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Andrea Ágnes Reményi

Long-Term Mobility for Public Education Teachers in the European Union — Policy Steps, Research Results

Abstract

The European Union (EU) embraces multilingualism because of its integration effect: it connects people and facilitates intercultural understanding. It also supports employability and, thus, both social and geographical mobility. (In this paper, only *geographical* mobility is discussed.) Multilingualism, mobility and tighter integration are expected to enhance the success of the EU. As the facilitation of multilingualism is mainly an educational issue, the mobility of teaching professionals has been emphasised in the EU's educational agenda. Still, to this day, no satisfying solution has been found for transnational long-term mobility of primary- and secondary-school teachers across EU countries, either through a centrally organised teacher exchange programme or through decentralised ones. This paper overviews some policy making steps, including the introduction of one such programme component in Erasmus+, describes some main results of a related research stretching 14 years, and ends with recommendations how to proceed.

Sommaire

L'Union européenne (UE) embrasse le multilinguisme en raison de son effet d'intégration: il connecte les gens et facilite la compréhension interculturelle. Elle favorise également l'employabilité et donc la mobilité sociale et *géographique*. (Dans cet article, seule la mobilité *géographique* est abordée.) Le multilinguisme, la mobilité et une intégration plus étroite devraient renforcer le succès de l'UE. La facilitation du multilinguisme étant principalement une question éducative, la mobilité des professionnels de l'enseignement a été mise en avant dans le programme éducatif de l'UE. Cependant, à ce jour, aucune solution satisfaisante n'a été trouvée pour la mobilité transnationale à long terme des enseignants du primaire et du secondaire dans les pays de l'UE, que ce soit par le biais d'un programme d'échange d'enseignants centralisé ou décentralisé. Cet article passe en revue certaines étapes de l'élaboration des politiques, y compris l'introduction d'un composant de programme de ce type dans Erasmus+, décrit les principaux résultats d'une recherche connexe s'étendant sur 14 ans, et se termine par des recommandations comment procéder.

Zusammenfassung

Die Europäische Union (EU) begrüßt Mehrsprachigkeit aufgrund ihres Integrationseffekts: Sie verbindet Menschen und fördert das interkulturelle Verständnis. Es unterstützt auch die Beschäftigungsfähigkeit und damit die soziale und geografische Mobilität. (In diesem Forschungsbericht wird nur die *geografische* Mobilität erörtert.) Mehrsprachigkeit, Mobilität und eine engere Integration dürften den Erfolg der EU fördern. Da die Erleichterung der Mehrsprachigkeit hauptsächlich ein Bildungsproblem darstellt, wurde die Mobilität von Lehrkräften in der EU-Bildungsagenda hervorgehoben. Bis zum heutigen Tag wurde keine zufriedenstellende Lösung für die grenzüberschreitende langfristige Mobilität von Grundschul- und Sekundarschullehrern in den EU-Ländern gefunden, weder durch ein zentral organisiertes Lehreraustauschprogramm noch durch ein dezentrales. In diesem Forschungsbericht werden einige Schritte der Politikgestaltung, einschließlich der Einführung einer solchen Programmkomponente in Erasmus+ zusammengefasst, einige Hauptergebnisse eines diesbezüglichen Forschungsprojektes mit einer Laufzeit von 14 Jahren beschrieben, und endet mit Empfehlungen zur weiteren Vorgehensweise.

1. Introduction: The Advantages of Long-Term Teacher Mobility

EU-wide mobility of the workforce is a key principle of the EU and one of its fundamental conditions is multilingualism. Widespread multilingualism in member states, however, is not achievable without qualified and motivated school language teachers. Apart from thus being pillars of the multilingualism of future generations, they can also be personal examples of the possibilities

of mobility to children in their school at home as well as in a host school abroad if a centrally organised teacher mobility programme supported their actual teaching abroad for a longer period.

In this paper, long-term transnational teacher mobility is defined as an extended period of time (5-10 months, that is, one or two academic semesters) by public education teaching professionals teaching their subject area(s) in a public education institution (primary or secondary school) in another EU country than their own, organised and funded either centrally as a direct or indirect teacher exchange, or in a decentralised way, through transnational school cooperations. Alternatives include pre-service teacher trainees' time spent abroad as well as pre- and in-service teachers spending time in a member state country where their taught foreign language is spoken as native. The present paper, however, concentrates only on in-service teachers' long-term teaching experience in another EU-member country.

Such a programme, if carefully organised, managed and monitored, is advantageous for all stakeholders. It is useful for *the visiting teachers* who, without doubt, collect new professional, cultural and language-related experiences while teaching in another country during their 5-10 months' mobility, thus positively impacting their present and future work. While talking shop in the staff room, workshops and so on, the visiting teachers and the *colleagues in the host school* will benefit from exchanging the expectations, teaching routines and profession-related views, while after returning home, the teachers will pass on their experiences among *students as well as colleagues in the base school*. *Students in the host school* taught by the visiting teacher will benefit from experiencing his/her culturally distinct presence, learning about his/her culture, thus undergoing an intercultural experience. Moreover, the example of the visiting teacher itself will forward a message, to both host and base school students, of the reality of mobility in the EU. Indirectly, a sizeable programme will affect both the *host and the base school systems* positively, partly through the continued partner links between the teachers in the host and base schools, and partly through the saturation of dissemination. Finally and most importantly, such a programme will have a positive effect on *Europe-wide integration and European identity formation*.

