-quality VET mobility for learners and staff to build their European internationalisation strategies. In addition to the advancement of learning in another Erasmus+ Programme country, European internationalisation involves the development of international approaches throughout the applicant and/or sending organisation.”

[https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents/applicants/vet-mobility-charter\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents/applicants/vet-mobility-charter_en)

(21) BIBB Datenreport 2019, p 515.

- (a) At the Berufskolleg Uerdingen, apprentices in electrical engineering, information technology, metal and chemistry can complete the IHK additional qualification "European Technician" <sup>(22)</sup>.
- (b) The Erasmus+ project "B.Smart4Europe" offers a European additional qualification in digital skills at the Max-Weber-Berufskolleg in Duesseldorf <sup>(23)</sup>.
- (c) The Schulzentrum Neustadt in Bremen offers the additional qualification "Intercultural skills in care and support" <sup>(24)</sup>.

Another example is BBVET (Boosting Business Integration through joint VET Education), a research and development project (2016-2019) broadening the internationalisation of VET in the Baltic Sea Region. The aim of this project is to develop and pilot the first cross-border VET qualification, involving 40 students (Mechatronics and Edtech sectors) and five countries (Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, and Sweden). Practical experience and analyses of national curricula together with ECVET regulations in the specific vocational fields represent a main part of the project. This will promote steps towards internationalisation of VET schools and regional companies. The concept and curriculum would be transferable to other branches <sup>(25)</sup>. The project is co-financed by the INTERREG South Baltic Programme and the European Regional Development Fund.

Chambers are also very active regarding additional international qualifications. The Crafts Chamber of Muenster for example, offers the additional international qualifications "European Assistant" with a three-week internship abroad as well as a "European Assistant" Plus version including a four-month stay abroad <sup>(26)</sup>.

Another important development, this time at state policy level, should be mentioned here. In May 2017, the education ministry of the federal state North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) decided to commit itself to reach the national benchmark for mobility in IVET: by 2020, 10% of IVET-learners in NRW should have a learning experience abroad. To reach this target, a two-fold certification

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<sup>(22)</sup> <https://bkukr.de/index.php?id=147>

<sup>(23)</sup> <http://www.max-weber-berufskolleg.de/web/b-smart4europe-digitalisierung2018/>

<sup>(24)</sup> <http://www.szn-bremen.de/berufsschulen/berufsschulehauswirtschaft0/weiterbildung10.html>

<sup>(25)</sup> <http://www.bbvvet.eu/>

<sup>(26)</sup> Handwerkskammer Münster (HWK): Zusatzqualifikationen und Auslandserfahrung während der Ausbildung - Europaassistent/-in <https://www.hwk-muenster.de/de/ausbildung/auszubildende/zusatzqualifikationen#section-277>

tool is to be implemented. Vocational schools are certified for their activities in "international cooperation in the European vocational education", and IVET learners receive a certification for additional qualification in "international vocational mobility" (including min. 10 working days abroad and min. 40 teaching hours before and after the traineeship abroad in different relevant subjects: foreign language, company abroad, cultural sensitisation, documentation and reporting). Certification is given to schools that allow at least 10% of their students to stay abroad, and implement curricular and strategic measures for internationalisation. Through this combination of qualitative and quantitative measures, NRW contributes to the sustainable integration of international mobility in the IVET system <sup>(27)</sup>.

## 2.5. Attitude of apprentices towards international mobility

In 2018, the National Agency for the Erasmus+ Programme at the Federal Institute for VET (NA at BIBB) published a research study on the status quo of transnational mobility in IVET in 2017, the so-called Study on Mobility <sup>(28)</sup>. According to the study <sup>(29)</sup>, the main motivation for all interviewed apprentices <sup>(30)</sup> to spend part of the apprenticeship programme abroad are intrinsic: to grow personally and to improve proficiency in a foreign language. Among the apprentices who went abroad, an additional motivation was to get to learn another culture. The main reason given by the apprentices for not going abroad was the feeling that they do not need to go abroad to be well qualified. The second main reason not to leave is that such a mobility seems too expensive and they wish more financial support. In third place, the apprentices named two barriers: they find it difficult to integrate the stay abroad in their normal life course, and their training company or their VET school is not interested in their going abroad.

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<sup>(27)</sup> <https://www.berufsbildung.nrw.de/cms/bildungsganguebergreifende-themen/idb/start-idb.html>

BWP 4/2018, BIBB, Bonn: Müller, H., Nannen-Gethmann, F., p 30.

<sup>(28)</sup> <https://www.na-bibb.de/presse/news/2018/studyonmobility/>

<sup>(29)</sup> NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Langfassung : Auslandsaufenthalte in der Berufsbildung 2017 - Mobilitätsstudie*. (p 93-97 of long version).

<sup>(30)</sup> For both "active" and "inactive", i.e. for those who went abroad and those who did not.

A more general study on barriers and obstacles that young people face when it comes to participating in international youth programmes seem to obtain similar results <sup>(31)</sup>. Most young people (aged 14-27) are in principle interested in an international activity (63%), regardless of their social environment. Parents, family and peers are important sources of information. The motivation to participate are intrinsic (i.e. new experience, discover a new culture) rather than extrinsic (i.e. follow wish of parents; improve carrier chances). The main barriers are the lack of information (especially on short-term programmes, which would seem more feasible for many) and the presumptions that such international youth programmes are very expensive, the application process complicated and that they are a reward for high-performing young people only.

The attitude of apprentices towards international mobility could be influenced by the age of mobile learners, especially if there are still minors. This is rarely the case in Germany: in 2017, the average age of apprentices when starting their training was 19.9 years. Only 26% of the apprentices starting a training were below 18 years <sup>(32)</sup>. In most cases, the international part of the training activity takes place in the 2nd or 3rd year of training, since the learner needs to have already a set of relevant professional skills. In the Erasmus+ VET programme, only about 5% of the mobile learners are minors.

In a survey carried out by BIBB end of 2012 <sup>(33)</sup>, the different experts were asked about the influence of several process-related measures on the image of dual IVET among young people in Germany. According to 62% of the experts, a greater promotion of stays abroad during apprenticeship would have a positive influence on the image of dual IVET. This presumption was confirmed by the Cedefop Opinion Survey on VET <sup>(34)</sup> and the Study on Mobility.

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<sup>(31)</sup> "Warum nicht? Studie zum internationalen Jugendaustausch. Zugänge und Barrieren".

Thimmel, A. (2018). *Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse der Zugangsstudie und Schlussfolgerungen – Kurfassung*. <http://zugangsstudie.de/>

<sup>(32)</sup> BIBB Datenreport 2019, p 181.

<sup>(33)</sup> BIBB (2013). *Expertenmonitor 2012: Image der Berufsbildung in Deutschland*.

<sup>(34)</sup> Huismann (2018). *Cedefop European Public opinion survey on vocational education and training, country overview: Germany*. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series, p 28.

## 2.6. Foreign languages in the apprenticeship system

Foreign language teaching is an integral part of basic general education at all primary and secondary level schools as from grade 3 (even from grade 1 in some federal states). In vocational schools, language teaching builds on the competences taught in the lower secondary level, and “develops the ability to act in an international professional context as well as promotes intercultural competences and the mobility of apprentices” <sup>(35)</sup>. The certification is based on the areas of competence and levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Improving proficiency in a foreign language is one of the main motivation for apprentices to participate in a learning mobility <sup>(36)</sup>.

Given the fact that the English language plays a crucial role in this respect, it remains a challenge to organise beneficial long-term mobilities in non-English-speaking countries, for example in France (Part III, Section 3.2.3). The same applies for in-coming apprentices, since they should be able to understand and speak the language in the company, in order to learn and take part in the working processes.

Linked to the foreign language proficiency, considerably more apprentices with a higher school qualification spend time abroad: 9.2% of holders of an entrance qualification for university (*Abitur*) versus 2.7% of holders of the lower secondary school (*Hauptschule*) certificate <sup>(37)</sup>.

