

HANDBOOK OF GOOD PRACTICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

DocMob - Tools and good practices
for doctoral mobility



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docmob

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INTRODUCTION

DocMob is a two-year Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership project (2018-2020). Its overall purpose was to sustainably improve the implementation and management of doctoral students' international mobility, and to make innovative recommendations for the next Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027, leading in the medium term to the internationalization of doctoral degrees and the reform of postgraduate studies towards integrated European systems.

More specifically, its main objectives are as follows:

1. To **identify and develop innovative practices** concerning the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme for the mobility of doctoral students;
2. To **update the existing Erasmus+ templates** (Erasmus+ inter-institutional Agreement, Erasmus+ Learning Agreement, Erasmus+ Diploma Supplement) in order to facilitate exchanges of doctoral students under the Erasmus+ programme;
3. To **publish a handbook for the mobility of doctoral students** to serve as a supporting document for the promotion of the Bologna process to postgraduate studies.

The consortium was composed of seven partners, each leading one aspect of the project:

- **Université de Lorraine**, Project coordinator : project management, drafting and writing of the Handbook for doctoral mobility
- **Universidade do Porto** : Quality assurance
- **Universidad de Valencia** : draft Erasmus+ interinstitutional agreement for doctoral students
- **Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II** : draft Erasmus+ Learning agreement for doctoral students
- **Universität des Saarlandes** : Recognition of doctoral students' mobility
- **Université Polytechnique Hauts-de-France** : doctoral mobility in the Erasmus+ KA107
- **European University Foundation** : Communication and dissemination

The consortium also involved an associated partner, Eurodoc (European Council of Doctoral Candidates, <http://eurodoc.net/>). The Eurodoc report « Identifying Transferable Skills and

Competences to Enhance Early-Career Researchers Employability and Competitiveness » was a particularly useful source of information and helped the consortium build its DocMob template of a Transcript of Records for doctoral mobility.

Summary of our recommendations for the implementation of Erasmus+ doctoral mobility in Europe:

- Create a specific mobility for doctoral students in the next Erasmus programme with different funding schemes ;
- Adapt the amount of the Erasmus grant to the specific needs of doctoral students for long-term and short-term mobility ;
- Make the duration of doctoral mobility as flexible as possible ;
- Allow that inter-institutional agreements are not compulsory for doctoral mobility ;
- Create an entirely new and flexible Learning Agreement (LA) and Transcript of Records (ToR) for doctoral mobility.
- Develop tools to enable Higher Education Institutions to get to know better their respective organization of doctoral studies.

Doctoral studies/third cycle studies:

The doctorate is the highest university degree. Doctorates (such as PhDs) are third-cycle degrees, usually taking three to four years. The doctorate is an advanced research training, which involves the writing of a thesis as an original research work. The doctorate also allows the acquisition of knowledge, know-how and soft skills.

Doctoral student:

According to the countries in Europe, a doctoral student may also have the status of researchers and/or be a staff member of its home university.

Doctoral fees:

Each country in Europe is free to set their own fees for doctorates and other degrees. However, EU member countries must charge the same fees to citizens of other EU countries as they do to their own students.

Cotutelle:

A cotutelle is a partnership between two universities or similar research organisations, offering joint supervision of a doctoral degree and providing a doctoral award from both institutions.

ECTS:

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is a tool of the [European Higher Education Area](#) for making studies and courses more transparent. It helps students to move between countries and to have their academic qualifications and study periods abroad recognised.

ECTS allows credits taken at one higher education institution to be counted towards a qualification studied for at another. ECTS credits represent learning based on defined learning outcomes and their associated workload.

HEI/HEIs:

Higher Education Institution/Higher Education Institutions

International mobility:

A period of study, training or research carried out abroad by a student outside the country of his or her home institution.

Home Institution:

Institution where the student takes his/her principal registration during his or her mobility abroad.

Host Institution:

Institution that welcomes a foreign student on a mobility project

Home coordinator:

Academic coordinator of the mobility project at the student's home institution

Host coordinator:

Academic coordinator of the mobility project at the student's host institution

The Bologna Process:

It was initiated in 1999, following on from the Sorbonne Declaration (1998) signed by France, Italy, the United Kingdom and Germany. It provides for the creation of an open European area, the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), with a twofold objective: to facilitate student exchanges and mobility in the region, and to adopt a common architecture for higher education based in particular on the harmonisation of the three levels of study: Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate (LMD), or ECTS credits. For further information, please visit the website <http://www.ehea.info/>

Erasmus+ mobility :

A mobility project performed under the Erasmus+ programme

SMS :

Erasmus+ Student Mobility for Studies

SMP :

Erasmus+ Student Mobility for Placement

STA :

Erasmus+ Staff Mobility for Teaching Assignement

STT :

Erasmus+ Staff Mobility for Training

Erasmus+ grant :

Erasmus+ grant awarded to the beneficiaries of an Erasmus+ mobility as a contribution to their travel and subsistence costs abroad

Inter-institutional agreement (IIA) :

By signing a compulsory Erasmus+ inter-institutional agreement, the institutions involved agree to cooperate for the exchange of students for studies and / or teaching staff for teaching assignement in the context of Erasmus+. In the Erasmus+ 2014/2020 Programmation, they are not compulsory neither for student mobility for placement nor for staff mobility for training.

Learning Agreement (LA) :

The Learning Agreement sets out the programme of the studies or the traineeship to be followed abroad and must be approved by the student, the sending and the receiving institution, organisation or enterprise before the start of the exchange.

Transcript of Records (ToR) :

The third section of the Learning Agreement that summarizes the results of a mobility in the host institution.

Recognition of an international mobility :

Recognition of the results of a mobility in the home institution, mainly by the transfer of ECTS.

Diploma Supplement :

The Diploma Supplement is designed as an aid to support the recognition of academic qualifications according to standards agreed by the Commission, the Council of Europe and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Funding :

Includes the various sources of funding for a doctoral student during his/her international mobility (scholarships from his/her home country at national, regional or local level, scholarships from his/her host country at national, regional or local level).

Short-term mobility:

A short-term mobility is a mobility that lasts less than 2 months, according to the Erasmus+ Programme.

Long-term mobility: A long-term mobility is a mobility that lasts more than 2 months, according to the Erasmus+ Programme.

OVERALL CONTEXT OF THE DOCMOB PROJECT

European doctoral mobility today is both a principle and a reality.

Its principle was promoted in the context of the harmonisation of European curricula through the **Bologna Process** in 1999 and its adoption of a common architecture for higher education based in particular on the harmonisation of the three levels of study: Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate (LMD), or ECTS credits. The doctorate was officially recognised as the European postgraduate level and integrated into the Bologna process at the **Berlin Conference** in 2003.

Its reality is confirmed by the fact that in the European Union (EU), doctoral mobility is first of all regional: approximately one doctoral student in three who is mobile in this zone comes from a European country member of the EU (*Les Notes Campus France*, N°60, juillet 2019, "Les doctorants à l'international : tendances de la mobilité doctorale en France et dans le monde", p.18).