Such a programme can count on second- and foreign-language teachers mostly as they, whether native or non-native teachers of their taught language, are prepared to teach their subject in any country. Teachers of other subjects may be included provided that they are proficient in the language of instruction of the host school so that they could teach their subject area in that language. An EU-wide programme, centrally organised and funded, would make not only direct but also indirect exchanges possible, in other words, apart from the possibility of two teachers changing places and teaching in each other's school, in a centrally organised placement procedure teacher-applicants and schools offering places could be matched.

2. Background

2.1. The European Communities – EU and Long-Term School Teacher Mobility in the Past Decades

As such a long-term primary and secondary school teacher mobility programme may offer obvious advantages towards both multilingualism and the European integration, it is no wonder that the European Community and later the EU have advanced numerous ideas and policy efforts related to it, including the facilitation of foreign language learning and teaching, and pre-service teacher mobility. Without being exhaustive, let me pinpoint a few important steps in those related education policies, focussing on long-term in-service school teacher mobility.

It was not earlier than 1973 that the Janne Report produced the first discussion of educational cooperation between the then nine members states of the European Community. The Janne Report already emphasised the importance of the knowledge of foreign languages (Janne 1973: 30-34), mentioning "exchanges and traineeships for teachers, pupils and students" (Janne 1973: 34), and, among the five most important recommendations, suggested "intensify[ing] exchanges between teachers and between the taught; generalize refresher training courses abroad for teachers" (Janne 1973: 52). A year later, the ministers of education met and settled a resolution on educational cooperation between member states (European Communities 1974). The seven areas of action the resolution prescribed included the encouragement of "movement and mobility of teachers, students and research workers" through two steps: by the removal of administrative obstacles and by the improvement of foreign language teaching (European Communities 1974: 1). Based on that resolution, in 1976 a Community Action Programme for education was settled and a permanent Education Committee within the Council was established. As a following step, another resolution by the ministers of education (European Communities 1988: 1) emphasised the importance of language learning and exchanges among young people to foster understanding among Europeans, as part of strengthening the European dimension of education. Economou (2003: 119) claims the resolution suggested that initiatives about the European dimension are to be actually introduced in the school years for changes on the concept of a common Europe in the population to begin.

The 1992 Maastricht Treaty ruled that, based on the subsidiarity principle, the organisation and content of education are to remain under the members states' control, and thus excluded harmonisation of those (Council/Commission 1992, Articles 126(4), 127(4)). The Treaty recommended action related to language learning and mobility aimed at "developing the European dimension of education, particularly through the teaching and dissemination of the languages of the Member States; encouraging mobility of students and teachers, [...] encouraging the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors", and prescribed that the Council take incentive measures to meet those targets (1992, Article 126). No operationalisable objectives, however, were included in the Treaty, which, according to Ertl (2003: 27), may have caused the failure to actually guide the educational performance of member states accordingly.

The Green Paper, published by the European Communities in 1993, expanded upon the meaning of the "European dimension of education." It suggested action in the following: cooperation through transnational mobility and exchanges of students, thus socialising them into the European context; the strengthening of teaching and training, including transnational cooperation of teacher training institutions; the development of language teaching, etc. (European Communities 1993: 10-11). Although the Green Paper is also criticised for being vague (Ertl 2003: 27), for the topic of this paper it is worth mentioning that in the annex, among the few accomplished examples of cooperation between schools, one is of a teacher exchange scheme: two teachers changing places and teaching in each other's schools in France and Greece, respectively (European Communities 1993: 14-15).

Following the 2001 European Year of Languages, the 2002 Barcelona Recommendations had education, and within it language learning, as one of its foci. Those recommendations came to support the Lisbon strategy (for the years 2000-2010) to enhance the competitiveness of the EU. Thus, the European Council held in Barcelona in 2002 called for further action in various fields of education, including steps:

- to enhance the transparency and comparability of diplomas for an easier professional mobility,
- to work out ways how to organise an internet-based network of secondary schools to

facilitate their cooperation,
- to improve the mastery of basic skills, particularly stressing that in each member states two foreign languages be taught to all children from an early age ("mother tongue plus two"),
- and to promote the European dimension of education, meaning that it should be integrated into students' basic skills (European Council 2002: 19).

All of these recommendations pointed towards the recognition that education, and language teaching within it, has a key role in high-level mobility leading to an increased competitiveness of the EU.

After the Barcelona Recommendations, efforts on the European dimension of education started to gather momentum. In 2004, Kelly and Grenfell published their reference book, the *European profile for language teacher education*. Its aim was, among others, to facilitate the harmonisation of the education of language teachers across EU countries for "greater transparency and portability of qualifications" (Kelly/Grenfell 2004: 3). They emphasised the importance for pre-service teachers to study or work in a country where their foreign language is spoken as native – a different focus from this paper in terms of both the target group and hosting countries – as well as the opportunity to observe or take part in teaching in more than one country (2004: 11-12). According to them, these experiences will enhance participants' communication skills and intercultural awareness. Further, the reference book offered an evaluation framework for teacher education programmes, thus supporting accreditation and mobility.