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<sup>(35)</sup> KMK (2011). *Empfehlungen der Kultusministerkonferenz zur Stärkung der Fremdsprachenkompetenz am 8.12.2011*. p 5.

<sup>(36)</sup> NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Langfassung : Auslandsaufenthalte in der Berufsbildung 2017 - Mobilitätsstudie*. (p 93 of long version).

<sup>(37)</sup> NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Transnational mobility in IVET in 2017 – Study on Mobility*. (English version, p 14).

## CHAPTER 3.

# Links between apprenticeship system design and apprentices' mobility

The German apprenticeship scheme is regulated since 1969 by the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz BBiG*) and the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (*Handwerksordnung HwO*). The Vocational Training Act was reformed in 2005 <sup>(38)</sup> and since then mentions explicitly the (outgoing) mobility of apprentices in Section 2, Subsection 3:

*“Parts of initial training may be completed abroad if this serves the purpose of training. The total duration of such training abroad shall not exceed one fourth of the duration of training specified in the training regulations.”*

The duration of apprenticeship programmes varies between two and 3.5 years, but most programmes last three years, enabling to spend up to nine months of the apprenticeship abroad.

The following chapter analyses whether or not the main dimensions of the apprenticeship scheme facilitate the transnational mobility of apprentices.

### 3.1. Apprenticeship type

Germany has one apprenticeship system with a structured VET delivery approach implemented via 325 programmes, one for each recognised training occupation <sup>(39)</sup>. This apprenticeship system is well established, well defined, and has a clear place and role in the overall education and training system <sup>(40)</sup>. It leads to formal specific qualifications at upper secondary level (EQF level 4), nationally recognised, and providing the apprentice with full competence and capability in an occupation.

According to the Vocational Training Act, each of the 325 training regulations includes the title and description of the occupation, defines the duration of the apprenticeship, stipulates the required skills, knowledge and competences as

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<sup>(38)</sup> [https://www.bmbf.de/upload\\_filestore/pub/The\\_2005\\_Vocational\\_Training\\_Act.pdf](https://www.bmbf.de/upload_filestore/pub/The_2005_Vocational_Training_Act.pdf)

<sup>(39)</sup> In 2018: Refer to register of recognised training occupations:  
<https://www.bibb.de/en/65925.php>

<sup>(40)</sup> Hippach-Schneider, U.; Huisman, A. (2019). *Vocational education and training in Europe: Germany*. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports 2018 (Chart p. 13).

well as instructions for the training company on how to impart them, and finally, regulates the examinations. Accordingly, the educational acts of the federal states define a framework curriculum for the school part of apprenticeship in the public vocational schools. The company and the apprentice conclude a training contract and the company pays a remuneration to the apprentice.

In complement to the in-company training, the apprentice must attend compulsory part-time vocational school with vocational (two thirds) and general subjects (one third). In fact, a major characteristic of the so-called dual system is the two learning venues: 70% of learning time in the company (including training centre, if necessary) and 30% of learning time in the public vocational school.

Due to this structure, any mobility has to meet the interests, benefits and duties of the three main actors involved in the programmes: apprentice, company and VET school. The results of the Study on Mobility show that training companies, schools and apprentices want the option of a transnational mobility anchored in the training regulations and framework curricula. Such an international option could be developed as a high quality and consistent standard through additional or optional qualifications in the training regulations of relevant professions <sup>(41)</sup>.

Since there is only one apprenticeship scheme and no sub-schemes, the approach and organisation of learning in the company and at school are homogeneous in the different apprenticeship programmes and guarantee equivalent quality standards and opportunities, as well as recognised value on the labour market for apprentices in all regulated training occupations. This feature creates a favourable context for outgoing and in-coming mobility.

### 3.2. Apprenticeship governance

The Vocational Training Act, as legal framework, defines the roles and functions of the stakeholders regarding the governance and management of the apprenticeship system. The main stakeholders are the federal government, the federal states, the social partners and the chambers <sup>(42)</sup>. Since the German

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<sup>(41)</sup> - BWP 4/2018, BIBB, Bonn: Hübers, B., Kröll, J; p 18.

- NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Auslandsaufenthalte in der Berufsbildung 2017 - Mobilitätsstudie*.

<sup>(42)</sup> - Hippach-Schneider, U.; Huismann, A. (2019). *Vocational education and training in Europe: Germany*. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports 2018, p 36.

- Poulsen, S.B.; Eberhardt, C.(2016). Discussion Papers No. 171, BIBB Bonn, p 15.

- BMBF (2017). *Duale Berufsausbildung sichtbar gemacht*. p 21.



economy is strongly based on exports, there is a need of internationally competent skilled staff (Part I). This explains why all stakeholders are fostering the transnational (long-term) mobility of apprentices in their different functions.

### **3.2.1. The federal government <sup>(43)</sup>**

- (a) has legislative powers for company-based VET and sets priorities and benchmarks in VET;
- (b) is responsible for the content structuring of the company-based element of the training occupations it has recognised;
- (c) recognises training occupations via a legal ordinance and stipulates binding requirements for the respective training and examination in training regulations;
- (d) promotes VET research;
- (e) and funds measures for the support and innovation of VET and measures for transition between school and apprenticeship.

The best example of how the federal government promotes international mobility in apprenticeships is the reform of the Vocational Training Act in 2005, which introduced the possibility of completing parts of the apprenticeship abroad (Section 2, Subsection 3). The general objective of the Vocational Training Act to support international mobility in VET has been specified by a recommendation of the Deutsche Bundestag (German Parliament) in 2013 defining a national benchmark for mobility in IVET: In 2020 at least 10% of all apprentices graduating in the Dual System should have had a learning experience abroad <sup>(44)</sup>. The Coalition treaty between CDU/CSU and SPD issued in February 2014 states: “Our apprentices and trained specialists should be able to move successfully in international markets and develop intercultural skills. As a result, we want to double the proportion of young people who spend time abroad during their training” <sup>(45)</sup>. This political commitment for learning abroad is repeated in the Coalition treaty between CDU/CSU and SPD in 2018 <sup>(46)</sup>.

All these policy targets include the objective of promoting international learning mobility in IVET as a rule and not as an exception.

A current research study on behalf of the federal government gives an essential insight in barriers and obstacles for young people to participate in

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<sup>(43)</sup> especially the BMBF and the BIBB.

<sup>(44)</sup> <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/17/109/1710986.pdf>

<sup>(45)</sup> [http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas\\_36853-544-2-30.pdf?140820093605](http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_36853-544-2-30.pdf?140820093605), p 20.

<sup>(46)</sup> <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/048/1904846.pdf>

learning abroad: “*Warum nicht? Studie zum internationalen Jugendaustausch. Zugaenge und Barrieren*“<sup>(47)</sup>. More specifically, the Study on Mobility shows “that insufficient communication by existing programmes as well as a lack of financial support can be identified as the main reasons for inactive schools and companies having refrained so far from sending apprentices abroad.” These two aspects ought to be tackled to achieve a higher mobility rate in the future <sup>(48)</sup>. In fact, the federal government is addressing these issues through specific incentives to promote incoming and outgoing mobility of apprentices (Chapter 3, Sections 3.2 and 3.3).

### **3.2.2. The federal states**

- (a) bear full responsibility for the school system in Germany,
- (b) finance teaching staff (municipal authorities and local government districts are responsible for buildings and inventory),
- (c) exercise legal supervision over the Chambers,
- (d) and draw up skeleton curricula for the vocational school which are harmonised with the training regulations for company-based training. Most vocational schools are convinced of the positive impacts of mobility and many of them apply for the mobility of their learners <sup>(49)</sup>. Many VET schools would even wish the anchoring of the mobility option in the framework curricula.

As detailed in Chapter 1, Section 1.4, the education ministry of North Rhine-Westphalia, the most populous and the economically strongest federal state, committed itself to reach the national benchmark for mobility in IVET. Not all federal states are equally active or focused on international mobility during IVET.

