Europe 2020 is the EU's growth strategy for the coming decade. In a changing world, we want the EU to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. These three mutually reinforcing priorities should help the EU and the Member States deliver high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion.

Concretely, the Union has set five ambitious objectives - on employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate/energy - to be reached by 2020. Each Member State has adopted its own national targets in each of these areas. Concrete actions at EU and national levels underpin the strategy.

José Manuel Barroso
President of the European Commission

-Youth on the Move is a comprehensive package of policy initiatives on education and employment for young people in Europe. Launched in 2010, it is part of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Youth on the Move aims to improve young people’s education and employability, to reduce high youth unemployment and to increase the youth-employment rate – in line with the wider EU target of achieving a 75% employment rate for the working-age population (20-64 years) – by:

- Making education and training more relevant to young people’s needs;
- Encouraging more of them to take advantage of EU grants to study or train in another country;
- Encouraging EU countries to take measures simplifying the transition from education to work.

DIRECT LINK:

Key reference / Could be used in: PART B.1, PART C (Investigation of the field), PART D (Rationale for setting-up if the consortium), PART E
Erasmus+ is the EU’s new programme for boosting skills and employability through education, training, youth, and sport. Between 2014-2020 the programme will provide opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain work experience, and volunteer abroad. In the field of education and training, the Erasmus initiative is renowned for the opportunities it provides students to learn abroad, as well as the opportunities it provides for teaching staff in higher education. Building on these, the Erasmus+ programme now covers five major areas of education and training: School education opportunities for staff and institutions; Vocational education and training opportunities for students, apprentices, trainees, staff, institutions, and business; Higher Education opportunities for students, staff, institutions, and businesses; Adult Education opportunities for staff, institutions, and businesses; European Integration opportunities for academic and research staff and institutions.

RATIONAL FOR EMREX:

-Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes:
Some paragraphs could be shared in PART D (Rationale for setting-up the consortium)

A number of European instruments such as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), Europass, European credit transfer systems (ECTS and ECVET), the multilingual classification of European Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) and quality assurance frameworks have been implemented in the last decade to support the mobility of learners and workers. These tools are improving transparency, for instance making qualifications comparable across countries (EQF) and credit points transferable (ECTS).

These instruments were not developed in isolation from each other; however, there is room for much closer coherence where the different tools and services - including transparency and recognition of qualifications, validation of non-formal and informal learning and lifelong guidance - are offered in a coordinated way. This will contribute to real European mobility where a person’s knowledge, skills and competences can be clearly understood and quickly recognised. The creation of a European Area of Skills and Qualifications will support this drive to achieve transparency and recognition of academic qualifications across borders, acquired in vocational and higher education.

... and academic recognition can lead the way

The recognition of both higher education qualifications and those enabling access to higher education has been on the European policy agenda for some time. Academic mobility is steadily increasing as a result of the changing structures of higher education systems, and this internationalisation is complemented by the drive to promote the EU as a destination for study and research. Nevertheless, to make the EU more attractive to students and researchers, better approaches to recognition are needed, as well as a more systematic and coordinated application of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and improvements in the application and assessment of learning outcomes. In addition, this will contribute to the European Area of Skills and Qualifications.
2.3. Strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border co-operation

Learning mobility helps individuals increase their professional, social and intercultural skills and employability. The ministers of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) have agreed to double the proportion of students completing a study or training period abroad to 20% by 2020[17]. The EHEA has brought about far-reaching changes: the bachelor-master-doctorate structure and advances in quality assurance have facilitated individual mobility and strengthened institutions and systems. In parallel, the development of the European Research Area (ERA) is increasing complementarity between national systems to enhance the cost effectiveness of research investment and intensifying exchanges and cooperation between institutions.

However, the recognition of academic qualifications gained abroad is still too difficult; the portability of grants and loans is restricted; “vertical” mobility [18] remains limited; and obstacles hinder the free movement of researchers within the EU. The implementation of the Council Recommendation on promoting learning mobility [19], and the use of European quality assurance tools such as the European Quality Assurance Register, would facilitate mutual trust, academic recognition and mobility.

Attracting the best students, academics and researchers from outside the EU and developing new forms of cross-border cooperation are key drivers of quality. They can also be important sources of income for institutions. Although some Member States are a very attractive study destination[20], the EU as a whole needs to attract the best students and researchers if it is to compete with the US[21]. Europe’s attractiveness can be enhanced if a number of concerns are urgently addressed: increasing cost and uneven quality; difficult academic recognition; non-transparent recruitment and unattractive working conditions for researchers; and problems in obtaining visas to study and work, including for intra-EU mobility.