Between 2002 and 2010, various other documents called for steps to boost multilingualism in the EU, to improve the quality of language teacher education, and to harmonise efforts in education policy in the member states, based on the work in the European Commission, the Council of the EU and other bodies. Some of them were also supported by the Council of Europe and its European Centre of Modern Languages (ECML) in Graz. They include, among others, Rádai et al. (2003), Dupuis et al. (2003), European Commission (2003), European Commission (2004), Newby (2006), Commission (2007), Council (2007), and Commission (2008).

The primary/secondary school teacher exchange initiative was prepared on the policy planning level in the European Commission in several rounds, targeting various groups. The first round (2004-2009) targeted non-first language teachers, with the idea in mind that they are the most immediately available to teach their subject in another country. While the second round in planning (2010-2013) widened the target group to all teachers, the present Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020), including a long-term mobility, targets all school staff. (Find more details about the evolution of the long-term mobility initiative in the following chapters.)

After 2010, multilingualism started to lose focus within the European Commission. That change in focus is also indicated by the position name of the related commissioner in the past 15 years. During the Barroso Commission, it was first, between 2004 and 2007, Ján Figeľ who held the office as the "Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and *Multilingualism*". Between 2007 and 2010 a distinct commission chair was opened for Leonard Orban as the "Commissioner for *Multilingualism*", while Ján Figeľ, followed by Maroš Šefčovič, was "Commissioner for Education, Culture, Training and Youth." From 2010 on, multilingualism has again become part of the education portfolio and Androulla Vassiliou was "Commissioner for Education, Culture, *Multilingualism* and Youth" until 2014. During the Juncker Commission, between 2014 and 2019, the word *multilingualism* was dropped from the name of the office, as Tibor Navracsics was called the "Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport" (see also in Table 1).

Barroso Commission	
2004-2007	Ján Figeľ
2007-2010	Leonard Orban
	Ján Figeľ, Maroš Šefčovič
2010-2014	Androulla Vassiliou
Juncker Commission	
2014-2019	Tibor Navracsics

Table 1. EC portfolio holders related to multilingualism and their title

Apart from this decrease in interest in multilingualism, what can be detected in recent EC interest and output in this area is a shift, instead of education, towards languages in the world of work. Presently, in the Register of Commission Expert Groups, the only group on multilingualism is the "Language Industry Expert Group" (LIND; Register 2019a). A similar working group functioning between 2010-2014 was the "Thematic Working Group on Languages in Education and Training" (TWG LET, Register 2019b), with their final report Languages for jobs out in 2015. In the same year, the EC's Joint Research Centre in Ispra produced an extensive research report on the relationship of employability and foreign language proficiency (Araújo et al. 2015), while two years later another report on the same topic was published by the EC Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (Beadle et al. 2017).

Most recently, in May 2019, the Council of the European Union settled a recommendation on the comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning foreign languages (Council 2019). Adopted by the education ministers, it starts reminding the reader about

> "the vision of a European Education Area in which high-quality, inclusive education, training and research are not hampered by borders; spending time in another Member State to study, learn or work has become the standard; speaking two languages in addition to one's mother tongue is far more widespread; and people have a strong sense of their identity as Europeans, as well as an awareness of Europe's shared cultural and linguistic heritage and its diversity."

Listing altogether 25 issues and problems surrounding foreign language teaching and learning across the EU, the document presents recommendations to the member states. Among the eight recommendations, we can find a recommendation that member states should promote "study periods abroad for students studying towards a teaching qualification, while encouraging mobility for all teachers, trainers, inspectors and school leaders" (Council 2019: 18, Point 5d). Therefore, the document announces the EC's intention to "strengthen the mobility of school pupils, learners in vocational education and training and teachers, trainers, inspectors and school leaders within the Erasmus+ programme and support overall the use of Union funding" (Council 2019: 19, Point 10). In other words, it is the intention of the EC to support the mobility of teachers and other education staff within the present framework – changes in that are not to be expected in the near future.

It remains to be answered in the future if the popular and well-functioning existing exchange programmes introduced in the 1980s-1990s (together with the creation of the European Higher Education Area) will have been sufficient to satisfy the ambitious vision of the policy-makers to produce an integrated transnational knowledge economy in Europe. The Erasmus programme for university exchange was established as early as 1987, while the Socrates programmes (incorporating the Erasmus, Comenius and Grundtvig programmes, etc.) ran between 1994 and 2007. The Lifelong Learning Programme was in effect between 2007-2013, and included Erasmus, Leonardo, Comenius and Grundtvig, among others. Since 2014, the Erasmus+ programme has been

in effect, combining all the schemes for education, training, youth and sport. The next seven-year cycle will comprise 2021-2027, with an increased budget expected.

In spite of earlier negotiation efforts to keep the United Kingdom within Erasmus+ after Brexit as an exception after the secession, at the time of writing this paper it does not look possible: both parties, the EU and the UK, seem to secure some guarantees for present Erasmus+ project participants for the case of a no-deal Brexit only, while negotiations about a possible extra agreement between the UK and the EU on the Erasmus+ programme have not been publicised. In case of a no-deal Brexit, the UK will drop out of the whole Erasmus+ programme. In that case, the EU secures the rights and allowances only for those already in the UK on the date the UK leaves the EU, according to a March 19, 2019 regulation (EP/Council 2019). On the other side, the UK government will continue the funding of all the Erasmus+ projects already agreed upon, on condition of extra registration (Gov.uk, 2019).

