

# Great diversity: Cross-border mobility in the educational sector in the Greater Region

## Report on the 2nd Greater Region Forum “Realities and Visions of Cross-Border Mobility in the Educational Sector” on 7/11/2018

The second “Greater Region Forum”, under the heading “Realities and Visions of Cross-Border Mobility in the Educational Sector”, took place on 7 November 2018 in the House of the Greater Region (Esch-sur-Alzette) under the high patronage of Ms Corinne Cahen, President of the Summit of the Greater Region during the Luxembourg Presidency (2017-2018).

The podium participants themselves were already representative of the wide range of mobility in the educational sector in the Greater Region: Alexandra Schwarz from the Verbundausbildung Untere Saar e.V. (VAUS) presented the expert body for cross-border education established within the scope of the InterregVA Greater Region Project FagA / CAMT. The experiences of students in vocational and technical colleges demonstrate the great potential of industrial placements in the neighboring country for young people in the region.

CCI Luxembourg, represented by Line Jacoby, offers cross-border education in specific professions. CCI Luxembourg cooperates closely with CCI Trier, but also with institutions in France and (East) Belgium. 140 Luxembourgers are currently involved in cross-border education.

Christine Pegel, Director of Anefore, the national agency of the Erasmus+ program, presented the statistics of her institution to clarify the mobility of pupils, trainees and students in the Greater Region. During the academic year 2017-2018, the Greater Region was the target region of 27% of all the mobilities emanating from Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany, with student mobility (almost 19%) and trainee mobility (a good 8%) predominating.

Elodie Mareau of the Académie Nancy-Metz described the three axes of her field of work, which extend from the acquisition of a neighbour language from early childhood, via intercultural exchange programs to the promotion of a common European identity culminating in the development of programs for vocational training and education. She presented numerous examples of the Académie’s activities. This is the only French academy to have established its own office for the border region and neighbour languages.

Claudia Polzin-Haumann, Vice President for Europe and International Affairs at Saarland University, Chair of Romance Linguistics, raised the question of languages and multilingualism as well as the role of universities and political frameworks in the context of mobility. She demonstrated successful examples of cross-border cooperation, such as the university grouping of the Greater Region (UniGR), the interdisciplinary Master in Border Studies, which takes students to four universities in three different countries, and the Franco-German Day of Teachers, to be held in Metz on 17 November and which will unite language teachers from Saarland and Lorraine for a joint exchange of information.

Joachim Mohr of Saarland University broached the issue of scholastic mobility, integrated foreign language learning and teacher training in the Greater Region together with the corresponding political visions. These include Vision 2020, which was developed at the 7th summit of the Greater Region and has yet to be implemented.

Florence Soriano-Gafiuk from ESPÉ (École Supérieure du Professorat et de l'Éducation, linked to the Université de Lorraine) in Sarreguemines formulated her demands and objectives for the adapted bicultural education of teachers in the Greater Region and made tangible proposals for common cross-border activities and actions.

Also mentioned in the contributions from the universities was the Interreg VA Greater Region SESAM.GR Project, which looks at multilingual educational patterns from childhood to secondary school, as well as the future-oriented BiPrimar Project for the joint training of primary school teachers in Lorraine and in Saarland, which is intended to lead to a teaching qualification in both countries.

Despite the existing initiatives, the round table stressed that there is still much to be done in the field of cross-border mobility in the education sector and in the field of language learning. A key role is accorded to raising awareness of the topic as well as the corresponding preparation and support for all those involved; important target groups are not just scholars, teachers, trainees and students, but also - and primarily - parents and decision-makers.

The next Greater Region Forum on "Greater Region Forum", Migration movements and borders: between regulation and integration" will take place on 14 March 2019.

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