

# Template for Classifying Best Practices in Teaching EU Matters

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## 1. Basic Information

- Title/Name of the Best Practice: **Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnerships in VET**
- Country/Region of Origin: Athens, Greece
- Institution/Organization Implementing the Practice: **AKMI VET school**
- Kind of activity: **Group activity**
- Target Audience: **Students**
- Duration of the activity: **2 weeks visit and internship**
- Accessibility: **Free, funded by EU**
- Year of Implementation: **2024**
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## 2. Description of the Practice

- **Objective:**

Erasmus KA1 projects allow students to participate in international mobility experiences, enhancing their professional skills, cultural awareness, and understanding of EU citizenship through work placements, internships, and study exchanges in European countries.
- **Description of Activities:**

The KA1 mobility in Krakow, Poland provided VET students with a comprehensive international learning experience, combining internships with cultural immersion to promote both vocational skills and EU citizenship awareness. Over two weeks, students participated in work-based learning through their internships at Polish companies, gaining practical experience in their field while developing adaptability, teamwork, and intercultural communication skills. In addition to their

internships, students engaged in cultural activities that deepened their understanding of Polish history, society, and European identity, reinforcing the values of EU diversity and mobility.

Before departure, students were prepared and matched with companies relevant to their vocational training. They were informed about EU mobility rights, cultural expectations, and workplace etiquette, ensuring they were ready for both their professional placements and cultural experiences. Logistical arrangements, including accommodation, transport, and Erasmus+ documentation, were all finalized by AKMI, to ensure a smooth experience abroad. During the mobility, students worked in local businesses and industries aligned with their vocational training, allowing them to apply their practical and technical skills in real-world settings. Guided by local supervisors, alongside their Polish colleagues, they improved their problem-solving, collaboration, and professional competencies while experiencing a different work culture.

Cultural immersion played a key role in the program. Students visited Auschwitz concentration camp, where they reflected on European history, human rights, and social justice. They explored Wieliczka Salt Mines and Krakow's historic city center, gaining insights into Poland's cultural heritage and contributions to Europe. An excursion to the Zakopane Mountains exposed them to local traditions, crafts, and cuisine, offering a deeper connection to Polish life and the outdoors. Regular outings to cafés, restaurants, and places of cultural interest provided opportunities for students to engage with Polish culture firsthand, strengthening their cultural adaptability and appreciation for European diversity. Following the mobility, students reflected, in order to assess their personal and professional growth. AKMI VET school collected feedback, and experience reports to evaluate the program's impact and improve future mobility flows.

- **EU Citizenship Focus Areas:**

This mobility indirectly addressed several pivotal EU Citizenship Focus Areas, reinforcing students' understanding of European values, mobility rights, and cultural diversity through hands-on experiences.

The mobility experience promoted **European identity** and **cultural diversity**, as students immersed themselves in Polish traditions, history, and daily life, encouraging a more wholesome appreciation for the shared heritage of EU

nations. By working in international settings, students developed intercultural communication skills, promoting social diversity and inclusivity in another European workspace. Through their visit to Auschwitz, students better understood the concept of **Social Inclusion** and **Equal Rights**, reflecting on the importance of human rights, democracy, and anti-discrimination policies supported by the EU. This life changing experience helped them understand the EU’s commitment to freedom, equality, and historical remembrance, strengthening their awareness of civic responsibilities and social justice.

The internship supported EU Law and Policies, particularly regarding labour mobility, workers’ rights, and cross-border employability. Students learned firsthand about professional opportunities within the EU, experiencing the freedom of movement that allows them to work and train in different member states. The program also introduced them to EU employment regulations, workplace ethics, and professional adaptability, reinforcing their knowledge of European labor laws. By participating in structured cultural and professional experiences, students gained insights into **Civic Participation** and the role of citizens in shaping European societies. The interaction with local businesses, stakeholders, and communities helped them see how EU policies support economic and educational exchanges.

This mobility effectively combined **WBL** with cultural education, ensuring that students not only developed vocational skills but also grew into active, informed European citizens, ready to get involved in EU matters.

<b>Strong points</b>	<b>Weak points</b>
<i>Students work abroad</i>	<i>Logistical matters</i>
<i>Free, no cost for students and teachers</i>	<i>Bureaucracy</i>
<i>Intercultural exchange</i>	<i>It's necessary to have expertise in Erasmus+ projects, funding and guidelines</i>

### 3. Pedagogical Details

- **Teaching Methodology:**

(e.g., project-based learning, role-playing, simulations, etc.)

The teaching methodology used in the mobility was primarily work-based learning (WBL) through an internship. This approach provided students with hands-on experience in a real professional setting, allowing them to apply their vocational skills in a practical, international environment.

The methodology focused on:

- Experiential learning, where students learned by actively engaging in workplace tasks.
- Mentorship-based training, with supervision from industry professionals guiding their development.
- Problem-solving and adaptability, as students navigated new work environments and cultural differences.
- Reflective learning, where participants assessed their progress and gained insights from their experiences.

This practical, immersion-based approach effectively supported students in developing technical, intercultural, and employability skills, reinforcing their understanding of EU labor mobility and citizenship rights.

- **Resources and Tools Used:**

Workplace Training Materials - Industry-specific manuals, guides, and instructions provided by the host organizations to help students integrate into their roles. Digital Communication Tools - Email, messaging apps, and online platforms (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Zoom) used for coordination between students, mentors, and teachers.