2.2. Policy Work on a Possible Long-Term Teacher Mobility Programme in the EU

Would it be worthwhile for the EU if public education teachers worked abroad, in a school in another EU-country, for half a year or a year, as a teacher exchange or job placement organised by the EC ? The EC's answer to this question has been yes. After two waves of policy planning and organisation (2002-2009, 2010-2013), since 2014 the EC has finally included long-term (one or two-semester) teacher mobility in the Key Action 2 (KA2) programme of Erasmus+. While short-term teacher mobility programmes (now called Key Action 1) as well as school-to-school and similar projects in KA2 have been a success, the long-term teacher mobility component in KA2 projects seems to have been unexploited since its inclusion in 2014.

Long-term school teacher mobility programmes can be of two types, centrally organised and decentralised ones. Centrally organised programmes make direct and indirect exchanges feasible. Direct exchanges mean that involved teachers swap places and teach in each other's school. Indirect exchanges match schools willing to host teachers and willing teachers (already employed as school teacher in their home countries), thus making the placement of teachers possible where they are desired. A possible model of reference for centrally organised indirect exchanges can be the once flourishing Fulbright programme for primary and secondary teachers. Apart from the university-level Fulbright programme, this "Classroom Teacher Exchange Program" supported, for 68 years, the worldwide exchange of primary and secondary school (K-12) teachers, for either one semester or a full year. The programme was sustained for long decades between 1946 and 2014 between the United States and numerous other countries, including almost all present EU member countries. Unfortunately, that Fulbright programme stopped running in 2014 (Fulbright 2019a), and has been replaced by a modified, limited programme between the United States and only a few other countries, among EU member countries only Finland and Greece being included (Fulbright 2019b).

As far as the EU is concerned, some evidence suggests that the EC worked on policy planning on long-term school teacher mobility already before 2005. This included, in 2005, the commission of a large-scale research project on language teachers' willingness to participate in such a mobility, the questionnaire-based DROFoLTA research ("Detecting and Removing Obstacles to Foreign Language Teaching Abroad"). That research concentrated on foreign language teachers, and implied the possibility of a centrally organised programme with the possibility of indirect exchanges, as described above. Some main results of that research are summarised in Chapter 3.1 below.

An alternative of the centrally organised teacher exchange or placement programme is a decentralised one. In such a programme it is up to the already cooperating ("twinned") schools to

decide if they wish to host a teacher from a partner school or to swap two colleagues. Such a scheme fits the subsidiary principle, cherished by the EU, as the decision to send or host a certain teacher is made by the school itself, and not by a central agency. This pattern of long-term mobility was the one the EC later seems to have started to be inclined towards in its policy planning.

In the meantime, the European Commission ordered research (unrelated to the three-phase research presented in Chapter 3 below) on the long-term mobility on education staff, conducted in 2012 by Ecorys UK. Their report was published in 2013 (Ecorys 2013). The purpose of that study was to evaluate the demand, the motivation and the value of the main stakeholders, to detect the obstacles and how to overcome them, and to offer recommendations how to implement such a programme, including alternatives (Ecorys 2013: II). Note that its target group is much more comprehensive than in the case of the research discussed above: while the previous DROFoLTA research (Williams et al. 2006, Strubell 2009) concentrated on the long-term mobility possibilities for *foreign language teachers*, the Ecorys survey's target group was *education staff* in general, including teachers of all subject areas, trainers and school administrators as well. The survey included an online questionnaire answered by 7,211 school education staff, telephone consultations with 78 stakeholders and three focus group interviews (Ecorys 2013: II).

Emphasising the robustness and thus the reliability of their results, on the basis of the sample size and the research method variety, the report came up with partly similar results to the Williams-report (2006). The Ecorys report claims (2013: III) that "there is likely to be strong interest from school education staff to participate in mobility opportunities lasting longer than six week offered through an EU scheme. [...] the scale of applications would be in the range of 3,000 to 6,000." Unlike the Williams-report, they found strong interest in both genders, all age groups and lengths of experience. As far as the geographical distribution is concerned, their results found, similarly to those of the Williams-report, that the UK and Ireland were highly the most popular target countries, while the new member states (EU12 then) received weaker interest. As for source countries, the report found the most interest from Italy, Spain and Portugal. Most education staff were found interested in teaching, followed by job-shadowing and doing research. As for subject areas, not only language teachers and trainers were interested but also teachers of sciences, maths, history, geography and ICT.

Though the Ecorys report also registers various obstacles (Ecorys 2013: IV), it strongly recommends that "an EU scheme should be adopted to support the long-term mobility of school education staff," and suggests an institutional approach as opposed to individual or project-based approaches (Ecorys 2013: V). What it means is that "an approach based on trans-national clusters of schools with some form of reciprocity will help improve cost-effectiveness," and will thus be more attractive to stakeholders (Ecorys 2013: V). The scheme should be decentralised, organised by national agencies, and the recommended duration could be three to six months (within a six week to 12 month maximum window), preceded by preparatory meetings. The report suggests that the new programme should be promoted intensively, presented as a "distinctive brand" (p. V).