### **3.2.3. The social partners <sup>(50)</sup>**

- (a) work together to develop proposals for the creation of new training occupations or for the modernisation of existing occupations;
- (b) appoint experts to prepare training regulations and framework curricula within the respective area of responsibility;

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<sup>(47)</sup> <http://zugangsstudie.de/>

<sup>(48)</sup> NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Transnational mobility in IVET in 2017 – Study on Mobility*. (English version, p 24).

<sup>(49)</sup> NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Auslandsaufenthalte in der Berufsbildung 2017 - Mobilitätsstudie*.

<sup>(50)</sup> E.g. employers, unions.

- (c) and conclude regulations in collective wage agreements relating to matters such as the remuneration of apprentices;
- (d) at the implementation level, companies are responsible for in-company training delivery. According to the Vocational Training Act <sup>(51)</sup>, they need to be suitable and authorised to train apprentices by fulfilling certain requirements, such as being able to provide a qualified trainer <sup>(52)</sup>, learning support, a suitable learning environment and a training plan.

As detailed in Chapter 3, social partners have a positive attitude and role towards mobility in apprenticeship.

#### **3.2.4. The Chambers <sup>(53)</sup>**

- (a) advise companies and apprentices (for example on mobility of apprentices <sup>(54)</sup>);
- (b) monitor company-based training (including the mobilities longer than one month):

The Vocational Training Act (Section 76, Subsection 3) stipulates, “Initial training undergone abroad pursuant to Section 2 Subsection (3) shall be supervised and supported by the competent body in an appropriate manner. If the duration of a period of initial training abroad exceeds four weeks, a plan agreed with the competent body shall be required.”;

- (c) ascertain the suitability of companies and trainers:  
Regarding the suitability of in-company trainers, the 2009 reform of the Ordinance on Trainer Aptitude requires trainers to have the competence to assess whether parts of an apprenticeship can be realised abroad (Section 3 (2) 6);
- (d) register apprenticeship contracts;
- (e) carry out examinations and provide formal certificates;
- (f) and set up a VET Committee.

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<sup>(51)</sup> BBiG, Division 3, Sections 27 and 28 on Suitability of premises and training staff.

<sup>(52)</sup> *Ausbilder-Eignungsverordnung (AEVO*; Ordinance on Trainer Aptitude): It prescribes standards for the occupational and work-related teaching abilities of instructors.  
[www.gesetze-im-internet.de/ausbeignv\\_2009/BJNR008800009.html](http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/ausbeignv_2009/BJNR008800009.html)

<sup>(53)</sup> Chambers of industry and commerce; chambers of crafts.

<sup>(54)</sup> With the inter-chamber programme “Training without Borders“ and its nationwide counselling network of mobility coaches: <https://www.berufsbildung-ohne-grenzen.de/en/about-us/our-network/>

By fulfilling the above, the Chambers provide valuable services to companies interested in sending their apprentices abroad. They take up an important role in fostering IVET mobility.

### 3.3. Duration of apprenticeship and placement

The duration of apprenticeship programmes varies between two and 3.5 years depending on the occupation, but most programmes last three years (247 out of 325, i.e. 76% in 2018) <sup>(55)</sup>. For these three-year programmes, long-term mobility abroad is possible up to nine months (a fourth of the programme duration, according to BBiG - Section 2 - Subsection 3).

The duration of company placement corresponds to minimum 70% of the apprenticeship programme. It is a major part, so the training company needs to agree to the mobility of its apprentices, as well as to its length and its timing. In some cases, the company applies for sending its apprentices abroad. In most cases, it is the vocational school. In any cases, all parties (learner / company / VET school) have to agree on the mobility and its length (Part I provides more details on the barriers expressed by learners towards stays abroad, and Part III provides results of a related survey).

According to the Mobility Handbook <sup>(56)</sup> of the NA at BIBB, the best time to go is after the mid-term examination. By then, the apprentice has already acquired some occupational and social skills, which can be applied abroad. Further, he/she can widen his/her knowledge and experiences in the new country. Towards the end of the apprenticeship, the apprentice is becoming more and more productive for the employer, who is paying him a salary and is investing in its training. For this reason, many employers prefer to send their apprentices abroad at mid-term and for short periods (of a few weeks) rather than a long stay (more than a month at a time) <sup>(57)</sup>. Nevertheless, in principle, the duration of apprenticeship enables (long-term) transnational mobility of apprentices.

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<sup>(55)</sup> BIBB Datenreport 2019, p 81.

<sup>(56)</sup> NA at BIBB (2018). *Handbuch. Mobilität machen – Auslandsaufenthalte in der beruflichen Bildung erfolgreich durchführen*. p 16.

<sup>(57)</sup> NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Langfassung : Auslandsaufenthalte in der Berufsbildung 2017 - Mobilitätsstudie*. (p 118 of long version).

### 3.4. Organisation of alternance

Alternation between two learning venues (company and school) is compulsory. The form of alternation varies by apprenticeship programme and is specified in the curriculum documents. At least 70% of learning time take place at the workplace. Several models of alternance exist, for example:

- Alternance within a week: 3-4 days in company followed by 1-2 days at VET school (day release method)
- Alternance in “blocks”: one or more weeks in company followed by one or more weeks at VET school (block release method).

The Mobility Handbook compiled by the NA at BIBB <sup>(58)</sup> explains the practical steps to be taken before sending an apprentice abroad:

- (a) The approval of the vocational school/training company is necessary; missed learning contents may have to be made up independently by the apprentice; the reporting obligation continues to apply. The parties involved agree which learning outcomes are to be achieved and how these are to be determined and documented. In the few cases where the mobility is an integral part of the apprenticeship programme, the stay abroad is included in the training contract as a training measure outside the training facility. In most cases however, the opportunity for a mobility arises only after the conclusion of the training contract, so it is documented separately without the necessity to amend the training contract.
- (b) The responsible chamber (IHK or HWK) must be informed; for stays of more than four weeks, learning outcomes are also coordinated with the Chamber. For Erasmus+ projects, the chamber recognises the project application as such.

In general, the organisation of alternance between workplace and school does not seem to present any major obstacles to (long-term) transnational mobility of apprentices. Indeed, surveyed companies and VET schools in the Study on Mobility did not find the integration of mobilities into the learning process as particularly difficult <sup>(59)</sup>. In practice, the block release alternance may be slightly easier for a mobility compared to the day release alternance, although this question was not part of the survey.

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<sup>(58)</sup> NA at BIBB (2018). *Handbuch. Mobilität machen – Auslandsaufenthalte in der beruflichen Bildung erfolgreich durchführen*. p 17+56.

<sup>(59)</sup> NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Langfassung : Auslandsaufenthalte in der Berufsbildung 2017 - Mobilitätsstudie*. (p 118+132 of long version).

### 3.5. Type of contract and status of apprentices

The training contract between the apprentice and the training company is a particular form of employment contract (employee status) covered by the Labour Code, with additional regulations in the Vocational Training Act (Section 10: specific rights and duties of apprentices and training company). The contract must be in writing and signed by both parties, must specify the apprenticeship occupation and draw a training schedule. Further, it includes provisions on the training duration, working and training hours, training measures outside the company (if any), salary and paid leave (Section 11). The contract is registered at the Chambers, which have a monitoring function (Section 34).

In case of transnational mobility, the contract with its obligations and rights for both parties stays in force and the salary continues to be paid. For the apprentice, this is not an obstacle to long-term mobility: On the contrary, it facilitates the decision of the apprentice in favour of a mobility since it is a financial security. Regarding the employer, he is often ready to manage without its apprentice during a short-term mobility, realising the positive impacts of such a stay (i.e. motivation of apprentice, foreign language skills).

However, the employer is less ready to finance a long-term mobility since the long absence of the apprentice from the workplace is seen as a disadvantage<sup>(60)</sup>. There are no compensation measures or ways to recuperate some of these costs.

### 3.6. Remuneration

According to the Vocational Training Act, the training company shall pay apprentices an appropriate salary or remuneration (taxable income). The amount and payment procedure are specified in the training contract. The training salaries are based on collective wage agreements. The Minimum Wage Act (MiLoG) does not apply to apprentices. However, the federal education ministry is currently discussing the introduction of minimum wages for apprentices in the Vocational Training Act.

