

Report



Örebro Castle

EuropeMobility For All – Final Conference Report

Örebro, 17 - 18 September 2013

From the 17th to the 18th of September all project partners and the YES Forum met in the historic town of Örebro in Sweden to recapitulate and to conclude the EuropeMobility For All (EM4A) project – which focused on mobility opportunities for young people with disabilities and/or who are at risk of exclusion – by presenting its results.



EM4A, started its work in 2011 with the intention to give these young people the opportunity to expand their job-related experiences and to acquire professional skills in other EU countries. Welcomed by the Swedish organization Stiftelsen Activa, a YES Forum member and one of the main organisers of EM4A, the Final Conference brought together more than 40 guests from Sweden, Germany, Italy, Spain, Romania, Finland, Austria, Great Britain and the Netherlands.

On the first day Activa and the YES Forum greeted all participants and invited them to take part in four workshops to share their ideas, experiences and expertise on mobility topics. The main idea was to collect proposals on how to continue a joint cooperation within the field of mobility after the conclusion of EM4A. In the afternoon the participants joined a study visit to Activa, to learn more about the organisation and its work. The organisation seeks to support men and women who, due to disabilities or ill health, lack access to the labour market and works for instance according to the rule of 'early intervention', namely that it helps people with disabilities right after they have left school in order to be straightaway included into the labour market. Activa would also like to make mobility a permanent service in the future, but underlines that it needs funding to do so!

On the second and final day of the conference the participants were welcomed by Susanne Lindholm and Anders Hagström, two politicians in Örebro who praised the work done in the EM4A project. The meeting took place in Örebro Castle to conclude EM4A with a presentation on the project's process and outcome.

In order to reach young people with fewer opportunities the project partners developed an information package for practitioners with young people and for young people themselves and their parents, to promote learning mobility. Mobility fairs were organised which brought together target institutions such as schools, educational and training institutions to boost mobility, and to raise awareness over benefits, funding opportunities and good practices. The success of the project was underlined by a panel discussion in which two young Swedes informed the audience about their successful exchange to Italy, where they worked as chefs in a restaurant. Daniel (20) and Johannes (22) shared their experience, initial fears and final enthusiasm about going abroad and described their stay as probably the best and most enjoyable way to gain work and life experience.



In another presentation Göran Sjöberg (European Minds Sweden) and Hans Steimle (BAG EJSA Germany) discussed the effects of learning mobility in a European context. Here they stressed the importance of a close cooperation between EU Member States in mobility projects. However, in order to cooperate transnationally it is essential that the local, regional and national levels of every country work together as one unit.



Petronella Odhner and Linda Nilson (Leonardo da Vinci/The Swedish Council for Higher Education) introduced some key points of the new Erasmus+ programme which will be an integrated programme, as it will be based around key actions rather than sectors of education. The budget will be almost 70% higher than the current one with a similar rise in the number of projects to be funded. They concluded with the advice to consult national agencies for the final decisions made on Erasmus+ and what that will mean for youth organisations, their work and future projects.

The conference ended with a somewhat critical note as young people with disabilities and/or who are at risk of exclusion are still absolutely underrepresented in European mobility programmes and in measures promoting stays abroad for learning and qualifying purposes. However, every young person has the right to go abroad and should not be excluded from this opportunity. Therefore, sustainable mobility networks which go beyond the EM4A project have to be established to ensure that all young people receive this opportunity! As well all know this is a major step in the life of a young person because it offers better chances on the labour market, builds up work and life experience, broadens the horizon and helps to become more independent.