After overviewing some of the policy work and decisions between 1973 and 2019, as well as a large-scale research project in 2013, let us see the research findings of another project, unrelated to the one by Ecorys discussed above. The research below comprises three research phases, each with a different focus.

3. Research on the Viability of a Long-Term Teacher Mobility EU Programme

Time	Research tool	Participants	Main results	Published in
Phase 1: 2005-2009	**Questionnaire** online, 64 questions	N = 6,251 foreign language teachers across the EU, among them 312 (5%) from Hungary	Willingness to go on long-term teacher mobility: **high**	Williams et al. (2006), Strubell (2009a), (2009b), Strubell (2011), etc.
Phase 2: 2010-2013	**Interviews** 20 questions, semi-structured; Mean interview length 53 mins	N = 67 active Hu-L1 teachers of English as a foreign language and CLIL	Willingness: **extremely high**	Biczók (2010), Gabnay (2012), Szamosi (2013), Reményi (2015), Reményi (2017a), etc.
Phase 3: 2016-2017	**Questionnaire** online, 93 questions	N = 88 Erasmus+ school-to-school partnership project coordinators in Hungarian schools	Willingness: **close to zero** Actual long-term mobility: **none** Reasons:	Reményi (2017b)
	Interviews 24 questions, semi-structured Mean interview length 97 mins	N = 3 project coordinators from the 2016-2017 questionnaire sample	-- administrative issues -- native-speakerism	

Table 2: Research phases

This chapter overviews some of the research results of over the past 14 years on the question whether teachers, foreign language teachers, and even more specifically, English-as-a-foreign-language teachers (TEFL) are willing to take part in a long-term school teacher mobility programme in another EU country than their own. While in the first phase of the research (2005-2009) the focus was on foreign language teachers across the EU, the second phase (2010-2013) concentrated on English teachers, including TEFL as well as teachers who teach their various school subjects through English (Content and Language Integrated Learning, CLIL). Phase 3 (2016-2017) had a much more specific focus: staff in Hungarian schools already involved in a transnational school-to-school project cooperation organised by Erasmus+ (see Table 2 for an overview).

3.1. The First Research Phase (2005-2009)

The first research phase was launched to prepare a long-term teacher mobility EU programme, on the initiative of the European Commission. This 2005-2009 phase was based on an online questionnaire in 2005 that reached over six thousand non-first language teachers across the EU (N = 6,251, among them 521 from Hungary, 5%). The sample of that DROFoLTA questionnaire ("Detecting and Removing Obstacles to Foreign Language Teaching Abroad") is extensive, however, it can not be considered representative of the language teacher population in the EU: enterprising, digitally literate teachers were obviously overrepresented in it. Results are summarised here on the basis of Williams et al. (2006), Strubell (2009a, 2009b, 2011) and Reményi (2015).

The 64-item questionnaire included items on the willingness to go to teach one or two semesters "next year" into another EU country, on advantages and disadvantages of such a mobility

respondent teachers are expecting, etc. That large-scale survey found that the mobility willingness was high, considerably higher than that of the general working-age population in the EU that year: while among the latter mobility willingness was 17 percent (Hungary: 29 percent; Eurobarometer 2010: 14-15), in the DROFoLTA sample overall willingness was 71.5 percent! The range stretched from Austrian FL teachers' willingness of 41 percent to Polish ones' 87 percent. Hungarian FL teacher respondents' willingness averaged 84.5 percent. But participants' willingness was sensitive to gender and age: language teachers, female in the majority, become less willing when starting a family. Another important finding is the geographical imbalance in the target countries: English teachers are in the majority, and most of those would wish to go to the United Kingdom (Strubell 2009: 16-17). The participating teachers envisaged several legal and administrative obstacles, and found them more decisive than personal ones (Williams et al. 2006: 60-67).

3.2. The Second Research Phase (2010-2013)

As the second phase of the research between 2010-2013, on the basis of the DROFoLTA question list, semi-structured interviews were conducted with over one hundred Hungarian-L1 teachers of English, including EFL and CLIL teachers. Eventually, 67 of the interviews were transcribed and analysed, a quota sample for gender, age and school type mirroring the distribution of the Hungarian teacher population (based on Balázs et al., 2010). Willingness to teach in another country was found to be even higher than in the 2005 questionnaire.

Early in the interview, participants were asked "Would you teach in another country if you had the chance?" with a following question "Why (not)?". 63 out of the 67 participants (95 percent) replied with a more (N = 59) or less definite (N = 5) 'yes' to the former question. However, while going through the interview, discussing possible advantages and difficulties with the help of questions as well as related statements to evaluate, several participants became more uncertain about their willingness. With the help of the constant comparative method of qualitative research (Maykut/Morehouse 1994), a group of trained raters analysed the transcripts to figure out how, in their discourse, participating teachers construct their teacher identity, also more specifically, how they construct their self-image as non-native teachers of English (non-NESTs), and how that relates to their willingness to teach English in another EU country. It turned out that while welcoming the possibility of a long-term EU-organised teacher mobility programme, they at the same time tended to undervalue themselves in comparison with NESTs. More precisely, some participants explicitly identified with the belief that native speakers and native speaker teachers (NESTs) are superior, others adhered to that belief less explicitly. A few participants declined to contrast NESTs and non-NESTs, others faced it as a problem and contemplated the dichotomy. Only in a few interviews did participants address the question of what happens to those actually taking the challenge to teach abroad. Overall, uncertainties about participants' willingness during the interviews tended to be related to their self-image as non-NESTs. (Read more of the results of this research phase in sources listed in Table 2, for example, Reményi 2017.)