Average apprentice remuneration across Germany in 2018 was EUR 908 gross per month (increasing from first year of training: EUR 825 to fourth year:

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<sup>(60)</sup> NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Langfassung : Auslandsaufenthalte in der Berufsbildung 2017 - Mobilitätsstudie*. (p 116;118; 130f of long version).

EUR 1 032). There are significant differences in the level of remuneration between the training sectors and occupations <sup>(61)</sup>.

The stay abroad is an integral part of the whole training. It shall not be completed during the apprentice's holiday. Moreover, the training company continues to pay the apprentice during the mobility, even if the apprenticeship is not productive for the company during his absence. This is one reason why the employer generally prefers shorter stays abroad rather than one long-term mobility <sup>(62)</sup>. The introduction of minimum wages for apprentices might even reinforce the reluctance of employers in lower paid occupations (i.e. hairdresser) to send their paid apprentices abroad <sup>(63)</sup>.

### 3.7. Provisions on occupational health, safety and social insurance

Incoming apprentices and IVET students from the EU benefit from medical care through the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). Apprentices benefit from social security of employees <sup>(64)</sup>. Outgoing IVET-learners (including apprentices) benefit from social security coverage through the EHIC (as regards medical care), and parents or school insurance. The sending organisation (school or training company) is responsible for the statutory accident insurance in EU countries or in other countries with whom social security agreements have been signed <sup>(65)</sup>.

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<sup>(61)</sup> BIBB Datenreport 2019, p 265.

<sup>(62)</sup> NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Langfassung : Auslandsaufenthalte in der Berufsbildung 2017 - Mobilitätsstudie*. (p 116-118 of long version).

<sup>(63)</sup> BIBB Datenreport 2019, p 265.

NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Langfassung : Auslandsaufenthalte in der Berufsbildung 2017 - Mobilitätsstudie*. (p 42f of long version).

<sup>(64)</sup> - Health insurance: <http://www.sozialgesetzbuch-sgb.de/sgbv/5.html> , § 5.  
- Accident insurance: <http://www.sozialgesetzbuch-sgb.de/sgbvii/1.html> , § 10 (1) 2.  
As the training abroad is covered by the federal training act, the accident insurance covers also the international mobility  
- Pension insurance: <http://www.sozialgesetzbuch-sgb.de/sgbvi/1.html> , §1 (1).  
- Long term care insurance: <http://www.sozialgesetzbuch-sgb.de/sgbxi/1.html> , §1 (2).  
- Unemployment insurance: <http://www.sozialgesetzbuch-sgb.de/sgbiii/1.html> , §24 (1).  
- The legislation concerning maternity leave is regulated in the protection of mothers law: <http://www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/gesetze,did=3264.html>

<sup>(65)</sup> [https://www.dguv.de/medien/inhalt/internationales/broschuere\\_ausbildung.pdf](https://www.dguv.de/medien/inhalt/internationales/broschuere_ausbildung.pdf)



The Labour Protection Act <sup>(66)</sup>, regulating the working conditions, covers all employees. In addition, for minors, the Youth Health and Safety at Work Act <sup>(67)</sup> applies. Both acts are applied regardless of whether the person is an employee, an apprentice or a VET student making an internship and regardless of whether he or she is an EU or non-EU national. The handbook of the inter-chamber initiative “Training without borders” provides a list of sources on insurance matters <sup>(68)</sup>.

As detailed in the German country fiche of the Cedefop ReferNet Mobility Scoreboard <sup>(69)</sup>, all standard public grants and support measures (based on the German Social Code and the German Federal Training Assistance Act; implemented by employment and BAföG offices) are portable, if parts of the vocational training is completed abroad.

All provisions mentioned above are enabling (long-term) inbound and outbound mobility of apprentices.

### 3.8. Curriculum / training standards specification

A key element of dual VET are training occupations (*Ausbildungsberufe*) and the corresponding regulations. These form the basis for in-company training and are complemented by the respective framework curricula from the school-based part of apprenticeships. The training regulations comprise VET standards, occupational characteristics, a two- or three-year training plan (a guide to structuring the learning process in terms of time and content) and examination regulations. The Vocational Training Act defines the requirements that these training occupations must meet, thus ensuring binding quality standards and the protection of minors <sup>(70)</sup>. Further, the act supports learning periods abroad “if this serves the purpose of training”. This imposes the obligation to the company and/or VET school to make sure that this relevance requirement is met.

As for the whole training, the relevance and quality are supervised by the chambers: “Initial training undergone abroad pursuant to Section 2

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<sup>(66)</sup> <https://www.bmas.de/DE/Service/Gesetze/arbeitsschutzgesetz.html>

<sup>(67)</sup> <http://www.bmas.de/DE/Service/Gesetze/jarbschg.html>

<sup>(68)</sup> [https://www.berufsbildung-ohne-grenzen.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Neuaufgabe\\_BoG-Handbuch\\_-\\_Kopie.pdf](https://www.berufsbildung-ohne-grenzen.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Neuaufgabe_BoG-Handbuch_-_Kopie.pdf) , p 86.

<sup>(69)</sup> Wiethölter, F., Huismann, H. (2019). *German country fiche - Cedefop ReferNet Mobility Scoreboard 2019*, Part 8.

<sup>(70)</sup> Hippach-Schneider, U.; Huismann, A. (2019). *Vocational education and training in Europe: Germany*. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports 2018, p 48.



Subsection (3) shall be supervised and supported by the competent body in an appropriate manner.” In fact, quality assurance and supervision are important elements for long-term mobility in particular, because the training companies as well as the apprentices want to make sure that the learning phase abroad is effective and beneficial, and is suitable to acquire the right competences. “If the duration of a period of initial training abroad exceeds four weeks, a plan agreed with the competent body shall be required.” (BBiG Section 76 Subsection 3). In practice, there is a fixed contact person at the Chamber and the interface between sending organisation (VET school or employer) and Chamber runs smoothly. In 2016, the Federal ministry of education evaluated the BBiG. As a result, it was recommended that the Chamber should supervise only stays longer than eight weeks. This recommendation considers the fact that the average duration of stays has increased to five weeks during the last years. With such an improvement, Chambers could better support long-term stays and the administrative effort could be reduced for shorter stays.

For Erasmus+ mobilities, the parties involved agree before sending the apprentice, which learning outcomes are to be achieved and how these are to be determined and documented. If integral part of the programme, the stay abroad should be included in the training contract as a training measure outside the training facility. Inspired by the positive experiences in Erasmus+, the national funding programme *AusbildungWeltweit* (Apprenticeship Worldwide) also requires from the funded institutions to set up learning agreements and working plans for stays abroad. In doing so, the use of learning agreements is strengthened at national level and ensures a high level of quality.

In the Study on Mobility <sup>(71)</sup>, both “inactive” (not sending apprentices abroad) companies and schools agreed that the requirements for stays abroad concerning the content of teaching ought to be specified clearly. Further, the documentation of the competences acquired abroad through certificates or diplomas increases the attractiveness of stays abroad. Indeed, the apprentices rated any kind of documentation as (very) important for their future application process. As mentioned in Section 2.1, the results of the survey also show that training companies, schools and apprentices even want the option of a transnational mobility anchored in the training regulations and framework curricula.

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<sup>(71)</sup> NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Transnational mobility in IVET in 2017 – Study on Mobility*. (English version, p 15+26).

### 3.9. Validation of competences acquired abroad

The assessment and validation of learning outcomes is subject to the holistic final examination at the end of the training which covers the whole training regardless whether parts of it were realised abroad or not. Therefore, a separate validation process for competences acquired abroad does not exist. However, all learning activities (including during the stay abroad) are reported by the apprentice in a logbook to be signed by the responsible trainer in the company. In addition, a countrywide coordinated mechanism ensures documentation of all types of learning components acquired during mobility, using EU tools such as the Europass Mobility Document and the Europass Certificate Supplement <sup>(72)</sup>.