Key policy issues for Member States and higher education institutions:

- **Encourage institutions to develop learning mobility** more systematically into curricula, and **eliminate unnecessary barriers** to switching institutions between bachelor and master levels and to **cross-border co-operation and exchanges**.
- **Ensure the efficient recognition of credits gained abroad** through effective quality assurance, comparable and consistent use of ECTS and the Diploma Supplement, and by linking qualifications to the European Qualifications Framework. **(Or creating a better working framework, such as in EMREX!)**
- **Improve access, employment conditions and progression opportunities for students, researchers and teachers from other countries,** including by fully implementing the Directives on students and researchers [22] and the EU Visa
- Academic recognition in higher education:

(see What's the next part) / Could be used in: PART B.1, PART C (Investigation of the field), PART D (Rationale for setting-up if the consortium), PART E

Recognition of skills and qualifications

What is it about?

When moving to a new job or to further learning, whether within or across borders, learners and workers should see their skills and qualifications quickly and easily recognised. This is essential to raise skill levels and which eventually increases employability. The European Union has developed several instruments to support the transparency and recognition of knowledge, skills, and competences to make it easier to study and work anywhere in Europe.

What has been done so far?

To date, a variety of initiatives have been launched with a view to simplifying the transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications across Europe. These include:

- The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) helps in comparing national qualifications systems, frameworks and their levels to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems in Europe.

- Validation of non-formal and informal learning is a way to recognise the full range of an individual’s knowledge, skills and competences, regardless if acquired within or outside the formal education system. If validated (identified, documented, assessed, and/or certified) these learning experiences can be made more visible and usable for further studies or work. Member countries are invited to put the necessary arrangements for validation in place by 2018. Guidelines for implementation of these arrangements in the member countries are being developed. A European Inventory is updated on a regular basis to provide an overview over good practices in the area of validation. Europass, a set of five standardised documents and a skills passport available for free in 26 languages, designed to enable users to present their skills, qualifications and experience across Europe.

- Credit systems, ECTS for higher education and ECVET for vocational education and training.

- Quality assurance arrangements in higher education and vocational education and training.

What is next?

The European Commission is collecting the views of stakeholders through the online public consultation on the "European Area of Skills and Qualifications". The consultation concerns the problems faced by Europeans with regard to the transparency and recognition of their skills and qualifications when moving within and between EU countries, on the adequacy of the related European policies and
instruments, and on the potential benefits of developing a “European Area for Skills and Qualifications”.


Already mentioned under ET2020 home page:

Following the link above:

*In Bucharest in April 2012, the Education Ministers identified three key priorities for the future: mobility, employability, and quality.*

**INVESTIGATION OF THE FIELD:**

- *Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020):*

  *The main aim of the framework is to support Member States in further developing their educational and training systems. These systems should better provide the means for all citizens to realise their potentials, as well as ensure sustainable economic prosperity and employability. The framework should take into consideration the whole spectrum of education and training systems from a lifelong learning perspective, covering all levels and contexts (including non-formal and informal learning). The conclusions set out four strategic objectives for the framework:*

  - **Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality** – progress is needed in the implementation of lifelong learning strategies, the development of national qualifications frameworks linked to the European Qualifications Framework and more flexible learning pathways. Mobility should be expanded and the European Quality Charter for Mobility should be applied (or compensating this with EMREX-tools!):
  - **Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training** – all citizens need to be able to acquire key competencies and all levels of education and training need to be made more attractive and efficient;


  A joint initiative of the EC, the Council of Europe and UNESCO, has been created primarily as a gateway to assist organisations and individuals easily find information on current issues in international academic and professional mobility, and on procedures for the recognition of foreign qualifications.

  *Could be used in:* PART C (Investigation of the field), PART E

Contains a lot of information on HIGHER EDUCATION (Academic recognition procedures; Documents required for recognition procedures; Institutions (HEIs): - Recognised HEIs and - Unrecognised HEIs (Diploma mills); Educational systems (country profiles and other tools); Qualifications Frameworks: level of qualifications; Quality assurance: accredited programmes; Joint programmes and joint degrees; Recognitions tools: ENIC-NARIC recognition tools and projects; Regulatory bodies recognition tools; Grading scale

-Please see under European Quality Charter for Mobility

Mobility has an important impact in that, as part of the freedom of movement of persons, it is a means of promoting employment, reducing poverty, and promoting active European citizenship by improving mutual and intercultural understanding in the EU and boosting economic, social and regional cohesion.

