Towards a European Apprenticeship Area

APPRENTICES' DECLARATION

PARIS – 14 October 2026

On 14 October 2026, on the eve of the main conference "Towards a European Apprenticeship Area", forty-two European apprentices who had experienced international mobility gathered in Paris. Having come to share their journeys, they were invited to make their voices heard to inform and help shape European mobility policies.

Drawing on their own experience, the participants first shared their reasons for going abroad, their destinations and the tasks they carried out in their host companies. They then put into words the emotions that marked their stay: the pride of overcoming an obstacle, doubt or a sense of disorientation, the encounter that helps one grow, values shaken or reinforced, but also dissatisfaction or a sense of injustice. Brought together in a collective fresco, these accounts revealed both successes and concrete difficulties.

Organised into working groups, the apprentices explored in depth four themes at the heart of their experience: the financial and material conditions of mobility, skills development and relations with employers, languages and cultural differences, and finally the administrative burden. For each theme, they considered the personal added value of mobility, what works and should be continued, and what needs to be improved.

Their testimonies converge on several findings:

- Mobility is a powerful driver of personal development. It strengthens self-confidence, autonomy and independence, and opens other cultural perspectives by allowing everyone to step out of their comfort zone.
- It enriches career paths through the acquisition of skills, experience and an international network.
- Mobility is not tourism: whereas the tourist consumes, the mobile apprentice engages in a reciprocal relationship, built on the exchange of values and know-how and on an effort to adapt.
- Erasmus+ funding, accessible and inclusive, is recognised as an essential prerequisite. The grant directly determines the quality of the experience, especially the cultural immersion.
- Difficulties persist, mainly due to unsatisfactory support of intermediary organisations, inadequate accommodation, unsuitable company placements and lack of communication.
- The administrative burden was not identified as a particular difficulty from the apprentices' point of view, which shows the support provided by their mobility coordinator.
- The role of the apprentices in preparing their own mobility was consider as essential.

Rooted in lived experience, the apprentices' testimonies have both enriched and confirmed the orientations of the Joint Declaration presented on 15 October. They call for the following recommendations:

1. Raise awareness of apprentice mobility opportunities among all young people.
2. Preserve the accessible and inclusive nature of Erasmus+.
3. Ensure safe, high-quality mobility through a dedicated mobility coordinator working within a network of reliable partners.
4. Create a dedicated digital platform with practical information, guidance and feedback on destinations.
5. Rigorously organise the follow-up of mobility, including reflection, recognition and impact.

This collaborative work highlights the needs of those most directly concerned: the apprentices themselves. It calls on mobility stakeholders, to provide concrete responses and to make excellence the norm for all mobilities.