The Vocational Qualifications Recognition Act (BQFG), introduced in April 2012, provides individuals with the right to have their foreign-acquired qualifications matched to a German qualification by an appropriate authority. The federal government's law on assessing professional qualifications has proven an effective instrument in helping people with qualifications acquired outside Germany to integrate into the labour market and in securing a supply of skilled workers <sup>(73)</sup>. Between 2012 and 2017, 111 500 applications for recognition were made in professions governed by federal law alone. Most of the qualifications recognised were in the regulated professions, especially in healthcare and nursing. The applications for nursing occupations originating from EU countries came mostly from Romania, Poland and Spain. The last issue of the NA at BIBB Journal is focusing on recognition of nursing qualifications in the EU. It gives several examples of good practice, like the Erasmus-funded project HCEU: HealthCareEurope - Fostering transparency and recognition of prior learning within geographical mobility of professionals in the health care sector (2015-18). <sup>(74)</sup>

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<sup>(72)</sup> Wiethölter, F., Huismann, H. (2019). *German country fiche* - Cedefop ReferNet Mobility Scoreboard, Part 3.

<sup>(73)</sup> Hippach-Schneider, U.; Huismann, A. (2019). *Vocational education and training in Europe: Germany*. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports 2018. (p 53-56).

<sup>(74)</sup> NA at BIBB (2019). *Pflege – Aktiv im Alter*. Bildung für Europa Nr. 30 – Juli 2019. Journal der NA beim BIBB. p 10-13; p 26.

## CHAPTER 4. Lessons learnt from existing policies, initiatives, projects

This chapter first summarises the main results of the Study on Mobility, looking at what works or not, and why. In a second step, a few best practice examples of outgoing and then in-coming mobility are presented and analysed.

### 4.1. Results of Study on Mobility

In 2018, the National Agency for the Erasmus+ Programme at the Federal Institute for VET (NA at BIBB) published a research study on the status quo of transnational mobility in IVET in 2017, the so-called Study on Mobility <sup>(75)</sup>. The study addressed IVET learners in their last year of training, VET schools and companies (among both active and inactive in IVET mobility) via specific online questionnaires and covered both German sub systems in IVET: the dual system (apprenticeship) and full-time school VET.

The outgoing mobility of apprentices has approximately doubled (in absolute and relative numbers) since 2010, partly thanks to the activities of the NA at BIBB. The results of the recent mobility study show that many improvements have taken place but they also show where there still is potential for further improvements.

#### 4.1.1. What works?

- (a) According to the mobility study, the vast majority of companies and VET schools that had experience with sending apprentices abroad will continue to include such stays abroad in their training offer (respectively 97.3% and 97.9%). Moreover, there is some potential for the companies and schools inactive so far, since a majority (54.2% and 63.7%) showed interest in future offers of transnational mobility as part of the initial vocational training <sup>(76)</sup>. Until now, the driving force of apprentice mobility are the part-time VET schools, which are applying and sending apprentices abroad in most of the

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<sup>(75)</sup> <https://www.na-bibb.de/presse/news/2018/studyonmobility/>

<sup>(76)</sup> NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Transnational mobility in IVET in 2017 – Study on Mobility*. (English version, p 27-29).

- cases <sup>(77)</sup>. There are still some inactive schools to be addressed but there are far more inactive training companies to be targeted.
- (b) Again, all dual VET actors (both active and inactive in international mobility) rate VET mobility as very positive and (would) have similar motivations to get involved: improving apprentices' foreign language proficiency and their personal growth. They also all agree on the many positive impacts of mobilities, corresponding to the motivations: language skills and personal competence such as self-confidence <sup>(78)</sup>. Accordingly, it does not seem necessary any more to convince that VET mobility has positive impacts, since there is now a consensus for this.
  - (c) The study has confirmed once more the perceived positive impacts of mobility on personal competences (i.e. self-confidence, motivation, willingness to take responsibility and working independently), knowledge (i.e. language skills and knowledge about country) and professional skills (i.e. working with international teams and dealing with new tasks more easily), and this by all actors concerned: apprentices, training companies and VET schools <sup>(79)</sup>.
  - (d) The assessment of the overall benefit varies, depending on the type of the mobility. Mobilities that mostly consist of work in a company abroad (apprenticeship, internship in case of school-based programmes) – also in combination with attending school (as long as more time is spent in the company) were considered the most beneficial. This was also the case of language classes. On the other hand, visits with a focus on school attendance and trade fairs were perceived as less beneficial in comparison. Accordingly, according to the apprentices, professional skills were mainly conveyed in internships and language classes, while attending school was perceived less beneficial. Knowledge about a country's economy was mainly broadened through internships abroad as well <sup>(80)</sup>.

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<sup>(77)</sup> NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Langfassung : Auslandsaufenthalte in der Berufsbildung 2017 - Mobilitätsstudie*. (p 74 of long version).

Dashboard KOM for Erasmus+ programme: Call 2018, 56% of granted applications came from VET schools.

<sup>(78)</sup> NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Langfassung : Auslandsaufenthalte in der Berufsbildung 2017 - Mobilitätsstudie*. (long version p 93-114-129).

<sup>(79)</sup> NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Transnational mobility in IVET in 2017 – Study on Mobility*. (English version, p 16-20).

<sup>(80)</sup> NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Transnational mobility in IVET in 2017 – Study on Mobility*. (English version, p 20).

- (e) According to the Study on Mobility, stays abroad of most mobile apprentices (over 85%) lasted at the most one month. About a third of the visits abroad (33.5%) lasted no longer than one week. Another third (33%) stayed abroad for more than a week and up to three weeks. Almost 20% of the mobilities lasted over three weeks and up to a month. The remaining 14% of stays lasted over a month, with hardly any long-term mobilities of over three months (only a few big companies like BASF and Merck Chemicals offer middle-term mobilities of three and four months respectively).

The very low share of long-term mobility of apprentices is confirmed by the statistics of the Erasmus+ programme. In the 2018 Call, 1 036 VET learners from Germany received a grant for a three-month mobility or longer, which corresponds to a share of 5% of all grants (22 770). In 2019, this share even dropped to 4% (999 long-term grants out of 25 797). The average length of stay for this very small category of mobile apprentices was 144 days (approx. 4.8 months), spent mostly in the UK (268 long-term mobilities), Spain (226), France (111) and Ireland (92).

There is a strong connection between the duration of the visits and the type of funding: While the visits funded privately or by the companies often lasted a week at the most, those funded publicly usually last between three weeks and three months and are thus considerably longer <sup>(81)</sup>. This can be explained by the minimum durations of stay in the Erasmus+ (min. two weeks) and the AusbildungWeltweit programmes (min. three weeks).

Short stays of one week and less were perceived as less beneficial than longer stays up to one month. Overall, both companies and schools, rate the time spent abroad on average as entirely appropriate for achieving the set goals. Longer stays would be more difficult to realise in practice for all actors: even more expensive and longer absences with more problems to fulfil the in-company and school contents of the apprenticeship <sup>(82)</sup>.

- (f) The participation of public funding programmes and foundations in the financing generally has a positive effect on the benefits. The number of cases allows in particular an assessment of the Erasmus+ programme: the benefits of stays abroad with the participation of this funding programme

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<sup>(81)</sup> NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Transnational mobility in IVET in 2017 – Study on Mobility*. (English version, p 9).

<sup>(82)</sup> NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Langfassung : Auslandsaufenthalte in der Berufsbildung 2017 - Mobilitätsstudie*. (long version p 118).

- were rated on average significantly higher than stays without corresponding funding <sup>(83)</sup>.
- (g) Companies sending their apprentices abroad agreed that stays abroad were a bonus for their apprenticeship marketing and would make dual VET more attractive overall <sup>(84)</sup>. As detailed in the former Thematic Perspectives on the Cedefop Opinion Survey on VET <sup>(85)</sup>, this was confirmed by a BIBB survey (Expertenmonitor 2012). These arguments could be used to help convince training companies, which have not been sending apprentices abroad yet.
  - (h) More than a third of all apprentices received a documentation of the skills acquired or a certificate at the end of their stay abroad, with the most important one being the Europass Mobility, which was received by 80% of the apprentices whose stay was funded partly publicly and partly privately (or 73% for those with full public funding). In contrast, almost two in three of those whose stay abroad was funded privately only, did not receive any documentation at all. In general, the apprentices rated any kind of documentation as (very) important for their future application process. A certificate of an internship abroad was regarded as particularly important.