As an objective of the Education and Training 2010 work programme, mobility contributes to the creation of the European Area of Education and Training and plays an essential part in achieving the Lisbon strategic objectives. Mobility and an increase in exchanges are promoted through measures such as the 2000 action plan for mobility and the above-mentioned 2001 Recommendation on mobility for students, persons undergoing vocational training, volunteers and teachers, as well as events such as the 2006 European Year of Worker’s Mobility. The Charter consolidates and complements these measures and the Erasmus Student Charter from the quality point of view.

The European Quality Charter for Mobility constitutes the quality reference document for education and training stays abroad. It complements, from the quality point of view, the 2001 Recommendation on mobility for students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers and has the same scope. <…> This guidance consists of ten principles implemented on a voluntary and flexible basis. Among them are:

- **Recognition**: if periods of study or training abroad are an integral part of a formal study or training programme, the learning plan must mention this, and participants should be provided with assistance regarding recognition and certification. For other types of mobility, and particularly those in the context of non-formal education and training, certification by an appropriate document, such as the Europass, is necessary;

- **Reintegration and evaluation**: on returning to their country of origin, participants should receive guidance on how to make use of the competences acquired during their stay and, following a long stay, any necessary help with reintegration. Evaluation of the experience acquired should make it possible to assess whether the aims of the learning plan have been achieved (could this be a possible feature of EMREX?!);

- **Commitments and responsibilities**: the responsibilities arising from these quality criteria must be agreed and, in particular, confirmed in writing by all sides (sending and hosting organisations and participants). EMREX has a solution for this, as the transfer of study credits from one university/country to another is done by the student him-/herself. In other words, the student gives the permission as the student makes the transfer → no contracts, nor agreements are necessary!)
"Learning mobility" consists of going abroad to study or undertake training. EU Ministers have agreed to double the proportion of higher education students completing a study or training period abroad to 20% by 2020 and support for mobility is a core focus of the EU programme for education and training: Erasmus+. Going abroad to study or train helps people develop their professional, social and intercultural skills and increase their employability.

The recognition of academic qualifications gained abroad, however, is still too difficult; the portability of grants and loans is restricted and obstacles hinder the free movement of researchers within the EU.

Developing new forms of cross-border cooperation will also help to improve the quality of higher education.

The European Higher Education Area (Bologna Process) has brought about far-reaching changes which make it easier to study and train abroad: the bachelor-master-doctorate structure and advances in quality assurance have facilitated student and staff mobility and strengthened institutions and systems. In parallel to setting the 20% mobility target, in 2011, EU education ministers adopted a Council Recommendation on promoting learning mobility, in which they committed to creating a more positive environment for learning mobility.

This recommendation seeks to improve the provision of information and guidance about mobility, increase the recognition of academic qualifications, and improve the portability of student support. The use of European mobility and quality assurance tools such as ECTS, the Diploma Supplement and the European Quality Assurance Register facilitates mutual trust, academic recognition, and mobility. (and again, we need to emphasise why EMREX-tools is better!)

The Erasmus+ programme provides direct support to people wishing to study or train abroad and to projects which support cross-border cooperation between higher education institutions.

See below "Increasing the transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications

What are the next steps?
ET2020 outlines the aims and expected outcomes of its operations over the present decade and is the main guide for the DG’s activities. In addition to the aforementioned activities, DG EAC will also focus on:

- Increasing the transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications;
• Promoting social inclusion through education and training;
• Promoting new education technologies, notably through the Opening up Europe initiative;
• Supporting the work of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions;
• Supporting the work of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology in the framework of the Horizon 2020 initiative.

TOOLS ALREADY IN USE:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/higher-education/tools_en.htm

The tools are:

The European Union supports a series of practical tools to enhance transparency in higher education. These include:

• The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)
• The Diploma Supplement (with the Council of Europe and UNESCO)
• The ENIC-NARIC network (with the Council of Europe and UNESCO)

More recently, the European Union is supporting the development of:

• U-Multirank project
• European Tertiary Education Register (ETER)