***Supporting students’ skills development for the labour market of the future***

The presentation of the two Coimbra Group working groups – *Employability* and *Academic Exchange and Mobility –* focuses on the empowerment of students’ experience abroad through raising their awareness of the skills they acquire and searching how to help students recognize and describe them. Facing the increasingly more important role of transversal skills on the global labour market, universities should consider students’ expectations and propose suitable solutions. By evaluating the advantages of students’ mobility periods within the Erasmus+ Programme (studies and placements) and other projects, with a special emphasis on their employability-related transferable skills, we aim to demonstrate a set of recommendations on the role of universities in supporting skills development.

Two recent Coimbra Group high-level policy seminars highlighted the fact that our universities are very innovative in terms of internationalisation of the curriculum and employability and lifelong learning***–*** areas where skills and competences in intercultural communication are crucial. Initiatives undertaken by the member institutions have driven us to the revision of students’ advantages of their studies and traineeships abroad. Our analysis of students’ EU mobility reports, projects conducted at different universities and examples of good practices concerning support for the quality of mobility and maximization of the overall mobility results, covering European universities from geographically diverse area, makes us conclude that appropriate support can not only affect individual students but also have a positive effect on the future European labour market. Consequently, all kinds of services and ideas helping students recognize and express their transferable skills to employers should be implemented. This is of the utmost importance in the context of skills development for the future labour market.

Our presentation shows the results of analysis of students’ mobility reports from Erasmus+ traineeships focusing on the aspect of students’ prospects of education, training and work*.* We will also investigate the Erasmus+ study exchange reports and compare results of both mobility schemes. The research sample consists of reports from seven Coimbra Group universities completed by all the students participating in the Erasmus+ traineeship and study exchange in the 2017/2018 academic year.

Moreover, results of a Finnish project *Hidden competences and experience in skills development in an international context* will be added to the presentation as a significant source of information. The third evidence was provided by the University of Graz that launched a workshop *Advantage of a stay abroad – how to identify and express gained skills*. The workshop, offered for students after their study or traineeship period abroad, confirms the demand for the active and complete support of universities in transferring and describing gained skills. The role of support offices and their structural solutions in favouring students’ skills development during the whole mobility cycle (pre-departure, during their stay abroad and after return) will also be considered.

Students’ skills development can play an increasingly important role on the globalizing labour market, which should be considered in the new perspective of the Erasmus Programme and new applications of the Bologna Process.