Although concretely reinforced by the Erasmus+ programme and the setting up of the Euraxess national networks, doctoral mobility still encounters obstacles in its implementation.

In the field, it can be observed that the specific nature of the doctorate is still insufficiently considered in determining the duration of the mobility programmes offered and the amount of the scholarships that they provide. Academic mobility at the doctoral level has its own particularities and issues and the rules for obtaining this degree still vary enormously depending on the country (even in Europe), but also on the university and even the subject matter. Some students must first have a master's degree or another diploma. Some receive a stipend, others have to pay. Some doctorates consist only of research, others involve taking courses and exams, and still others give an obligation to teach at the university.

Based on this experience, the partners of the DocMob project decided to reflect together on how to improve the conditions for the international and European mobility of doctoral students.

METHODOLOGY

The DocMob project was carried out in three phases.

In the first phase of the project, a survey was spread to all awarded Erasmus+ Charter HEIs in order to understand their use of Erasmus+ funds for doctoral mobility and identify the major challenges to be overcome by the next Erasmus programme. During the same period of time, project partners drafted new versions of the Erasmus+ templates already in use for the organization of student mobility to adapt them to doctoral students. These are the documents involved : the Erasmus+ inter-institutional agreement, the Erasmus+ Learning agreement and Transcript of records.

In the second phase of the project, qualitative interviews were conducted with administrative staff and potential or confirmed doctoral candidates for mobility. These interviews helped us to get an overview of all stakeholders' needs and consider how the next Erasmus+ programme could be designed to meet them. At the same time, project partners and all volunteer HEIs were invited to test the above-mentioned designed draft templates for doctoral mobility to improve them thanks to the users' feedbacks, until we reached a final proposal.

The third phase consisted in analysing the results of the project in order to draw up guidelines and recommendations for European and national bodies. For each of the projects' three phases, we set up working groups that were each led by one project's partner :

- Interinstitutional Erasmus+ agreement
- Learning Agreement (LA)
- Recognition of mobility (Transcript of Records, Tor)
- Handbook of good practices and recommendations on doctoral mobility

THE SURVEY

The initial DocMob survey was sent to all our Erasmus+ partners in Europe and National Erasmus+ Agencies in February 2019. The EUA also published the survey on its webpage¹.

The Université de Lorraine prepared the draft of the survey in the fall of 2018, using Lime Survey as a tool to collect participations. During the kick-off meeting of the project, the draft survey was introduced to the project's partners and several adjustments were made further to their feedbacks. A new draft version was sent to all project partners in December 2018 so that they could test it before the planned dissemination in February 2019. Confidentiality and personal data rules were included in the survey.

In February 2019 the survey was spread among all our Erasmus+ partners in Europe, leaving them a month to answer so that we could get first results before the second transnational meeting of the project in April 2019.

The survey was also sent to all national Erasmus+ agencies and other HEIS in our respective countries and was made available on the website of the DocMob project.

We received the feedbacks from 110 HEIs that represent 84809 potential doctoral candidates for an Erasmus+ mobility, e.g. more than 10% of the total amount of doctoral students in Europe².

Table A: Number of respondents to the survey

Number of HEIs that answered the survey	110
Number of doctoral students represented	84809

Most answers came from Germany, France, Italy, and Romania while there was a lack of contributions from northern countries, Baltics, Ireland, UK, Greece, Netherlands, and Belgium. Other answers arrived meanwhile, but not from those countries. For this reason, the analysis should be seen as a global feedback for Europe, but it does not make sense if considered country by country.

1 <https://eua.eu/partners-news/270-survey-on-the-organization-of-doctoral-studies-and-doctoral-erasmus-mobility-in-europe.html>

2 There is an estimated number of 764 400 doctoral students in the European Union - Source : Eurostat https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Tertiary_education_statistics#Participation_by_level

Table B: Number of survey responses per country

Germany	16	Luxembourg	1
Bulgaria	1	Norway	1
Croatia	1	Netherlands	2
Spain	5	Poland	5
Estonia	2	Portugal	5
Finland	2	Czech Republic	4
France	14	Romania	13
Greece	1	UK	1
Hungary	2	Russia	1
Island	1	Slovania	1
Italy	16	Sweden	1
Latvia	2	Turkey	3
Lithuania	1		

In the following pages, we share the global trends in managing doctoral mobility in Europe brought to light by the DocMob's survey. Of course, there are also individual differences to consider if we study the doctorate system of each European country. This question is dealt with later on in this handbook.

Studying the results of the survey helped us raise several questions. The most significant ones are listed below with the comments they induced.

1. TYPES OF THIRD CYCLE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY COMMONLY USED THROUGHOUT EUROPE

Table C - Which kind of doctoral international mobility is fostered by your institution?

Joint degree programmes and cotutelles	64%
Short periods of mobility (less than 2 months)	61%

Internship in the laboratory	49%
Other	25%

The table above is extracted from the survey. It shows diverse and variable needs in terms of the duration of doctoral mobility : from cotutelles that require a long mobility period to very short-term mobility projects (less than 2 months).

2. FUNDING OF DOCTORAL INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY IN EUROPE

72 % of the HEIs that answered the survey declared that they use Erasmus+ to fund international mobility at doctoral level. At the same time, it appears that half the HEIs that use the Erasmus+ funds find them not sufficient to cover the needs of their doctoral mobility.

Table D - Who funds (or co-funds) the international mobility of your doctoral students?

The ERASMUS+ national agency	72%
The student himself/herself	57%
Your institution on its own funds	54%
Other	31%
National Agencies (other than the ERASMUS+ agency)	30%
Companies	18%

3. CURRENT USE OF ERASMUS+ MOBILITY FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS IN EUROPE

Not all HEIs use Erasmus+ for their doctoral mobility, but if they do, then they tend not to favor any particular kind of Erasmus+ mobility but rather choose the best option on a case-by-case basis. Often, the same institution will use for its doctoral students both academic (SMS) and traineeship mobility (SMP), while it will prefer teaching (STA) or training staff mobility (STT) in other situations. This can lead us to make several hypotheses to explain why HEIs may sometimes use STA and STT rather than SMS or SMP for their doctoral students :

- In some European countries, a doctoral student also has the status of a staff member in his/her home institution, which makes the switch between student mobility to staff mobility very easy. This is the case, for example, in Italy ;
- The SMS or SMP status may not be allowed for doctoral student by national regulations. It is the case, for example, in France, where traineeships are not allowed to doctoral students³ ;
- STA and STT allow very short-term stays when SMS and SMP are more adapted to longer stays.
- The way STA and STT are welcomed in the host institution is different from the SMS and SMP's, as well as the means of recognition.
- STA and STT are in terms of procedure and signature easier to implement than SMS and SMP's.