#### **4.1.2. What could work better?**

- (a) Two main reasons for inactivity, mentioned by all three actors <sup>(86)</sup>:
  - (i) lack of information on mobility programmes and lack of direct (in the sense of outreach) mobility offers by sending programmes;
  - (ii) mobility being too expensive for apprentices.
- (b) In accordance with the reasons for inactivity mentioned above, the apprentices and companies named more financial and organisational support as well as more information as suitable means to facilitate stays abroad. Additionally, companies regard clearly defined additional qualifications and the respective certification or documentation as helpful for apprentices' stays abroad. Such additional qualifications through international mobility are described in Section 1.4.

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<sup>(83)</sup> BWP 4/2018, BIBB, Bonn: Hübers, B., Kröll, J; p 16.

<sup>(84)</sup> idem, p 21-22.

<sup>(85)</sup> Huismann (2018). *Cedefop European Public opinion survey on vocational education and training, country overview: Germany*. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series, p 28.

<sup>(86)</sup> NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Auslandsaufenthalte in der Berufsbildung 2017 - Mobilitätsstudie* (German short version p 31-33).

- (c) The schools rated external support in their search for international partners as what would be most needed. Further means of support needed are the inclusion of stays abroad as an option in the training regulations and framework curriculum, as well as a greater placing of importance for stays abroad on part of the school/educational authorities. It is obvious that VET schools mainly regard an increased institutionalisation of international mobility as an appropriate way of support. The companies considered these aspects as far less important. As described in Section 1.4, the federal state NRW leads the way to more institutionalisation by certifying vocational schools for their activities in “international cooperation in the European vocational education”, and IVET learners receive a certification for additional qualification in “international vocational mobility” since 2017 <sup>(87)</sup>. The Erasmus+ funding programme started promoting the internationalisation of VET learning venues in 2015 with its “mobility charters” <sup>(88)</sup>.
- (d) Schools and companies do agree, though, that the requirements for transnational mobility, e.g. concerning the content of teaching, ought to be specified more clearly. Moreover, substantial documentation of the competences acquired abroad by means of certificates or diplomas would facilitate the international mobility of apprentices, according to both schools and training companies.
- (e) Prof. Dr. Hubert Ertl, Research Director and Vice-President of BIBB, takes yet another step: “In view of the different constitutions of national regulatory systems in vocational education and training, the joint development of training plans across national borders may appear to be a very far-reaching goal. However, the ambitions formulated at European and national level can only be fulfilled in quantitative and qualitative terms if this type of cooperation is also taken into account.” <sup>(89)</sup> In fact, the development of common curricula are already being piloted, for example by the BBVET project described in Section 1.4 <sup>(90)</sup>.

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<sup>(87)</sup> <https://www.berufsbildung.nrw.de/cms/bildungsganguebergreifende-themen/idb/start-idb.html>

BWP 4/2018, BIBB, Bonn: Müller, H., Nannen-Gethmann, F., p 30.

<sup>(88)</sup> BIBB Datenreport 2019, p 515.

<sup>(89)</sup> BWP 4/2018, BIBB, Bonn: Ertl, H., Editorial p 3.

<sup>(90)</sup> <http://www.bbvet.eu/>

## 4.2. Outgoing mobility of apprentices

Regarding outgoing mobility of apprentices, the federal ministry of education (BMBF) is for example co-funding Erasmus+ and, through the implementing national agency (NA at BIBB), supports the new mobility programme outside Europe “AusbildungWeltweit”<sup>(91)</sup>, the IBS information service<sup>(92)</sup>, as well as bilateral programmes such as ProTandem with France<sup>(93)</sup>. The German country fiche of the Cedefop ReferNet Mobility Scoreboard gives a detailed overview of all activities for international mobility of apprentices in Germany and show the improvements reached in the last years<sup>(94)</sup>.

### 4.2.1. Erasmus+ programme

In Germany, Erasmus+ for VET is implemented by the National Agency at BIBB<sup>(95)</sup>. As shown in the Study on Mobility, Erasmus+ funds about half of all transnational mobilities of VET learners. The steady rise continued in 2018: 22 770 VET learners participated in a transnational mobility funded by Erasmus+, compared to 7 515 in 2008, tripling in ten years<sup>(96)</sup>. Some training occupations have already reached the benchmark of 10% mobility, such as the industrial sales manager. Since 2015, Erasmus+ has been promoting the internationalisation of VET learning venues with its “mobility charters” (total of 121 accredited venues by 2018)<sup>(97)</sup>. As detailed in Section 3.1, the share of long-term mobility (more than three months) of apprentices in the Erasmus+ programme is very low (2019: 4%).

### Measures addressing apprentices

In 2017, the NA at BIBB established a European network of Erasmus+ funded apprentices: **EuroApprentices**<sup>(98)</sup>. Based on individual success experiences of German mobile apprentices, they give learning mobility an individual face and a

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<sup>(91)</sup> <https://www.ausbildung-weltweit.de/de/ueber-ausbildungsweltweit.html>

<sup>(92)</sup> <https://www.go-ibs.de/>

<sup>(93)</sup> <https://protandem.org/>

<sup>(94)</sup> Wiethölter, F., Huismann, H. (2019). *German country fiche - Cedefop ReferNet Mobility Scoreboard*.

<sup>(95)</sup> <https://www.na-bibb.de/>

<sup>(96)</sup> BIBB Datenreport 2019, p 513.

<sup>(97)</sup> BIBB Datenreport 2019, p 515.

<sup>(98)</sup> <https://www.na-bibb.de/erasmus-berufsbildung/mobilitaet/euroapprentices/>



personal story. This idea is inspired by the EuroPeers-Network <sup>(99)</sup>. As Erasmus+ funds the largest number of learners staying abroad and since the NA at BIBB is the most important player in the field of funding mobility experience and internationalisation in VET, this network is a very important measure for strengthening the motivation of learners to participate in international mobility experience.

Another measure addressing IVET learners directly since 2016 are the so-called “**pool projects**”. Normally, VET schools, companies or chambers apply for mobilities of IVET learners (including apprentices). These pool-projects, co-funded by the federal education ministry, allow apprentices, especially from SMEs or learning venues with little international experience to obtain funding to take part in a mobility project, even if not implemented by their own learning venue. In 2018, 3 582 pool placements were granted.

The federal education ministry established about 25 years ago an office providing transparent information and guidance to IVET-learners on opportunities for learning abroad, i.e. the **Information and Guidance Service for International Mobility in VET (IBS)** <sup>(100)</sup>. The IBS is located at the NA at BIBB. The IBS covers IVET-learners individual information and guidance, connecting individuals to regional or sectorial counsellors for further in depth guidance on mobility opportunities, guidance in finding financial support and an internet database for programmes supporting VET learning abroad. The service is provided to all VET learners in initial and continuous VET as well as to employees looking for an international CVET opportunity. The office supports also employers and schools looking for advice with respect to their international VET activities. The service is provided by internet, e-mail, telephone and on education fairs. Complementary to the IBS, the Erasmus+ programme provides information and guidance to IVET learners directly. Therefore, a website dedicated to IVET learners was launched in 2015 <sup>(101)</sup>.

In addition, the NA at BIBB and the IBS started together in 2017 the **social media campaign “Mein Auslandspraktikum”** on Instagram and Youtube. This campaign is especially dedicated to young people in IVET in order to provide them with information and to motivate them to participate in mobility <sup>(102)</sup>. In November 2018, the social media account “Mein Auslandspraktikum” registered

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<sup>(99)</sup> [www.europeers.de/international/](http://www.europeers.de/international/)

<sup>(100)</sup> Informations- und Beratungsstelle für Auslandsaufenthalte in der Berufsbildung, IBS: <https://www.go-ibs.de/>

<sup>(101)</sup> <http://www.machmehrausdeinerausbildung.de/> (only in German).

