

Hot topics from the German consortia

I. The situation of consortia in Germany – results from the latest meeting of mobility promoters in Magdeburg

The meeting in Magdeburg was held (13-14 March 2017). It was open to consortia, individual educational institutions and NA's.

In Germany there are currently **17 consortia** to run mobility projects for practical experiences – plus 3 in comparison to 2016, but one has quit its work.

The German consortia meet at least once a year to share experience – an initiative from inside. The NA is sometimes invited, members of the Expert team of DAAD (representing promoters from the projects = insiders) participate in the meetings and give feedback to the NA. The meetings are long term tradition and are a good instrument to exchange ideas and experiments.

The annual meetings of the NA with the mobility promoters under Erasmus+ do not reflect the consortia and the importance of placements (students and graduates) and the network as such requested the inclusion of placement aspects and consortia work to the annual meetings - without success so far.

So the Magdeburg meeting with DAAD (NA) was a result of the last meeting in Aschaffenburg – hosted by Prof. Alexandra Angress at FH Aschaffenburg. The meeting in Magdeburg was attended by more than 100 participants from Germany. The agenda of the meeting was developed by the host – Angela Wittkamp in close cooperation with the initiators of the consortia meeting group and DAAD.

The consortia network agreed to continue with the useful meetings and the next meeting of the German promoters will be held in March 2018 in Saarbrücken (together with the NA again).

LEO-Net representatives were present in Magdeburg and the meetings are open for any other European consortia to share experience. The participants regret that there is no more platform for meetings of European consortia like in the past in Bordeaux, Bonn, Porto and Bilbao.

It was agreed in Magdeburg to present and discuss the results and content of the meeting at the Leo-Net seminar in Barcelona, by Frank March or any other German participants, or by other LEO-Net representatives.

The participants asked DAAD to continue the data bases with placement experience of mobile students/graduates => former "EU community" but there was no opportunity to bring back the format "because of financial and other aspects" (DAAD). Solutions can be the use of the remaining tools of consortia and networking of them, application to the mobility tool. Examples: www.eu-servicepoint.de/erfahrungsberichte

II. Situation of the recent graduates in Erasmus+ => analysis

(Angela Wittkamp, Frank March, Marjo van der Valk, Bruno Wöran)

Cf. presentation from Angela (in German / available at LEO-Net) – analyzing the trend in Germany and especially in her consortium. Some remarks from Frank => conclusions are as follows and an open discussion led by the persons mentioned above.

Franks remarks and recommendations:

- Young graduates can use the mobility after their study to bridge the gap of not acquired skills by a period of time abroad (by reasons of no time or no interest at that time) and to obtain the necessary skills and knowledge for the development of their individual professional career.
- Mobility of recent graduates is a suitable instrument to support young people and enterprises / labour market in times of crises and sector specific up- and downturns in specific sectors.
- In Germany the number of participants/applicants is declining because of the specific situation on the labour market (low unemployment rate and high request for specialists and skilled workers in the industry) and the preconditions in this track of Erasmus+ strand.
- The target group of recent graduates needs a specific lobby (companies or associations, EC) to improve the situation and conditions.
- Even the so called gap mobility between Ba and Ma period is declining in Germany => the reasons cannot be detected easily
- Hosting companies should be involved into the financial concept of the grant agreement – (financial) contribution to the trainee's expenses and consideration in value.
- The level of grants is too low (Lifelong learning program (Leonardo) offered about 1.000,- Euro per month depending on the region). Graduates provide skills (fully)fledged and about 380,- Euro/month or less is not attractive enough for applicants.
- The application procedure during the study time is not reasonable and many of the students prefer to keep the former status as a student even if the grant is so low.
- Consortia can provide service in this sector because international offices are not in close connection with companies and do not care for graduates too much. The solution can be career services but the network is not so much developed (in Germany) and this service is voluntary and many H.E.I.s do not spend money on these activities.

III. Announcements of the Germany National Agency DAAD about the upcoming mobility projects in 2017 ff

- Key action 107 plays an important role in the future by the opening of Europe to partner countries (worldwide). DAAD presented an overview about the huge request from the universities. The money available for the specific countries and regions is in some cases on one third or less – so the competition in this field is really big.
- The amount of money in the projects will be increased in 2017 (the average monthly rate shall develop from 228,- to 260,- (students) and from 339,- to 360,- for placements.

- The consultation process for the next generation of funding programs (2020ff) is open now and the universities and consortia are invited to join the discussion by providing proposals and recommendations.
 - The NA prefers high rates of utilization in the financial project management and the promoters should keep close contact to the NA to maximize the use of the money.
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