Whatever the reasons, HEIs seem to take advantage of all available opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ programme to organize the mobility of their doctoral students, regardless to the core objectives of a doctoral mobility. This is somehow counterproductive, as the tools seem to take precedence over the goal to achieve. According to us, this clearly shows the need for a specific doctoral mobility in the Erasmus+ programme, adapted to the specific objectives of doctoral studies, and flexible enough to allow a variety of lengths and purposes of mobility. This new mobility should be adaptable in its duration and in its objectives, and result as a mix of academic, traineeship, teaching and staff mobility so that the tools are at the service of the specific needs and goals of doctoral mobility (and not the reverse).

3 L'article L. 124-3 du Code de l'éducation précise que «les périodes de formation en milieu professionnel et les stages sont intégrés à un cursus pédagogique scolaire ou universitaire, selon des modalités déterminées par décret», avec un volume pédagogique minimal de formation en établissement. Ce volume est fixé à deux cents heures au minimum par année d'enseignement par l'article D.124-2 du même code et empêche par conséquent, en l'état actuel de la réglementation, tout doctorant de réaliser un stage dans le cadre de son cursus. Néanmoins, une période de formation en milieu professionnel - de même qu'un séjour dans un autre contexte de recherche - peut tout à fait être réalisée par le doctorant dans le cadre d'une convention d'accueil entre son établissement d'origine et la structure d'accueil.» <http://www.enseignement-sup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid111561/la-formation-doctorale-renovee-par-l-arrete-du-25-mai-2016.html> - Article L. 124-3 of the Education Code states that «periods of training in the workplace and the internships are integrated into a school or university curriculum, according to modalities determined by decree», with a minimum pedagogical volume of in-school training. This volume is set at two hundred hours at least per teaching year by article D.124-2 of the same code and prevents, under the current regulations, any doctoral student to carry out an internship within the framework of his or her curriculum. Nevertheless, a period of on-the-job training - as well as a stay in another research context - can be carried out by the doctoral student as part of a hosting agreement between its home institution and the host structure» <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid111561/la-formation-doctorale-renovee-par-l-arrete-du-25-mai-2016>

Table E - Which kind of ERASMUS+ mobility do you organize for your home doctoral students?

	% [all]
Student mobility for studies (SMS)	64%
Traineeship mobility (SMP)	59%
Teacher training mobility (STA)	32%
Staff training mobility (STT)	30%

4. USE OF ECTS CREDITS FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS IN EUROPE

The ECTS user's guide clearly shows that ECTS credits are not automatically used for the 3rd cycle studies. But in this guide, the specific case of doctoral mobility is treated in less than a page (half of page 27) when the guide itself is 105 pages long, which may discourage the HEIs willing to apply the ECTS rules to their doctoral mobility. Despite everything, DocMob survey shows that a clear majority of European HEIs use ECTS for 3d cycle studies, while those that do not use them tend to think ECTS is not the appropriate frame to assess doctoral studies. The Diploma Supplement is even less applied among the European HEIs. This could be a major obstacle to encouraging Erasmus+ doctoral mobility. The Erasmus+ programme should be flexible enough to allow other kinds of recognition of mobility, whose rules should nonetheless be clearly defined in the ECTS' guide so that the HEIs that do not use ECTS do not give up using Erasmus+ for their doctoral students for lack of information on how to do things otherwise.

Table F - Which kind of academic credits does your institution use for doctoral students?

	n	% [all]
Another type of credit system	4	7%
ECTS	38	63%
Not applicable	18	30%

Total	60	100%
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Unlike Bachelor and Master level, the use of ECTS for third cycle is not yet generalized and may vary mainly according to the country.

Table G - If your institution does not use the ECTS system for its doctoral students, could you tell the reasons?

	n	%
We don't use it yet but we intend to in the near future	4	6%
We face some difficulties in applying the ECTS system to doctoral students	7	10%
We believe that doctoral studies must be assessed in an entirely specific manner	13	18%
We use another type of academic credits which we find efficient for both our home and incoming doctoral students	3	4%
My country does not use ECTS	1	1%
Other	6	8%
I don 't know	3	4%
Total	37	54

The main criticism to the use of ECTS for doctoral studies is the way they assess the knowledge acquired during the mobility. Doctoral studies are composed by a great variety of activities (research, courses, training, etc). The translation of these activities in credits is not an easy task. For this reason, HEIs often use ECTS only to assess for the courses taken by doctoral students just as they do for Bachelor and Master levels, which means it amounts to much less than 30 ECTS per semester.

Table H - Does your institution deliver the Diploma Supplement to doctoral students?

	n	%
No	26	45%

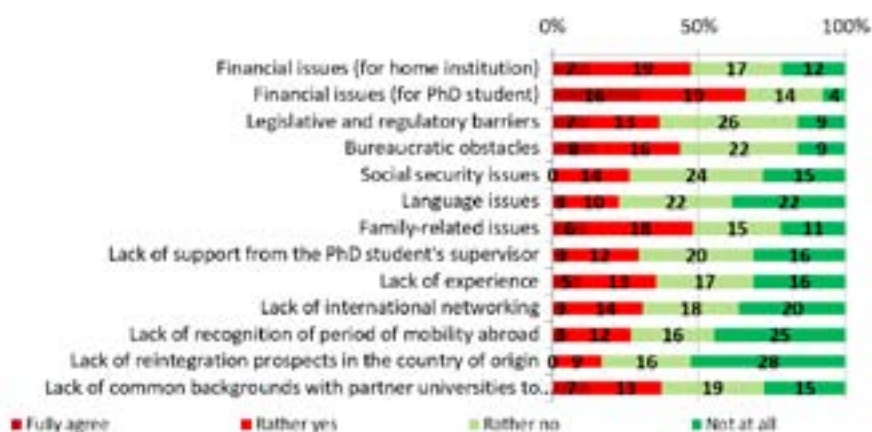
Yes	22	38%
I don 't know	6	10%
Partly	4	7%

5. THE OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED IN ORGANIZING DOCTORAL INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY IN EUROPE

A list of the main obstacles that usually prevent mobility projects to take place was elaborated by the project's partner during the first project meeting. This list was used in the survey so that the respondents could choose from the list the most appropriate items corresponding to their own situation. The list enclosed the following items :

- Financial issues (for home institution)
- Financial issues (for doctoral students)
- Legislative and regulatory barriers
- Bureaucratic obstacles
- Social security issues
- Language issues
- Family-related issues
- Lack of support from the PhD student's supervisor
- Lack of experience
- Lack of international networking
- Lack of recognition of period of mobility abroad
- Lack of reintegration prospects in the country of origin
- Lack of common backgrounds with partner universities to organize efficient PhD international mobility

Table I - What are the obstacles met by your institution in organizing doctoral international mobility ?



This table shows the main difficulties HEIs have to face when setting up doctoral mobility (red bar means difficult, green bar means not difficult or rather not difficult).