- **Innovative Aspects:**

The KA1 mobility in Krakow introduced several innovative aspects that enhanced the learning experience for VET students:

- **Work-Based Learning** in an International Context - Unlike traditional classroom learning, this mobility combined practical, hands-on vocational training with cultural and professional immersion in an EU country, reinforcing real-world application of skills.
- **Integration of EU Citizenship Education Through Workplace Experience** - Instead of learning about EU values and mobility rights in a classroom, students experienced them firsthand, gaining insights into EU labor policies, workers' rights, and intercultural collaboration.
- **Adaptive Learning Approach** - The internship allowed students to develop problem-solving, adaptability, and critical thinking skills as they navigated new work environments, making learning more personalized and dynamic.
- **Digital and Hybrid Communication Tools** - The use of online training platforms, remote mentorship, and digital collaboration tools enabled a flexible, technology-enhanced learning process, preparing students for modern work environments.

- **Targeting Underserved VET Students** – By providing access to international mobility opportunities for VET learners—who typically have fewer chances to participate in study-abroad experiences—the program expanded inclusivity in EU citizenship education.

- **Adaptability to VET Settings:**

This mobility is highly adaptable to VET schools in all regions, as it follows a structured Erasmus+ framework that can be replicated with different host organizations, industries, and EU countries. The model of work-based learning combined with EU citizenship education can be tailored to various vocational fields, ensuring relevance for a wide range of students. With proper institutional partnerships, funding, and logistical planning, VET schools can easily implement similar mobility programs to provide international work experience and intercultural learning opportunities for their students.

#### 4. Outcomes and Impact

- **Measured Outcomes:**

The KA1 mobility in Krakow yielded significant measurable outcomes, demonstrating both academic and personal growth for participating VET students.

- **Quantitative Outcomes:**

- 100% of participants successfully completed the two-week internship, gaining practical experience in their vocational field.
- A lot of students reported an increased understanding of EU mobility opportunities and workers' rights within the EU.
- Most expressed higher confidence in their ability to work in an international setting.
- Most improved their English communication skills, particularly in professional and intercultural contexts.

- **Qualitative Feedback:**

- Students highlighted the value of hands-on learning, stating that the internship enhanced their employability skills and prepared them for international careers.
- Many participants noted a stronger sense of European identity, appreciating the cultural diversity and professional exchange within the EU.
- Teachers observed increased motivation and adaptability in students, particularly in problem-solving, teamwork, and professional behavior.

## Overall Impact:

The mobility experience reinforced EU citizenship education by allowing students to experience different labour market policies in action, engage with other European cultures, and develop practical, transferable skills that will benefit their future careers.

- Student/Teacher Feedback:

Teachers observed greater student motivation, improved communication skills, and enhanced adaptability upon their return. They noted that the experience helped students connect EU policies to real-world employment scenarios, making EU Citizenship Education more relevant and engaging. The program was seen as highly beneficial for both professional and personal growth.

- Evidence of Success:

N/A

## 5. Inclusivity and Accessibility (

### How Inclusive is the Practice?

It was highly inclusive, ensuring equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their economic, social, or cultural background. There was no discrimination in the selection process, and students from diverse backgrounds—including those from disadvantaged economic situations, underrepresented social groups, and foreign backgrounds—were almost equally represented.

## 6. Alignment with EU Citizenship Education Goals

### Relevance to EU Citizenship Topics:

The KA1 mobility in Krakow for two weeks, including an internship, significantly enhances students' understanding of EU citizenship topics by providing firsthand experience of European cooperation, mobility rights, and cultural exchange. Through their internship in a Polish company, students gain insights into a different labour market, workers' rights, and professional mobility within the European Union, aligning with EU policies on free movement and employment opportunities.

Additionally, immersion in Krakow's cultural and social environment promotes European identity and intercultural understanding, helping students appreciate EU values such as diversity, inclusion, and democratic participation. Engaging with peers, mentors, and professionals from different backgrounds reinforces their knowledge of EU institutions, policies on labour mobility, and the role of vocational education in strengthening the European workforce.

This experience directly supports EU Citizenship Education by enabling students to experience EU rights in practice, understand their role as active European citizens, and see the benefits of EU-funded mobility initiatives firsthand.

### **Policy Alignment:**

The KA1 mobility in Krakow aligns closely with both EU and national education policies, supporting key objectives in vocational education, mobility, and EU citizenship development.

At the EU level, the practice aligns with:

- The European Education Area (EEA), promoting student mobility and cooperation across EU member states.
- The Erasmus+ Program objectives, which emphasize learning mobility, intercultural exchange, and skills development.
- The European Pillar of Social Rights, reinforcing equal access to education, professional training, and employment opportunities within the EU.

At the national level (Greece), the program aligns with:

- Law 4763/2020 on Vocational Education and Training (VET), which prioritizes international mobility and cooperation to enhance employability.
- The Greek National Strategy for Lifelong Learning, which promotes practical, work-based learning experiences in EU contexts.
- Greek Ministry of Education policies encouraging participation in Erasmus+ and cross-border collaborations to strengthen VET education.

By integrating practical work experience in another EU country, the KA1 mobility contributes to bridging the gap between education and the labour market, in line with

both European and Greek policy priorities on youth employability, skills development, and active European citizenship.

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## 7. Additional Notes or Recommendations

- **Challenges in Implementation:** Too much bureaucracy, especially regarding the organizational part of the activity
- **Suggestions for Improvement:** Simplification of some procedures
- **Additional Resources (if applicable):** <https://iek-akmi.edu.gr/erasmus-vet-mobilities/>