

Anna Götsch:
How companies can improve European mobility

Doing research on the topic and considering my own experience, it turned out that except for the Erasmus Programme for students, none of the existing support programs are well known within Austria.



I participated in the Leonardo Da Vinci programme which was part of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) of the European Union now being replaced by the Erasmus plus programme.

The Leonardo Da Vinci Programme was designed for people who have already finished their education. I learned about this programme more or less by chance. It was presented at a fair at my university. To spread the idea of Europa we do need to look more closely at how we can increase public awareness of the different supportive programmes.

Another challenge for Austrian people– and I guess people in some other countries, too - is the language. In Austria, schools need to pay more attention to teaching foreign languages. If you leave school in Austria after completing your compulsory education, you will have learnt only some fairly basic skills in English. It is understandable that in this situation, people will not have the courage to go abroad. Yet gaining experience abroad is essential to understand different cultures and appreciate the advantages of the European Union.

On these two items – language and support programmes - companies can contribute a lot.

- International companies quite often select one of the European languages as their company language – Austrian companies often use English. Companies can support their employees to improve their language skills by using the company language more consistently within the group. This would allow employees to get used to a foreign language and overcome their fears regarding language.

- I also like to mention the possibilities of group internal education programmes. Quite a lot of companies have implemented education programmes for their employees such as a “Sales Academy” or something similar. These internal programs are quite often designed similar to the European mobility programs. Besides giving employees additional training in a special working field, they aim to inform them about the group’s common strategies and to encourage them to go abroad and learn from each other.

I would like to point out that a (European) exchange of employees would not only be important for the development of these employees themselves, but also be beneficial to the company. This is a way of ensuring the transfer of knowhow within the group. In addition, getting to know the different cultures and working methods may help avoiding misunderstandings in the future.

To sum it up quickly, companies have the possibility to reduce fears and encourage employees to be open-minded!