According to DocMob’s survey, the main challenges encountered are as follows:

- Financial issues for home institution:

The same concern was observed during the further individual interviews that were made after the survey, whose methodology and results will be presented later in this handbook. We believe that it could mean that there is not enough allotted Erasmus+ funds to cover at the same time mobility at Bachelor/Master levels and mobility at doctoral level. In some of the project’s partners institutions, and until recently, the possibility of doctoral mobility in the Erasmus+ programme was simply not spread among the university’s doctoral schools because there were not enough Erasmus+ funds to cover both Bachelor/Master mobility and doctoral mobility and the choice was clearly made to favour the Bachelor and Master mobility. During the interviews, we tried to understand if this was a common point to most universities.

- Financial (related to family issues) for doctoral students:

This obstacle is frequently put forward for any students. But we believe it would be interesting to investigate the specific financial needs doctoral students meet compared to Master and Bachelor students. Our hypothesis is that whereas the Erasmus+ grants are the same whatever the study cycle in which the student is enrolled, yet doctoral students’ personal situation is often different from Bachelor and Master students. For example, we can presume that because they usually are older, they may be in a different life stage that might involve a spouse, children and a job position; or they may not live with their parents anymore; or they may not be able to get grants that Bachelor and Master students receive. All these specific situations imply that doctoral students preparing a long-term mobility probably often need higher scholarships in order to move with family or compensate the loss of their job position.

- Bureaucratic obstacles:

The high rate of this issue in the DocMob survey suggests that Erasmus+ mobility may be too rigid for doctoral students. Our hypothesis is that their peculiar status in their home university makes it difficult to associate them either as students or staff members, for in most countries they are at the same time students, trainees, teachers and researchers. When in mobility, they all participate in the different activities in which they are already used to be involved in their home institution. The current Erasmus+ programme does not explicitly reflect this reality. Erasmus+ was made for the needs of academic training and therefore focuses on the student and its training activity, but in reality the doctoral students are involved in many other activities than training. They also have to follow a research plan, which is not well taken into account in the Erasmus+ student mobility.

QUALITATIVE SURVEYS AND GOOD PRACTICES

The DocMob Survey showed the need to get more qualitative data in order to get better understanding of its results and confirm our theories. The project's partners therefore decided to conduct interviews based on the questions raised further to the quantitative survey. Each project partner used its own methodology and addressed the interview to different stakeholders. We tried to get the more various experiences and good practices as possible. All project partners agreed that the interviews should be conducted informally as face-to-face interviews. The best time to organize them seemed to be during the international events that each partner was to attend in the summer and fall 2019 (EUF Open space, UPorto staff week, EAIE, etc.), but some partners might prefer phone calls or private discussions. Each partner was expected to lead 3 to 5 interviews. It was decided that the interviews should not exceed 15 minutes and give precise and concise answers. Each partner was free to determine when to conduct interviews as well as the numbers and the position of the interviewees, as long as they were chosen among the colleagues in charge of doctoral mobility or Erasmus+ mobility. We also tried to respect a geographical balance so that a majority of European countries could be represented among the interviewees.

The Université de Lorraine prepared the draft qualitative interview, and each partner tested it with a colleague to check that it worked well. The project's partners validated the last template in June 2019.

Below is the common interview frame that was used by all project partners to lead their interviews :

DocMob Interview

Country:

Contact:

Position:

- 1. Duration of the mobility:** Do you think that current student mobility duration is flexible enough for doctoral students?
 - 1.1. What should be the minimum duration?
 - 1.2. What should be the maximum duration?
- 2. Fundings:** Do you think that current Erasmus+ scholarships for doctoral mobility are sufficient?
 - 2.1. Do you think there should be a difference between short (few days) and long mobility (ex. more than 3 months)?
 - 2.2. What should be an optimal amount for short stays?
 - 2.3. What should be an optimal amount for long stays?
- 3. Tools:** In which way existing Learning agreement and ToR could be modified/improved?
 - 3.1. Do you think that LA and ToR should be a sort of mix between traineeship (for research work), studies (for courses and seminars attended), teaching (for classes and seminars taught), staff (for transferable skills) ?
 - 3.2. How do you think activities (research, seminars, publications, teaching, etc.) should be recognized (Ex through ECTS)?
- 4. New mobility:** Do you think the new Erasmus programmeme should include a new kind of mobility for doctoral students? If yes, what should be the difference with existing mobility, apart from the duration and funding?

1. EAIE (IROs STAFF)

Saarland University and the Université de Lorraine conducted some interviews at the EAIE in Helsinki. This event brought together more than 5000 IRO staff from all around the world, which offered a good opportunity to meet various mobility managers. During this event, we also gathered feedback on the first DocMob models of the doctoral learning agreement and transcript of records.

The interviews led by the Université de Lorraine and Saarland University at EAIE concerned the following countries that are outside the DocMob consortium: Netherlands, Denmark, Lithuania, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland and Belgium.

Five major issues were raised during these interviews:

- **Lack of Erasmus+ funding at the institutional level** : The universities don't have enough funds to cover all their needs in terms of Erasmus+ mobility at bachelor and master levels. As a result, they give priority to the first two cycles and don't encourage doctoral mobility. If the next Erasmus programme gives them additional funds, they will be able to develop doctoral mobility as well.
- **National or local funding versus Erasmus+ funding** : Some countries have national or local funding for doctoral mobility that are more interesting in terms of their amount than the Erasmus+ grants (like the DREAM scheme at the Université de Lorraine, or a national fund from Slovakia that amounts to 500 euros per month of mobility).
- **A long-term job and a salary versus a mobility with a limited grant** : In some countries like Eastern and Northern countries, it seems that doctoral students often have a job, which prevents them from undertaking a long-term mobility. This could explain why they tend to favour mainly staff mobility for it is short mobility. A specific doctoral short mobility programme would therefore fit very well their needs.
- **Research-based mobility** : Doctoral students mainly want to lead research activities during their mobility and not take training courses. This aspect should be taken into account in the learning agreement and the ToR, but is lacking in the current Erasmus+ programme.
- **Short-term mobility versus long-term mobility** : The Erasmus+ funding of short-term mobility seems to be suitable. But most interviewees think that the funding schemes need to be adapted for long-term mobility, for the current grants are considered as very low for this type of mobility.

2. WORKSHOP WITH DOCTORAL STUDENTS

In the fall 2019, the Université de Lorraine also organized a workshop with some of its doctoral students who undertook or were willing to undertake a mobility abroad. Seven doctoral students attended the workshop. One of them had received an Erasmus+ scholarship, and four of them had used the UL funding scheme called "DREAM" (a university's source of funding that is described on this link: <http://doctorat.univ-lorraine.fr/en/international/dream-en>), The last two doctoral students were candidates for an international mobility, either through Erasmus+ or the "DREAM" Scheme.

A list of questions was discussed with them.

