



Legal and administrative obstacles in the mobility of secondary school teachers in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine (EMR)

Executive summary

This report analyses selected legal and administrative obstacles surrounding the cross-border mobility of secondary school teachers in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine (EMR) with the aim of developing recommendations for overcoming them.

The research finds that cross-border mobility of secondary school teachers is currently limited. However, there is great potential to increase this mobility and use it (also) as a measure in mitigating (language) teacher shortages especially in the regional labour market such as the EMR. However, the research finds that numerous obstacles impede the cross-border mobility of teachers. By means of literature review and case examples gathered via interviews, the report identifies three clusters of obstacles, with recognition of professional qualifications as the most prevalent barrier in the cross-border mobility of secondary school teachers. Other obstacles emerged from differences in the employment conditions, as well as social security and taxation. This report provides an in-depth analysis of these three categories of obstacles.

Moreover, the report highlights the importance of a comprehensive understanding of these obstacles and suggests that solutions to these obstacles are intertwined. A situation that illustrates these findings is that the absence of (recognition of) qualifications of a teacher frequently results in less favourable employment conditions and may result in lower salary, the loss of, or inability to obtain, a permanent employment contract, or/and to be appointed as a civil servant. The status (or its absence) of civil servant, in turn, could also have effects on the Member State in which the teacher is liable for social security contributions and taxation. Altogether, these factors may discourage or encourage the cross-border mobility of a secondary school teacher. Therefore, the report emphasises the importance of viewing these obstacles not as distinct from one another, and recommends a comprehensive, holistic approach for addressing them.

To overcome these obstacles and to facilitate the cross-border mobility of secondary school teachers in the EMR the report makes the following recommendations:

1

Strengthen (central) information provision in the EMR.

- Develop targeted information on cross-border mobility for teachers and schools in the form of a central point for information in the EMR.
- Clearly define which actor has the responsibility and the mandate for the provision of this information.

2

To bridge differences in the secondary teaching profession in the EMR in order to facilitate the recognition of professional qualifications, common training programs, modules, exchanges, internships and/or secondments should be established throughout the EMR. Focus should be placed on finding solutions that would enable the teacher to gain substantial experience and permanent perspectives in a neighbouring (cross-border) labour market as a fully qualified teacher.

- Offer internships or other types of exchanges in the neighbouring countries as part of the teacher education programmes.
- Develop special educational programmes targeting the cross-border mobility of (language) teachers.
- Organise exchanges of teachers via a secondment procedure.

3

Foster cooperation in the EMR at the national, regional and operational levels.

- To implement Recommendation 1 and 2, cooperation should be sought from the level of national as well as regional governments, including the authorities responsible for recognition procedures, social security and taxation.
- Especially in border regions such as the EMR, which involve countries with federalised structures, decisions that are to affect cross-border workers inherently should not be taken unilaterally on a regional or national level.
- To implement Recommendation 2, strong euregional networks at the operational level (including non-institutional actors such as schools) are essential.

Finally, it is recommended that future research expands the scope of cross-border mobility studies to include other levels of teachers (for instance, primary schools), as well as exploring the potential and challenges of cross-border internships in teacher education, and secondment of teachers across the borders.