3.3. The Third Research Phase (2016-2017)

The 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme indeed introduced a long-term education staff mobility component within the KA2 School-to-School Strategic Partnership project support scheme. In this scheme, long-term staff mobility is one of five possibilities for project partners, the others being international partner meetings, short term mobility of pupils, short-term joint staff trainings and long-term mobility of pupils (above age 14).

Commissioned by the Hungarian national Erasmus+ agency, in the third phase of the research all Hungarian education institutions (kindergartens, primary and secondary schools – 'school' from now on) leading such an Erasmus+ School-to-School Strategic Partnership project were invited, first, to fill in a questionnaire about the mobility components of their project. Then the school coordinators in a few of them were also interviewed about their mobility decisions and experiences. Below let me summarise the results of this phase in somewhat more detail than the previous two phases (those having been published more widely).

Questionnaire results. In 2016, 164 Hungarian schools coordinated (i.e., led) such a KA2 type School-to-school Strategic Partnership project, out of which 88 (54 percent) participated in the questionnaire. Their number and diversity in terms of school type, school size, funding organisation (state, church, etc.), geographical region and project starting year establish the reliability of the data. In each of those projects schools from three to seven EU countries were cooperating including the coordinator Hungarian school, and were working together on their project for one to three years. As for project partners, all but Ireland of the 28 EU member countries plus Iceland, [North] Macedonia, Norway and Turkey participated in the 88 projects, with Polish, Italian, Spanish, German and Turkish partner schools taking part in over 30 of the projects. A majority of the schools were not newcomers in international school projects but had taken part previously in other programmes (e.g., Comenius).

Project topics were partly teacher-focussed, partly student-focussed. The topics ranged from teaching methodology (talent support, conflict management, new techniques in foreign language teaching, team debate competition) and digital pedagogy (ICT techniques in the classroom) to ecology (renewable energy use in the project partner countries, plastic waste reduction possibilities) and the development of intercultural competences (cooperative techniques, comparative history, gastronomy), and so on.

In the 88 projects in the sample, partner schools participated in altogether 504 mobility activities (one to ten activities per project, 5.73 on average), involving 1,114 staff and 2,794 pupils. (Participants present in the hosting school events and other multiplier activities are manifold.) Project partners decided early in the project what mobility types to organise. Table 3 shows the mobility types and their number in the 88 projects, indicating the popularity of each mobility type across the sample.

Mobility type	**Sum**	**Max per project**	**Min per project**	**Average per project**
International partner meeting	249	7	0	2,83
Short term mobility of pupils	210	7	0	2,39
Short-term joint staff training	45	4	0	0,51
Long-term mobility of pupils (above age 14)	0			
Long-term teaching or training assignments	0			

Table 3:
The distribution of mobility types in the sample ("short-term": 3 days to 2 months, "long-term": 2 to 12 months)

As can be seen in Table 3, the most popular mobility type in the projects was partner meetings, followed by the short-term mobility of pupils. The only other mobility type utilised was that of staff for trainings. Partner schools were free to decide on the mobility types according to the project topic and partners' preferences. Some project partners decided to vary the three mobility types along the project, others stuck to one type and had the same type of mobility all along, repeatedly. Most projects (79%) started the cooperation with a partner meeting, for organisational purposes. Another

remarkable feature was that several projects merged mobility types: staff members took pupils with them on their mobilities, so while the teachers were sitting at a meeting or training, pupils took their time in the host school or with host families. The coordinators found this economical arrangement feasible only with partner schools they were familiar with from earlier projects, ones they had learnt to rely on, lending over caregiver responsibilities to their project partners.

What is the most remarkable in Table 3 from the viewpoint of this paper is the complete absence of long-term teacher mobility in the projects (along with the absence of long-term mobility of pupils). I learnt from a KA2 project manager at the Hungarian national agency of Erasmus+ that not only the 88 research participants missed to exploit that possibility but *none* of the 164 Hungarian schools coordinating such a project between 2014-2016 included one (Lampért-Kármán, personal communication, 2016). As Erasmus+ policy planners had finally found a way to introduce long-term teacher mobility into the programme system from 2014 on, after many years of planning, those interested had high expectations how far this opportunity, being included in the school-to-school partnership, would actually be utilised. It is disappointing to see this failure, and begs the question why it is so.

At the end of the questionnaire respondents were asked about some of the results they yielded, one of them being about their choices of inclusion/non-inclusion of long-term teacher mobility. Apart from the answer that this mobility type did not fit the project profile, the most frequent answer to explain the absence of long-term teacher mobility was an administrative issue, the impossibility to find a substitute teacher: “the school wouldn’t have been able to solve the problem how to substitute for the colleague away for such a long time”, “even one week [with the colleague being away] is difficult”, “there’s no way to substitute for the teacher in our small school”, “the curriculum is too tight to allow for problems emerging due to the absence”.