1) **Reasons for mobility:** For most of them, the mobility had been integrated since the beginning of their research programme. They found a host institution thanks to the network of their doctoral supervisor. As a result of the mobility, they worked on a new chapter of their

thesis. In any case, it was a research-based mobility.

2) **Choice of funding:** those who used the Université de Lorraine's DREAM scheme did so because of the more interesting funding it offers and because they also lacked information on the Erasmus+ programme as a possibility for doctoral mobility.

3) **Encountered obstacles:** The doctoral students who benefited from the DREAM Scheme did not meet any important administrative obstacles. On the contrary, the doctoral student who used the Erasmus+ programme found its administrative procedures too heavy. He would therefore recommend greater flexibility for the next Erasmus Programmation. For instance, he suggested that the Erasmus+ interinstitutional agreement shall not be compulsory for doctoral level, as his supervisor found it difficult to establish such an agreement that requires anticipating collective figures when a doctoral mobility is very much an individual project. For all doctoral students present, whatever the programme they used to perform their mobility, another major obstacle was to convince their supervisor of the interest of such mobility.

4) **Duration of the mobility:** Doctoral students in France only have 3 years to finish off their thesis. The doctoral students present thought that a doctoral mobility could hardly last more than 6 months. The Next Erasmus+ programme could allow shorter mobility for this very reason.

5) **Amount of the scholarship:** the Ph.D. students who have benefited from the DREAM scheme declared to be very happy about the funding: they actually thought that it was more than they needed to cover their expenses. On the other hand, the Erasmus+ student thought that his scholarship was just enough if we consider that he got other sources of funding to conduct his doctorate. But he also underlined the fact that his mobility was a long-term one, enabling him to leave his apartment in Nancy and not to pay two accommodation rents at the same time (one in Nancy and one abroad). In comparison, the grant might not seem to be sufficient for a short-term mobility, as the student would still have to pay his/her rent in his home city.

6) **Learning agreement and transcript of records:** The Erasmus+ student completed his LA once in mobility by adding two courses and a general sentence stating that he was doing research work, but without any further description. At the time of the workshop, he had not yet received any ToR form his host institution. For DREAM students, the LA was mainly a research work (scientific description), and their mobility was recognized as a new chapter of their research thesis. We showed them the new templates of the LA and ToR proposed by DocMob project for doctoral mobility. They found them very interesting and complete. They also found that the Eurodoc's list of transversal skills was a useful tool to consider, but according to them if used in the ToR these skills would need to be largely explained and detailed (how did the Ph.D. student acquire them? When? etc.)

It would be interesting to have more feedbacks from other doctoral students who came back from an Erasmus+ mobility, especially an International Credit Mobility.

3. PORTO STAFF WEEK

Brief description:

The survey took place during the Staff Week organized by the University of Porto (22 to 26th of July 2019). Luisa Capitão, UPorto's mobility coordinator and local coordinator of the DocMob Project, had the chance to explain during her presentation/training the goals of the DocMob Project and the purpose of such interviews. We divided the audience into 4 groups to get as accurate information as possible and for the groups to exchange ideas with each other. (mainly because the majority of the participants had no relation with the implementation of student mobility and were slightly apprehensive with the interviews).

Conclusions:

By the implementation of the questions, the doubts expressed by the participants and their answers, we can conclude that there is a lack of information and experience regarding the implementation of PhD mobility. In addition, we can deduce that, in the majority of the HEIs represented in the Staff Week, this opportunity for PhD students is scarcely encouraged by the Institutions either due to the lack of interest by the students themselves or the lack of information and the right tools to support the application of PhD students to Erasmus+ scholarships. Nevertheless, participants from Germany, UK, Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Italy and Lithuania were able to present some interesting ideas on how to improve the interest among this target group, such as adapting the traineeship model to the PhD mobility experience (scholarships, duration, recognition of the work, etc.).

4. WORKSHOPS AT UPHF ABOUT PHD MOBILITY A NEED FOR ADAPTATION TO THE INTERNAL CONTEXT

Since 2015, UPHF applied to Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility (ICM) calls and has already been successful in 2016 with Russia, Moldavia, Kazakhstan, in 2017 with Indonesia, Vietnam, Tunisia, Algeria and USA and in 2018 with Moldova. If the European rules for ICM are clearly defined, the difference between French and foreign backgrounds for doctoral studies has required at least to think in depth about some adaptations to set up a more relevant procedure and fit as close as possible the requirements of each partner. Moreover, ICM has created a new window of opportunity for rethinking ways of dealing with PhD mobility at UPHF: new funding were made available especially as the PhD level – as it was the core interest from partners university (in terms of impact or previous relationship) or in some cases the only allowed level of cooperation.

It created new funding opportunities offering more possibilities abroad for student exchanges as well as an official and institutionalized framework for sending and welcoming students at

the PhD level but with its specific constraints (preplanned partner, restricted area of studies, minimum duration and limited project duration).

Before ICM, only few PhD mobilities were managed by the International Relations Office (IRO) in the Erasmus Framework. PhD mobilities (all kinds) were mainly organized outside the program, at the Laboratory level and at individual levels (e.g. teachers-researchers' networks). Available funding (excluding Erasmus KA1 funding) were mainly managed by the Research and Development Office, applying rules and regulations for short PhD mobilities and thesis co-supervisions. Moreover, at IRO, no specific focus within the framework of the Erasmus+ program was planned in order to prioritize PhD level exchanges over Bachelor and Master levels.

ICM has given a first impulse for the IRO to rethink its strategy for successful PhD mobilities in the Erasmus Framework: promotion, internal organization, link and responsibilities distribution with partners, authorized activities, recognition while respecting the above constraints but also national and institutional specificities.

One particularity of UPHF is the absence of 'Ecole doctorale' (Doctoral School) within the institution: the authorization from the 'Ecole doctorale of Lille' has to be delivered for the pedagogical content and recognition.

Finally, as among other French universities, ECTS is not delivered for PhD studies but specific credits called "Crédits de Formation Doctorale". Most of them are granted for the thesis redaction and the other part for various activities related and more perceived as a learning about Research than a PhD training (conference participation and presentation, investigation, bibliographic research).

To manage this ICM project, several meetings were organized gathering UPHF people and structures involved in PhD mobilities. At the onset, this work defined the authorized activities related to Erasmus studies mobilities and led to a first quality assurance procedure for international credit mobility at UPHF. This procedure summarizes incoming and outgoing UPHF's incoming and outgoing PhD mobility organization loop (selection, learning agreement validation and signature, supervisor and Chancellor's authorization, laboratory specific organization and requirements).

Workshops : planning, participation and activities

1. «PhD mobility and international relations for research» workshop during KA107 staff week (June 2019)

A two-hour workshop was organized about PhD mobilities – incoming and outgoing with International relations officers.

The objectives were to inform participants about PhD mobilities in France – its landscape and its challenges, and then to discuss during an interactive session their challenges regar-

ding PhD mobilities, in countries outside Europe.