<sup>(102)</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/meinauslandspraktikum/>

more and more visits as well as 751 followers. This campaign does not only include information about funding by Erasmus+ but also many references about any other mobility schemes and funding programmes. In this context, the NA at BIBB and the IBS also produced in 2017 a video about four apprentices funded by Erasmus+ who gained international work experience <sup>(103)</sup>. Furthermore, the NA at BIBB is about to release a new film about two apprentices also funded by Erasmus+ and staying abroad in Amsterdam. This film project demonstrates the benefit of staying abroad for the young people themselves as well as for their training companies.

### **Measures addressing companies and VET schools**

The NA at BIBB provides information and guidance to applicants of mobility projects (VET schools and companies) on its website <sup>(104)</sup>. Organisers of mobility projects can find tailor-made information in the **Mobility Handbook**, first published in 2016 and updated in 2018 by the NA at BIBB. Information and guidance concerning learning agreements and ECVET instruments are also available in the Mobility Handbook <sup>(105)</sup>.

Complementary to the activities funded by the BMBF, the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) funds the **initiative “Training without Borders”**, a structure of about 35 mobility counsellors located since 2009 at the different regional chambers of craft as well as at the chambers of industry and commerce <sup>(106)</sup>. The mobility counsellors support enterprises as well as apprentices in initiating and realising their international training activities. The services are focused on enterprises and apprentices but address partly VET-schools and VET-learners in full time IVET. The support is given in meetings, via a handbook, by internet, e-mail and phone <sup>(107)</sup>.

An example of good practice for international mobility of apprentices is the company Liebherr-Verzahntechnik GmbH. The company sends 90% of its apprentices for three to eight weeks learning in a company abroad with the

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<sup>(103)</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrPja604vmauBi-TTloASUg> as well as <https://www.go-ibs.de/>

<sup>(104)</sup> <https://www.na-bibb.de/erasmus-berufsbildung/mobilitaet/>

<sup>(105)</sup> NA at BIBB (2018). *Handbuch. Mobilität machen – Auslandsaufenthalte in der beruflichen Bildung erfolgreich durchführen.*

<sup>(106)</sup> <https://www.berufsbildung-ohne-grenzen.de/>  
[https://www.berufsbildung-ohne-grenzen.de/fileadmin/redaktion/Dateien/Neuaufgabe\\_BoG-Handbuch\\_-\\_Kopie.pdf](https://www.berufsbildung-ohne-grenzen.de/fileadmin/redaktion/Dateien/Neuaufgabe_BoG-Handbuch_-_Kopie.pdf)

<sup>(107)</sup> BWP 4/2018, BIBB Bonn: Moll, T., p 26-27.

Erasmus+ programme. The company uses ECVET agreements as intercultural and professional framework of the exchange and Europass to confirm the learning outcomes <sup>(108)</sup>. More examples of good practice can be found in the last annual report of the NA at BIBB <sup>(109)</sup> and on the NA website.

#### **4.2.2. AusbildungWeltweit programme**

The federal ministry of education launched in September 2017 a new national pilot programme for funding international learning experience of German IVET-learners. It is called “AusbildungWeltweit” and offers the possibility to gain international learning experience in all countries outside the EU (so possibly also in the UK, in case of a hard BREXIT). This new programme should strengthen the participation of learners and their training companies in outgoing transnational mobility. It provides an attractive supplement to Erasmus+ for enterprises having a high demand for sending their apprentices in countries outside Europe. As this funding programme was very successful in 2017 and 2018, this pilot programme became a national funding programme for international mobility in IVET in November 2018.

The funded mobilities last between three weeks and three months. To date, the average length of stay applied for is six weeks, which is higher than the average length of stay in the EU programme Erasmus+ (4.6 weeks in 2017). China and USA have been the most important countries of destination until now.

Training companies and chambers can apply for funding, but not VET schools, in contrast to Erasmus+. Mobility of trainers up to two weeks can also be co-financed, as well as a preparatory visit at the host company for up to five days. The host company should already be identified, when applying. As in Erasmus+, learning content and outcomes are agreed in writing between the sending and the host company. With two application deadlines per year, there is more flexibility than in Erasmus+ <sup>(110)</sup>.

#### **4.2.3. Bilateral exchanges**

Three organisations offer mobility projects for apprentices between Germany and France: the NA at BIBB with Erasmus+, ProTandem and the DFJW (Franco-

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<sup>(108)</sup> BWP 4/2018, BIBB Bonn: Interview with Michael Schuster, Managing Director of Liebherr-Verzahntechnik GmbH, p 28-29.

<sup>(109)</sup> NA at BIBB (2018). *Jahresbericht 2018*. p 18-20.

<sup>(110)</sup> <https://www.ausbildung-weltweit.de/>

BWP 4/2018, BIBB Bonn: Timmermann, S., p 24-25.

German Youth Office) <sup>(111)</sup>. According to an online survey among sending organisations carried out by the NA at BIBB in 2017 <sup>(112)</sup>, the biggest obstacle for mobilities of apprentices between Germany and France is the language problem on both sides. This explains the pragmatic approach of ProTandem and the DFJW, which offer low-threshold exchange formats.

ProTandem <sup>(113)</sup>, the German-French-Office for exchange in VET (former DFS “Deutsch Französisches Sekretariat”), provides financial support and information on possibilities for staying in France for IVET-learners. It also addresses VET institutions via website and different events. ProTandem offers low-threshold group exchanges: the foreign language (language course and support is part of the exchange), the fear of jumping in cold water alone (close accompaniment, in a group) or the length of the mobility (mostly short-term: a few weeks) should not be in the way of transnational mobility.

Several binational organisations foster the cross-border mobility of youth, including VET exchanges, and thus encourage foreign language skills, intercultural awareness as well as the internationalisation of curricula, for example the Deutsch-Französisches Jugendwerk DFJW / OFAJ (Franco-German Youth Office), Deutsch-Polnisches Jugendwerk DPJW (Polish-German Youth Office), Deutsch-Griechisches Jugendwerk DGJW (Greek-German Youth Office) <sup>(114)</sup> or Tandem - Koordinierungszentrums Deutsch-Tschechischer Jugendaustausch (Coordination centre for Czech-German youth exchanges). The DFJW <sup>(115)</sup> (Franco-German Youth Office) funds the largest number of apprenticeship mobilities between Germany and France (more than 9 000 participants). The mobilities last up to three weeks. The meetings can also be trilateral.

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<sup>(111)</sup> NA at BIBB (2018). *Deutsch-Französische Partnerschaft*. Bildung für Europa Nr. 28 – August 2018. Journal der NA beim BIBB. p 18-19.

<sup>(112)</sup> NA at BIBB (2018). *Deutsch-französische Mobilität in der beruflichen Bildung: Fakten, Trends, Herausforderungen*.

<sup>(113)</sup> [www.protandem.org](http://www.protandem.org)

\* active = sending their apprentices abroad / inactive = not sending their apprentices abroad

<sup>(114)</sup> <https://www.ijab.de/was-wir-tun/internationale-zusammenarbeit/griechenland/griechenland/a/show/abkommen-zur-gruendung-eines-deutsch-griechischen-jugendwerkes-gezeichnet/>

<sup>(115)</sup> [www.dfjw.org](http://www.dfjw.org)

### 4.3. Incoming mobility of apprentices

The Study on Mobility shows that most companies in the survey offer internship placements for incoming apprentices from abroad (76% of active\* training companies and 54% of inactive\* training companies) <sup>(116)</sup>.

The Erasmus+ national agencies only implement outgoing mobility (see above). However, the total Erasmus+ statistics show that approximately 15 000 VET learners of other countries participated in a mobility in Germany in 2017. Most of them came from France, Turkey and Poland <sup>(117)</sup>. The fact that France is the first country of provenance, can be partly explained by the tailor-made, low-threshold exchange programmes described above (DFJW and ProTandem). There are similar exchange programmes with Poland, the Czech Republic and Greece (see above).