Another cause named was the veto of the school management: “they simply did not allow it”, “it was not within our competence”. Other explanations referred to the reluctance of their teachers: “the teachers don’t have the time and energy for the effort required for such an endeavour”, or the sheer impossibility of the idea: “a teacher can’t be away from their school for such a long time”. A third type of explanation referred to their uncertainty due to the novelty of this mobility type: “with more experience, we could have tried”, “probably English teachers could have swapped but, being new partners, we did not dare to try”, “it did not surface in our organisation phase, though it may have been a good idea”, “in another project we could try it”, “later long-term teacher and student mobility could become more important”. Some respondents mentioned that the new KA2 scheme in Erasmus+ did not allow wide experimentation, even for experienced project coordinators.

Interview results. Coordinators of three of the 88 projects were carefully selected for a face-to-face oral interview on their views about mobility in their projects: one in a primary school in south-east Hungary, one in a secondary school in the capital, Budapest, and another in a secondary school in west Hungary. Their projects focussed on STEM gamification, on inclusion possibilities of problematic youth, and on the use of ICT in foreign language teaching, respectively. I conducted the interviews with the coordinators and colleagues joining them in the respective schools.

The interviewed coordinators do not find long-term teacher mobility feasible in the framework of the present Erasmus+ KA2 scheme. The only type they would welcome is an incoming native speaker teacher. They would not like to send anyone, and would not themselves go. In their view, the chief obstacles to direct teacher (or staff) exchange include the following: fear of job loss, the poor language proficiency of those not teaching foreign languages, substitution problems if the swapped teachers’ subjects do not match, and students’ language proficiency in the primary school.

They find the issue of outgoing teachers more difficult, while they would be glad to host incoming teachers, mostly native speaker teachers, though organising their timetable could be difficult unless they came for a whole academic year. The interviewees reported administrative difficulties, related also to the recently introduced overcentralization of the public school system in Hungary and to superiors' disincentives. In the interviewees' own words:

> "We did not include long-term teacher mobility because we would not be able to organise their substitution. On the other hand, direct teacher exchange is not viable due to the possible mismatch of the swapped teachers' school subjects."

> "Our teachers are hesitant, even in the case of a short, one week long, mobility, partly because of the substitution problems, partly because of the extra work. We are overburdened, nobody has the extra capacity or enthusiasm any more."

> "We did not include long-term teacher mobility in our project because in the present system, managed by KLIK [the centralised school management agency since 2013], one cannot be sure if their job is secured if they are absent for three or four months, away on such a mobility. The compulsory weekly lesson numbers being 22-26, everybody has 26 lessons – our capacities are fully utilised, we do not have spare capacities for back-up. We cannot not even guess if the employer would let us go. A direct exchange where teachers would take each other's position would be useful, though that could cause some organisation problems, too. On the other hand, while foreign language teachers could, naturally, teach their subject through the target language, non-language teachers do not speak foreign languages – or at least not well enough to teach it in another language. This type of exchange could make sense only if a native speaker teacher came here to support the teaching of that language in our school. In that case we may be able to find someone to send to fill that teacher's home position."

> "Only foreign language teachers would go but only if their classes were taught by an incoming colleague. In that case, we would welcome a native speaker teacher, that would be real help. In earlier teacher mobility programmes we had native teachers, via Peace Corps or Teacher Central Europe, but that was before the administrative centralisation, when our employer, the local council, provided accommodation for the incoming teacher. In the present system such support is inconceivable."

To summarise, coordinators reported that outgoing long-term mobility looks close to impossible to organise, partly because only foreign language teachers would be capable to teach their subject abroad. The teachers are overburdened, superiors are disinterested and administration is overbureaucratised. As for incoming teachers, the schools would mostly, or only, welcome native speaker teachers. Within that scheme the only other possibility partner schools would welcome is direct exchange, i.e., where teachers could take each other's position.

4. Discussion

4.1 Possible Causes of the Differing Results

The new Erasmus+ programme has finally included long-term school teacher mobility but Hungarian teachers seem to be reluctant to take advantage of these opportunities. This is in surprising contrast with the results of two earlier research phases, both of which showed enthusiasm and willingness on the part of foreign language teachers and Hungarian EFL teachers, respectively. Thus, what may be the causes of the discrepancy in the results between those research results? According to the former (Research phases 1 and 2), language teachers are highly enthusiastic about, and willing to go to, a possible long-term mobility, while according to the latter (Research phase 3), their readiness seems close to zero. This inconsistency may be due to at least three reasons: the time difference in the data collection dates, the data collection focuses, or differences in the samples.