Participants had the opportunity to brainstorm in smaller groups about their home situation using a Post-it method. At the end of this first session, one participant per group shared their feedback. Two topics were proposed:

- What are your challenges regarding international cooperation at PhD level?
- What are your challenges regarding PhD mobilities?

Participants shared the following challenges during this session:

- Funding: PhD students have to find scholarships by their own
- No bridge exists between Erasmus+ mobilities and 'cotutelles'
- Lack of interest for PhD studies (study case: USA)
- Timing of the Erasmus+ program: 2 years' program, need at least 1 semester for communication
- Linguistic barriers for going abroad between PhD students and researchers
- Difficulties for funding common research topics, requested for a mobility
- Insufficient existing link between laboratories and the IRO
- Administrative issues: visa, permits, etc.

2. Workshop #1 with internal staff (October 2019)

This workshop was organized with internal staff at UPHF, on October 2019. It aims to focus only on outgoing PhD mobility. All actors related to PhD mobility at UPHF received an invitation to the workshop: teachers-researchers, directors of laboratory, current PhD students, Research (projects) officers, and administrative staff in laboratories involved in PhD mobilities and in advising PhD students.

The workshop was divided into 4 key topics:

- [Interactive] What comes to your mind when you think of «international mobility for PhD students?
- [Interactive] Who are the key actors regarding international mobility of the PhD students for you?
- [Interactive] What are the constraints of international mobility for (outgoing) doctoral students?
- [Final presentation] Introduction to Erasmus+ opportunities for PhD students

Again, administrative issues were raised (complicated procedures) and brought negative feedbacks from the participants. Low financial funding was thought to be the main obstacle. Also, issues were raised concerning the timing of the mobility procedure (bad schedule), and the general lack of information (who to contact, when, what to do...), as well as the

problems for doctoral students to be allowed by doctoral supervisor to leave on mobility. The participants also raised the question of what a “mobility” actually is: a cotutelle, the participation in a conference, a research work, a study visit, other?

Further details of UPHF experience can be found specifically in annex 1.

ALTERNATIVES TO ERASMUS+

In order to understand what improvement could be done in the new Erasmus programme, it is important to analyze other funding schemes for doctoral mobility. As we have seen in our interviews and surveys, there is a big part of doctoral mobility that happens outside the Erasmus+ framework for various reasons. We will try in this part to highlight some good practices in other funds and try to understand why the participants tend to use them instead of Erasmus+.

For a more complete overview of those programmes, we created a tool listing a number of European, international and national grants.

[EUF survey on national and regional funding opportunities](#)

In April 2020 EUF launched a new online survey, whose objective was to collect information on national and/or regional funding opportunities that are made available to doctorate candidates to spend some time abroad. The information was to be published as a booklet and made available through the DocMob and PhD Hub websites (PhD Hub project : <https://phdhub.eu/>). The survey enabled us to gather information on alternative or complementary funding options that support the mobility of doctoral candidates.

This has the potential to directly translate into increased PhD mobility. The resulting database, which was complemented by information received from the University of Trier, Eurodoc and the University of Lorraine, leading to, respectively, 10, 10 and 6 additional entries to the database, will be made available through the DocMob and PhD Hub websites.

A total of 237 responses with a completion rate of 40% was collected. Of these responses, unfortunately, only a part was conducive to the resulting database: the final database includes 73 grants, of which 64 are active, for 8 it is unclear whether they are active and for one it is unclear whether PhD candidates or only senior researchers can apply. Furthermore, several times information about non-mobility related doctoral grants was submitted.

In terms of eligible countries of the Higher Education Institution (HEI) at which doctoral candidate is based, 8 scholarships are independent of the country of the HEI. In addition to these, the average amount of scholarships is 4.85 per country. The two highest values are those of HEIs based in Belgium and Germany with, respectively, 17 and 15 available scholarships, and Ireland and Malta are on the other end of the distribution with one available scholarship only. This excludes scholarships which are independent of the country of the HEI. Although not being totally comprehensive, the database, which includes a minimum of one scholarship per EU country, provides a good overview of the state of the art of doctoral grants in Europe. For a more detailed overview of the amounts of scholarships per country of HEI see Table 1. Some scholarships are also specifically for PhD candidates from certain

nationalities independently of where they study.

Table J: Amount of scholarships per country of higher education institution

HEI country	Amount of doctoral scholarships
Austria	3
Belgium	17
Bulgaria	5
Croatia	5
Cyprus	2
Czech Republic	5
Denmark	4
Estonia	5
Finland	4
France	7
Germany	15
Greece	3
Hungary	5
Ireland	1
Italy	5
Latvia	4
Lithuania	5
Luxembourg	2
Malta	1
Netherlands	3
Poland	6
Portugal	3
Romania	4
Slovakia	5
Slovenia	4
Spain	3
Sweden	5

More than 55% of funding opportunities were for outgoing mobilities. 21.92% were for incoming and 17.81% for both incoming and outgoing mobilities. For three funding authorities it was unclear whether their funding opportunities applied to incoming mobility, outgoing mobility or both.

The highest maximum grant, of those stipends that stated it, is that of the “Fellowships for doctoral Research in the U.S.A.” and the “Fellowships for Study or Research in Belgium” of the Belgian American Education Foundation, amounting to \$30,000 and \$28,000 respectively. The highest maximum duration is 18 months of “Doc.Mobility” by the Swiss National Science Foundation, closely followed by 12 months, which is the maximum duration of several grants.

Unfortunately, the information about the number of available grants per year, the average granted funding and the total funding available could not be evaluated in a reliable manner. This is partially explained by the fact that respondents themselves did not have the information at hand, and therefore did not respond anything, or the information provided could not be verified. As such, the few answers collected for these three questions were mostly unconvincing and, thus, not included into the database.

This work was completed by partner’s research of national and international institutional grants. This allowed us to have a better overview of the institutional funding schemes. We choose to not include bilateral cooperation to avoid a longer list.

For some uncommon opportunities, the Université de Lorraine used the platform open4research. Thank to this platform we were able to discover and include some interesting sources.

European Fundings

COST Action

COST Action is a network dedicated to scientific collaboration, complementing national research funds. A COST Action is organised by a range of networking tools, such as meetings, conferences, workshops, short-term scientific missions, training schools, publications and dissemination activities. Funding covers the cost of COST Action networking tools.

For doctoral mobility, the main opportunity offered by COST action are the training schools.

Training Schools aim to facilitate capacity building on a topic relevant to the theme of the respective COST Action through the delivery of intensive training on a new or emerging subject. They can also offer familiarisation with unique equipment or expertise and are typically, although not exclusively, considered to be for the benefit of ECI and PhD students. They are not intended to provide general training.

Training Schools are recommended to last a minimum of 3 days.

Both Trainers and Trainees can be reimbursed for their long-distance travel expenses. The reimbursement of incurred accommodation, meals, and local travel expenses in the country where the meeting takes place is paid as one item known as daily allowance. The daily allowance considers the participant's travel start and end dates and hours. The daily allowance rate is determined based on the country where the event takes place. The daily allowance rates can be found on the COST website at www.cost.eu/daily_allowance.