The mobility handbook of the chambers organisation "Training without Borders" also includes information on incoming mobility <sup>(118)</sup> but special programmes like MobiPro-EU are focusing and organising solely long-term incoming mobility of apprentices, in view of future employment in occupations with shortage of skilled staff.

#### 4.3.1. MobiPro-EU

To foster incoming mobility of apprentices, the Federal Ministry for Employment and Social Affairs (BMAS) and the German Employment Agency (BA) are funding a special programme to promote the vocational mobility of young Europeans (18-27 years old) interested in vocational training in Germany (Sonderprogramm "Förderung der beruflichen Mobilität von ausbildungsinteressierten Jugendlichen aus Europa": MobiPro-EU).

It is a contribution to reduce the youth unemployment in Europe. In order to facilitate the access to the labour market, the programme MobiPro-EU <sup>(119)</sup> offers supporting measures to complete successfully a company-based VET training in Germany, e.g. German language courses before and during training, grant for travel and subsistence costs during training, accompanying qualification and orientation measures.

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<sup>(116)</sup> NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Langfassung : Auslandsaufenthalte in der Berufsbildung 2017 - Mobilitätsstudie*. (long version p 124).

<sup>(117)</sup> BIBB Datenreport 2019, p 517-518.

<sup>(118)</sup> [https://www.berufsbildung-ohne-grenzen.de/fileadmin/redaktion/Dateien/Neuaufgabe\\_BoG-Handbuch\\_-\\_Kopie.pdf](https://www.berufsbildung-ohne-grenzen.de/fileadmin/redaktion/Dateien/Neuaufgabe_BoG-Handbuch_-_Kopie.pdf)

<sup>(119)</sup> [www.thejobofmylife.de](http://www.thejobofmylife.de)

The programme started in 2013 with an individual funding scheme. Based on first evaluation results <sup>(120)</sup>, the funding principles moved to project funding in 2015, which means that projects receive funding now, not individual persons. The funding volume 2013-2018 has been increased from the original EUR 139 million to EUR 550.1 million, so almost quadrupled. As of January 2018, 250 projects (corresponding to more than 2 300 apprentices, mostly from Spain) were given a grant.

#### **4.3.2. Projects in sectors with acute shortages of skilled staff**

Skilled staff shortages are already acute in certain areas. Therefore, the government takes measures to facilitate access to the training and labour market. Here are a few examples:

- (a) Train traffic is growing - but there is a lack of train drivers in Germany. The German Railways “Deutsche Bahn” has therefore recently started recruiting new apprentices in Spain, to pursue the complete dual apprenticeship as train driver in Germany <sup>(121)</sup>.
- (b) Despite many political efforts to make the care and nursing occupations as well as the corresponding apprenticeships more attractive <sup>(122)</sup>, skilled staff shortages are already acute in this area. The federal government’s law on assessing professional qualifications has proven an effective instrument in helping people with qualifications acquired outside Germany to integrate into the labour market and in securing a supply of skilled workers, partly in nursing occupations (Chapter 2, Section 2.9). Additionally, the government drafted a law on the immigration of skilled workers to come into force in March 2020 <sup>(123)</sup>.

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<sup>(120)</sup> <http://www.iaw.edu/index.php/project-detail/evaluation-des-sonderprogram...>

<sup>(121)</sup> [https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/fachkraeftemangel-deutsche-bahn-setzt-auf-spanische.766.de.html?dram%3Aarticle\\_id=452906](https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/fachkraeftemangel-deutsche-bahn-setzt-auf-spanische.766.de.html?dram%3Aarticle_id=452906)

<sup>(122)</sup> [https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/fileadmin/Dateien/3\\_Downloads/K/Konzertierte\\_Aktion\\_Pflege/Vereinbarungstext\\_KAP.pdf](https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/fileadmin/Dateien/3_Downloads/K/Konzertierte_Aktion_Pflege/Vereinbarungstext_KAP.pdf)

<https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/themen/aeltere-menschen/altenpflegeausbildung/ausbildungsoffensive-pflege/ausbildungsoffensive-pflege-/132444>

<https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/konzertierte-aktion-pflege.html>

<sup>(123)</sup> <https://www.bmas.de/DE/Presse/Meldungen/2018/fachkraefteeinwanderungsgesetz.html>

<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/>

<https://www.bmas.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2018/fachkraefteeinwanderungsgesetz.html>

Moreover, the government is signing cooperation agreements with several countries (Kosovo in July 2019; in planning: North Macedonia, the Philippines and Cuba) to support the apprenticeship in such occupations and the learning of the German language by the apprentices in view of employing the graduates of such programmes in care and nursing occupations in Germany <sup>(124)</sup>.

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<sup>(124)</sup> [https://rp-online.de/politik/deutschland/pflegenotstand-spahn-will-pflegeausbildung-im-ausland-foerdern\\_aid-34791637](https://rp-online.de/politik/deutschland/pflegenotstand-spahn-will-pflegeausbildung-im-ausland-foerdern_aid-34791637)

## CHAPTER 5.

# Conclusions

All exogenous factors influencing the mobility of apprentices presented in this article show that Germany could benefit of more outgoing and in-coming mobility of apprentices. The only possible disabler to be in the way could be a lack of proficiency in foreign languages other than English. Consequently, language classes need to be part of mobility concepts, as well as low-threshold offers minimizing the language barrier (short stay, close accompaniment in a group; language support and translation), as the bilateral programmes with France, DFJW and ProTandem.

The positive impacts of apprentices' mobility and the necessity to increase the share of mobile apprentices are clear to all stakeholders of the apprenticeship system in Germany, who have already been promoting such mobility in many ways. Since 2005, the Vocational Training Act supports international mobility as part of the apprenticeship. National and regional targets have been set. The National Agency at BIBB has been monitoring the overall mobility of apprentices and analysing how to encourage it. The recent Study on Mobility <sup>(125)</sup> identified four areas of support to be intensified: better information on mobility programmes reaching all three actors concerned (apprentices, companies, VET schools), more financial support, better practical support, and anchoring the option for mobility in training regulations <sup>(126)</sup>.

The federal government has been expanding and diversifying the funding and support programmes accordingly. The best example is the new programme *AusbildungWeltweit*, funded by the federal education ministry (BMBF). When conceiving and piloting the mobility programme, an optimal duration range was set between three weeks and three months. This is in line with the results of the Study on Mobility, stating that 85% of all stays abroad lasted one month at the most. In fact, experiences in Erasmus+ and other programmes, as well as studies have shown that such a duration margin brings many positive impacts to all VET actors concerned, while still being feasible and practicable for all. Indeed, in case of longer absences, training companies and schools worry about not being able to cover all training contents, and the paying employers worry about the return on

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<sup>(125)</sup> 2017 Mobilitätsstudie: NA at BIBB (Ed.) (2018). *Auslandsaufenthalte in der Berufsbildung 2017*.

<sup>(126)</sup> BWP 4/2018, BIBB, Bonn: Hübers, B., Kröll, J; p 18.



investment and may lose their motivation to train. Further, even more apprentices would hesitate to participate in a mobility due to the higher costs.

So, increasing the numbers and shares of mobile apprentices: yes – but at the optimal length of mobility between three weeks and three months, because beneficial and practicable at the same time. The long-term mobility of apprentices according to the EU definition of 6 to 12 months seems to sidestep in a top-down fashion the reality of all actors concerned and does not seem practicable for apprenticeship, which has very different prerequisites than education at universities. Even if it appears to be a very far-reaching goal, perhaps the only way to make such long-term mobility practicable for all actors concerned would be to develop common transnational training curricula, as suggested by Prof. Dr. Hubert Ertl, Director of Research and Vice President of the Federal Institute of Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) <sup>(127)</sup>.

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<sup>(127)</sup> BWP 4/2018, BIBB, Bonn: Ertl, H., Editorial, p 3.

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