Data were collected in 2005 and 2010-2011, on the one hand, and 2016, on the other. As for the former, that period can be counted as the "golden age" for multilingualism in the EU, the EC

focussing on the issue as can be seen in the policy documents and even the naming of commissioner titles (see Chapter 2.1, including Table 1, above). That emphasis on multilingualism was, in all likelihood, felt by language professionals across Europe, sending the message that those involved are expected to participate in boosting multilingualism in the region. Moreover, the expansion with its enlargement steps (2004, 2007 and later 2013) can be said to have brought some enthusiasm for people in new member states, including Hungary. Those data collection times preceded the period after 2010 when the EU could be seen as less than secure, due to the debt crisis and later, the migrant crisis. By the time of the data collection in 2016, that enthusiasm slightly decreased: 42 vs. 39 percent of Hungarians had a positive image of the EU in 2010 and 2015, respectively, on a positive-neutral-negative scale (Bíró-Nagy et al., 2016: 13, based on Eurobarometer data).

Additionally, the education situation in Hungary considerably changed between those dates. Both the primary and secondary school system became centralised in 2013 by the force of law: taken away from local municipalities, all schools were turned into the management of a central government agency, with excessive bureaucracy and strictly limited funds. Before that, in 2011, teachers' weekly lesson hours were raised from 22 to 22-26 – due to an intensifying teacher shortage, most teachers now teach a minimum of 26 lesson hours, and a majority of teachers across the system are obliged to teach overtime above those 26. Furthermore, school autonomy has been curbed by law as far as teachers' rights to be involved in the selection of their school principal are concerned. The feeling of overburden and the loss of autonomy may have added to the worsening atmosphere in public education, with recurring street demonstrations since 2016 and a looming teacher strike.

The differing dates and the change in Hungary in between them, however, may not be enough to fully explain the difference in our results. Another reason may be that data collection in Research phases 1 and 2 vs. 3 had differing foci: while the former targeted teachers' attitudes ("willingness"), the latter targeted actual behaviour (the absence of teachers actually going to teach in a project partners' school abroad). Those differing research focuses most often yield divergent results, as every social science expert would testify. I am still convinced, however, that it is the dissimilarity of the samples that may add more to the explanation to the discrepancy. First, Research phases 1 and 2 involved foreign language teachers and EFL teachers, respectively, while in Research phase 3 concentrated on school projects, where language teachers and other staff, including school principals (with various subject areas), participated. And secondly, and more importantly, though neither samples of Research phases 1 and 2 can be called strictly representative of the Hungarian teacher population, the sampling in both stretched wide, and included members of highly diverse teacher groups. Research phase 3, on the other hand, concentrated on teachers in schools that were already deeply committed to a different type of international cooperation, a majority being already experienced participants in various other EU-funded and other school cooperation projects (e.g., Comenius). They had been working hard to give meaning to those projects, and the possibility of long-term teacher mobility seemed not to fit into that. Having first-hand experience in Research phases 2 and 3, I am of the conviction that this difference in the samples has an essential explanatory effect on the variance in the results.

4.2. Native-Speakerism

Native-speakerism turned out to be a major ideological obstacle against language teacher mobility both according to Research phases 2 and 3. That it is an ideology was first emphasised by Akoha et al. (1991, as cited by Seidlhofer [2001: 152]). Native-speakerism is defined by Holliday (2006: 385) as "a pervasive ideology within English language teaching, characterized by the belief that 'native-speaker' teachers represent a 'Western culture' from which spring the ideals both of the English

language and of English language teaching methodology". Elsewhere he emphasises that the same ideology works not only in the case of teachers but all speakers alike (Holliday 2008: 49).

An ideology as a structured belief system is socially constructed as a representation of reality. It presents itself as commons sense, as a universal, taken for granted reality. People tend to think that "*the* native speaker speaks better English than *the* non-native speaker," even if we know all too well that native speakers come in all shapes and sizes, just like non-native speakers. The boundary itself between the two groups is not as clear-cut as one might think. Even if most NESTs do speak English better than most non-NESTs (and even if non-NESTs are bound to strive for a near-native competence), the latter have advantages to offset their relative language handicap, as Medgyes (1992: 346-347) summarised: they are role models or living examples to prove that it is possible to learn a foreign language well. Being experienced language learners, they can be more effective in teaching language learning strategies. For the same reason, they are more empathic and can foresee the difficulties ahead of their learners. They also have more conscious, verbalisable knowledge about the language. The question is not if NESTs or non-NESTs are worth more – as their advantages and disadvantages balance each other out, both should be employed in schools (Medgyes 1992, 1994). Still, not only language learners and their parents but also the management of schools and language schools, moreover, English teachers themselves often tend to think in terms of the ideology of native-speakerism in an unreflected way, as the above research indicates.

5. Conclusion

As the EU is struggling to remain unified, a stronger incentive towards integration seems to be expected from the EC and the member states. As the new EC starts to work at the end of 2019, that incentive has to be translated into new programmes, with a focus on education's integrative potential. Among them, a long-term school teacher mobility programme should again be introduced into the EC agenda. In my opinion, a centrally organised programme allowing indirect teacher exchanges should be taken into consideration, as the present decentralised Erasmus+ long-term mobility scheme seems to fail to find the target group interested in that type of mobility. Such a programme should return to focusing on foreign language teachers again, as that teacher group has been shown to be the most willing to participate in such a programme, and, due to their subject areas, are already equipped to teach them in another EU country.

Andrea Ágnes Reményi
English-American Institute
Pázmány Péter Catholic University
1 Egyetem utca
Piliscsaba 2087, Hungary
remenyi.andrea@btk.ppke.hu

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