The daily allowance goes from 200€ (UK) to 160€ (Moldova)

Trainees shall be engaged in an official research programme as a PhD Student or postdoctoral fellow or can be employed by, or affiliated to, an institution, organisation or legal entity which has within its remit a clear association with performing research.

Trainees eligible for reimbursement:

1. Trainees from COST Full Members / COST Cooperating Member.
2. Action MC Observer from NNC.
3. Trainees from Approved European RTD Organisations.

Trainees not eligible for reimbursement:

1. Trainees from COST Partner Members.
2. Action MC Observers from IPC.
3. Trainees from Approved IO, EU Commission, Bodies, Offices and Agencies.
4. Other Trainees not specifically mentioned as being eligible.

Source : <https://www.cost.eu/>

H2020

The Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA) provide grants for all stages of researchers' careers - be they doctoral candidates or highly experienced researchers - and encourage transnational, intersectoral and interdisciplinary mobility.

The Innovative Training Networks (ITN) aim to train a new generation of creative, entrepreneurial and innovative early-stage researchers, able to face current and future challenges and to convert knowledge and ideas into products and services for economic and social benefit.

ITN supports competitively selected joint research training and/or doctoral programmes, implemented by partnerships of universities, research institutions, research infrastructures, businesses, SMEs, and other socio-economic actors from different countries across Europe

and beyond.

There are three types of Research networks:

- European Training Networks;
- European Industrial Doctorates; and
- European Joint Doctorates.

European Training Networks help researchers gain experience of different working environments while developing transferable skills.

European Industrial Doctorates help PhD candidates step outside academia and develop skills in industry and business.

This type of network is provided by at least one academic partner and partners from the business world. Individuals are enrolled in a doctoral programme and jointly supervised by the academic and non-academic partners.

European Joint Doctorates promote international collaboration that cuts across different business and research sectors.

They are run by a minimum of three academic organisations forming a network to supervise joint, double or multiple degrees.

A Career Development Plan should be established jointly by the supervisor(s) and each early-stage researcher recruited by the selected network. In addition to research objectives, this plan comprises the researcher's training and career needs, including training on transferable skills, teaching, planning for publications and participation in conferences.

Attention is paid to the quality of supervision and mentoring arrangements as well as career guidance. Joint supervision of the researchers is mandatory for EJD and for EID, and encouraged in ETN.

In EID and EJD, fellowships offered to early-stage researchers should lead to a doctoral degree. EJD result in joint, double or multiple doctoral degrees awarded by institutions from at least two different countries, primarily within Europe.

Grants (for individuals) cover:

- Recruitment and training of each researcher for up to three years. The researcher is hired under an employment contract and benefits from a monthly living allowance, social security cover, plus a mobility and family allowance.
- Research costs including the organisation of joint activities and conferences.

- **COFUND**

The COFUND scheme aims to stimulate regional, national or international programmes to foster excellence in researchers' training, mobility and career development, spreading the best practices of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions.

Doctoral programmes address the development and broadening of the research competencies of early-stage researchers. The training follows the EU Principles on Innovative Doctoral Training. Substantial training modules, including digital ones, addressing key transferable skills common to all fields and fostering the culture of Open Science, innovation and entrepreneurship will be supported. Collaboration with a wider set of partner organisations, including from the non-academic sector, which may provide hosting or secondment opportunities or training in research or transferable skills, as well as innovative and interdisciplinary elements of the proposed programme, will be positively taken into account during the evaluation.

Each researcher must be enrolled in a doctoral programme. Attention is paid to the quality of supervision and mentoring arrangements as well as career guidance. The selection procedure for doctoral candidates must be open, transparent and merit-based. The vacancy notice must include the minimum gross salary offered to the researcher, as set out in the proposal.

The EU contribution to the researcher costs must be used exclusively for the living allowance provided for the benefit of the researcher appointed under the programme. In addition to the researcher unit cost, there will be an EU contribution for institutions on the basis of unit costs.

COMPARISON WITH ERASMUS+

The experience of international credit mobility (KA103)

For KA103, Universities have a centralized budget for all the mobility (students, staff, teaching, traineeships). Universities decide the allocation of these funds, according to the requests of the participants.

This means that often Universities communicate on the possibilities of mobility to all, but primarily to first two cycles participants rather than doctoral candidates or researchers.

The application of KA103 to PhD mobility meets some obstacle, shared by project partners and other European institutions, as arisen during the interviews:

- There are not enough funds to promote massive PhD mobility, so the priority is given to Bachelor and Master students. During the interviews at the EAIE, it seems that the same problem arises in other HEI mainly from western Europe.
- Scholarships are equal for the three cycles. This implies that Erasmus+ is in concurrence with local/regional funds that often have higher scholarships and few administrative rules.

For KA107, the situation is different:

- The funds are allocated upon a call for proposals and on a project-by-project approach. Most projects have links between education and research; the application gives the possibility of build a structured project rather than manage a broad fund, including all three study cycles. The scholarships are used for a specific project, set up in the application stage. This allows institutions to better anticipate the needs in terms of kind of mobility.
- The scholarships are much higher than KA103, and almost similar to other funds.

The projects include more incoming that outgoing mobility: for non-EU students, KA107 scholarships are already enough to come in Europe without other sources of funding.

Best practices from other funds

We tried to analyze other European/national/international funds in order to identify some possible best practices. Coherently with project work, we split the funds into different categories, related to financing of the mobility and its duration.

Best practices: Duration of the mobility

Some funds allow shorter mobility period: the most common minimal duration is of 1 month. This is the case, for example, of Estonia, Slovakia and Poland national funds (1 to 10 months), DAAD in Germany (1 to 6 months), Coimbra Group scholarships (1 to 3 months)

and Utrecht network (1 to 6).

Some funds allow even shorter periods, and allocate grants on daily basis: CEEPUS the mobility is less than 3 months and of at least 6 days, PROM program from Poland (5 to 30 days) or PHC from Campus France. European programme COST allow mobility periods of a minimum of 3 days, in a sort of intensive programmes. UniGR funds reimburse on real costs mobility from 1 day.

At the same time, one of the obstacles of the financing of the mobility is the maximum length, 12 months for Erasmus+, not sufficient to cover the whole need in the case of cotutelles. Of course, the reference is Marie-Curie actions, that is joint supervision oriented. Another good example comes from the DAAD: in the case of cotutelle, the funding is up to 18 months. An interesting case is Eiffel scholarships by Campus France, that give the possibility to split the mobility on several periods.

