

Reaction to the Council Recommendation on the Automatic Mutual Recognition of Diplomas and learning periods abroad

On 26th November the EU Council has adopted the [Council recommendation on the Automatic Mutual Recognition of Diplomas and learning periods abroad](#) which calls on *automatic recognition of learning periods abroad within upper secondary education and training, with the learner not being required to repeat the programme year or achieved learning outcomes in the country of origin, provided that the learning outcomes are broadly in line with the national curricula in the country of origin.*

Our organisations, which have carried out the campaign [#RecogniseStudyAbroad](#) over the past two years, welcome this initiative as an important step towards removal of barriers to learning mobility, also for school students. Therefore, we are very glad to see that the calls and stands from the campaign are well-reflected in the final text of the Council recommendation.

Now it is time to start implementation of the principles of this recommendation at national level. For this purpose the **European Commission** plans to launch a Union level cooperation process under the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training to initiate closer cooperation and exchange of practices among Member States at upper secondary education level to foster transparency and build mutual trust in school education systems across the Union.

Moreover **Member states** are called upon:

- supporting upper secondary education and training institutions on general principles and tools for recognition, for example through guidance material or training;
- promoting the use of transparent criteria and tools, such as learning outcomes-based learning agreements between the sending and hosting institutions. In vocational education and training, extending the use of the Union tools
- promoting the benefits of mobility among upper secondary education and training institutions and learners and their families.

Based on the experience of the campaign partners and the evidence from [EFIL's study recognition of school study periods abroad in Europe -an overview and policy recommendations'](#), we encourage the European Commission and the Member states to ensure:

- the **involvement of civil society stakeholders** in designing the implementation measures, namely students, parents, teachers and school heads, and the non-profit pupil exchange organisation which run long-term individual pupil mobility programmes since the 1950s, involving at least 10.000 students per year.
- the adoption of **recognition tools that value the key competences** gained by pupils through the mobility experience. In fact learning agreements based on correspondence between the curricula contradict the objective of the experience itself, namely learning from diversity.
- **that pupils have an active role in the shaping of their own mobility programme, including the recognition procedure of their time spent abroad.**
- **teachers and school heads are trained properly** to be able to promote mobility, set up recognition processes with are competence-based, and assess the transversal competences developed by pupils through a mobility experience
- Recognition **procedures are not valid exclusively among EU Member states, but are the same regardless the hosting country of the mobility.** In fact, the current successful procedures for automatic recognition applied in Member states do not make any distinction among countries of destination.



Who we are



EFIL is the umbrella of 30 national organisations running AFS Intercultural programmes in Europe, providing intercultural learning opportunities for school pupils, schools and volunteers. With its experience of over one century in pupil exchanges, reaching 12.000 pupils and 40.000 volunteers worldwide, AFS is a non-profit world-class intercultural education organisation which has given a significant contribution to help the world learn to live together.



EEE-YFU is the umbrella organisation for national YFU organisations in Europe and currently has 29 member organisations. Youth For Understanding is a non-profit youth exchange organisation, providing exchange programmes for 15 to 18 year old students in more than 50 countries worldwide. EEE-YFU works to support its member organisations to grow as quality and sustainable organisations.



The Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU) is the platform for cooperation between the national school student unions active in general secondary and secondary vocational education in Europe. All Member Organisations are independent, national, representative and democratic school student organisations.