Best practices: Financing

The other main issue with doctoral mobility, as we have seen during the survey and the interviews is related to the amount of the scholarships: many students and IRO's staff have the feeling that the normal scholarship for the mobility (either for studies or traineeship) is not sufficient, due to different family and professional situation of the students. What other funds offers? For national grants, here some numbers: 900€/month for Italian national fund, 670€/month for Latvia, 468€/month for Lithuania, 660€ for Estonia (incoming), 734€/month for Slovakia, 1200€/month for Germany and 1500€/month for Finland. Japan offers 16000€/year with Vulcanus programme, and 1600€/month the JSPS. Other countries with lower scholarships offer in reality other advantages: it is the case, for instance, of Slovenia which scholarships are 300€/month but offer free accommodation, meals (2,63€/day) and insurance.

If we try a comparison, those funding schemes are more similar to KA107 than KA103. This explain perhaps the use of national funds over KA103, and the good use of Erasmus+ mobility in the framework of the International Credit Mobility.

For shorter stays, there is often a scholarship per day: Pprogrammes Hubert Curien (France), offers both possibilities, and the amount of the scholarship may vary according to the country, Colciencias (40,30€/day up to 60 days). BUP scholarships are up to 3000€ plus a support for travel and accommodation, with no time restriction. UniGR mobility are reimbursed on real costs.

A unique case, but interesting to be highlighted, is the Commonwealth PhD Scholarships, that include family allowance in the form of a spouse allowance and a child allowance. It is the only grant we know that take explicitly into account different family situation of PhD students.

THE TOOLS DEVELOPED BY DOCMOB

In DocMob, there were three working groups, each of them in charge of a template document to review: the Erasmus+ inter-institutional Agreement (working group led by the University of Valencia), the Learning Agreement (working group led by the University of Naples Federico II) and the recognition of the mobility (working group led by Saarland University). During our discussions, we agreed on the following statements:

- There is no need to modify drastically the Erasmus+ inter-institutional agreement template for doctoral mobility. However, if such an agreement must be established to allow Erasmus+ doctoral mobility to take place, then it should contain some light intellectual property rights clauses, as doctoral students often participate in mobility within a research programme. However, during the interviews led after the DocMob survey, a need for more flexibility in the organization of the Erasmus+ doctoral mobility was clearly identified and confirmed, and most respondents thought that in the case of doctoral mobility, the requirement for an Erasmus+ inter-institutional agreement in itself was another obstacle that could be overcome by simply making this agreement not mandatory, as it is already the case for traineeship mobility (SMP) and training staff mobility (STT). Moreover, doctoral mobility is often an individual initiative rather than an organized and recurrent mobility, which makes the obligation of an inter-institutional agreement even more ill adapted.
- When dealing with doctoral mobility, the Erasmus+ Learning Agreement should be considered as a flexible document, including the description of both research/teaching activities and training components chosen in the host institution (courses attended, seminars and courses taught by doctoral student), but not making either of them compulsory. It is important for the recognition to take into account all aspects of doctoral educational and research components, and what is considered as important to be recognized at the third cycle level. In this sense, the learning agreement for doctoral mobility should not be comparable to an academic or a traineeship mobility learning agreement, but it has to be a specific document that may be agreed upon by a student and a University or a Company. Therefore, it really is a new “LA for doctoral mobility” rather than a mere adaptation of an existing learning agreement. This means that doctoral mobility should be viewed as a particular mobility in itself, and not just a different kind of student or staff mobility (for both short and long stays).
- The learning agreement should also be considered as provisional, as doctoral education is not as precise as for the first 2 cycles. Before the mobility, the LA must be regarded as a tool for the preparation of the mobility, in terms of information provided before departure, and not as a definitive binding contract.
- The LA and the ToR should be included in the same document to be signed before and after the mobility. During the mobility, the LA has to be considered as the reminder of all

activities conducted by the student.

- The use of ECTS should be made optional. The possibility of a conversion table between working hours (for all activities) and ECTS would be useful to better implement the doctoral mobility and its recognition. Such a conversion table should be included in the ECTS guide to help HEI's that do not use ECTS credits to make good use of Erasmus+ mobility for their doctoral students.
- At the end of the ToR, some transferable skills and competences must be included, as an Erasmus+ mobility gives the opportunity to third cycle student to develop such individual skills and competences in new ways that are very specific to doctorate studies. Talking about skills can also help HEIs to overcome the challenges of doctoral mobility's recognition. They could be identified on the basis of the transferable skills and competences matrix proposed by the Eurodoc Report: *Identifying Transferable Skills and Competences to Enhance Early-Career Researchers Employability and Competitiveness*.

The following pages show the first drafts of the LA and ToR as prepared by the working groups of DocMob.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

Built on the experience and feedbacks shared with project's partners and other participating European HEIs, we would like to make the first recommendations that follow:

- There should be a specific mobility for doctoral students in the Erasmus+ programme. Doctoral students have a particular status compared to Bachelor and Master students; they are in a specific stage of their life and are conducting not one but multiple activities at the same time (teaching, research, courses, traineeships, training...).
- Two clearly separate funds should be allocated to HEIs to organize their student mobility. One would be for their Bachelor/Master mobility, and the other for their doctoral mobility. It would replace the current global financial envelope designed for both types of mobility, which often gives no choice to HEIs but choose between funding Bachelor/Master mobility and funding doctoral mobility.
- Inter-institutional agreements should not be made compulsory for Erasmus+ doctoral mobility, which is often an individual initiative rather than an organized and recurrent mobility. Making the inter-institutional agreements mandatory most probably discourages most doctoral candidates and their supervisor to engage in an Erasmus+ mobility project.
- Specific template documents should be designed for doctoral mobility to take into account all the activities carried by a doctoral student during his/her mobility. An entirely new Erasmus+ Learning Agreement for doctoral mobility must be shaped, containing all the forms of activities that a doctoral student can undertake without making any of them compulsory. This document should also allow modifications during the course of the mobility in the smoothest possible way. We suggested above a draft proposal further to the discussions within the working groups of DocMob's project. It includes a list of transferable skills acquired during the mobility.
- The use of ECTS should not be made mandatory for Erasmus+ doctoral mobility, but a detailed conversion table could be usefully included in the ECTS guide to help HEI's that don't use ECTS credits to make good use of Erasmus+ mobility for their doctoral students.
- The mandatory duration of doctoral mobility has to be as flexible as possible to meet the needs of different countries and candidates (from few days to more than a year).
- A difference should be made between short-term mobility and long-term mobility when managing doctoral mobility. Because they usually are older, doctoral students are in a different life stage that may involve a spouse, children, and a job position to support their studies. A common barrier to doctoral Erasmus+ mobility is the low monthly grant that

discourage doctoral students to participate in the programme. Experience in the field-work clearly shows that as far as doctoral mobility is concerned, Erasmus+ Programme faces the concurrence of national/local programmes that offer more advantages in terms of scholarships and flexibility of the mobility. One of the reasons of the success of KA107 for doctoral exchanges is the higher attractive scholarships compared to KA103 for long-term mobility. Next Erasmus Programme should consider raising the scholarships of KA103 for third cycle students to the amounts proposed in the framework of the KA107.

