



An
introduction

experiencingeurope

General information

BACKGROUND

Due to recent events and developments, the European Union has been facing enormous criticism, in particular for its perceived bureaucracy and aloofness. As a result, the countless benefits arising from a united Europe have been suppressed by frustration and isolation tendencies. Nationalistic parties are gaining popularity, seeking to close national borders and pleading to exit the union. Underprivileged youths often lack access to opportunities given by a united Europe, leading to increased anti-European sentiment within this group.

International corporations – among others – can counteract these trends by helping to maintain a stable and united Europe where businesses are not limited by borders and cultural reservations, but benefit from international trade and collaboration.

WHAT IS THE “EXPERIENCING EUROPE” INITIATIVE?

“*Experiencing Europe*” addresses these issues by reaching out to those who have little access to the opportunities offered by a united Europe. In cooperation with *Bundesagentur für Arbeit*, young unemployed adults aged 18 to 25 are encouraged to join the European project. They will have the chance to travel the within the continent and acquire international work experience by completing two short consecutive internships in two different European countries. This allows them to experience the shared values of European integration first hand.

WHAT DOES “EXPERIENCING EUROPE” OFFER PARTICIPANTS?

In just four weeks, the programme offers an insight into two cultures and two different professional environments through two 14-day long internships with different companies. “*Experiencing Europe*” helps young individuals develop both professional and personal skills.

In addition to the internships, participants will attend educational and social activities organised by the hosts. This will give them the opportunity to build a cross-national and cross-cultural network.

To ensure a sustainable impact of the programme for the participants, Caritas and Deutsche Angestellten Akademie (DAA) as two nationwide operating *Bildungsträger*¹ (educational institutions) will provide an extensive preparation for the participants as well as guidance during and after the internship programme.

In return, the participants agree to blog about their internship on social media and join events back home where they can share their stories. Strong media coverage is a desired outcome of the programme in order to spread the experiences beyond the participants and people involved in the process to all the people profiting from a united Europe. The participating companies are encouraged to share the experience themselves and support the media engagement.

¹ Nationale Bildungsträger are nation-wide operating institutions that are financed through the Bundesagentur für Arbeit and focus on the training and development of individuals

Organisation

HOW IS THE PROGRAMME ORGANISED AND SET UP?

The organisation of the programme is built around three entities.

Through a selection process, the *Bundesagentur für Arbeit*, in cooperation with the participating *Bildungsträger* Caritas and DAA (Deutsche Angestellten Akademie) provides profiles of potential candidates, which are shared with participating companies.

Each *company* will have to set up a dedicated project team to implement the project within their organisation. Continental and Oliver Wyman are volunteering to provide the blueprint as well as an elaborate Factbook on the set-up of the pilot project „*We l.o.v.e. (live our values everyday) Europe*“. The project managers of all company project teams will have the chance to come together and share their experiences as part of the *Core Team Experiencing Europe*.

The *host locations* of the companies provide internship spots and accommodations in host families as well as local contact persons for the interns.

The *companies* are free to craft their own internship programmes under the umbrella of “*Experiencing Europe*” or they can follow the proposals provided.

The *Bildungsträger* will act as a link between the *Bundesagentur für Arbeit*, the participating *companies* and the *participants* and coordinate between the parties. They extensively prepare the participants (e.g. through intercultural lessons and language courses) and support the companies in case of potentially upcoming issues during the internships. Succeeding the internships, the *Bildungsträger* will support the participants through the next steps on their way to finding a permanent occupation.

WHO BEARS THE COSTS FOR THE PROGRAMME?

The Bundesagentur für Arbeit bears the costs related to the selection process as well as travel costs to the host institutions (e.g. interrail tickets). Prerequisite is that the aim of the project is to initiate an employment relationship with social security benefits. The participating companies are committed to defray the costs for hosting the participants and providing them with food during their stay. They also account for contract-related costs such as insurances and communication costs.

Preparation and follow-up of the participants will be covered by the national *Bildungsträger* without any additional costs for the companies.

WHAT DO COMPANIES NEED TO DO TO JOIN THE PROGRAMME?

Any corporation that is willing to offer internships or support the programme in another way can participate.

If you are interested in joining the programme, engage with your European offices or plants and get their interest and support to identify how many internships you can offer and where.

We are happy to share our experiences in setting up the programme. **Contact details can be found at the bottom of this introduction.**

Our life in freedom and prosperity cannot be taken for granted. It is our responsibility to shape Europe's future. Join this exciting initiative and allow young people to take part in the European experience!

WHAT ARE THE EXPERIENCES FROM THE "WE L.O.V.E. EUROPE" PILOT?

The pilot project successfully took place in June. Eleven participants from the Hanover area were able to travel to Continental locations in France, Belgium, Romania, Great Britain, Portugal, Hungary and Italy, each of them visiting two different countries. This way, both they and the people involved in the host locations were able to share their experiences. Eight out of ten local buddies even stated that they will stay in touch with participants beyond the initiative.

Some of the participants received excellent feedback as they showed high motivation and discipline as well as social and cultural integrity. They will therefore have the chance to participate in future apprenticeship application processes at Continental.

The people involved were also asked to provide anonymous feedback, some excerpts can be found below:

"The possibility to try out new jobs and at the same time get to know new cultures and make new friends was a great experience"

Participant

"I am now a little bit more independent, and perhaps there will be a chance of an apprenticeship for me in the future which would be a huge step"

Participant

"I would definitely recommend the two interns we had for a longer internship at a German Conti location with the possibility of a future position at Conti"

Internship responsible

"Our intern interacted with all the family members in a positive way. He was communicative and willing to help wherever possible and demonstrated a very strong integration capacity"

Host family

"I will stay in contact with my candidates because we had a great time here and I am curious what will happen with them in the future"

Local buddy

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR THE GERMAN ROLL-OUT?

A broad range of companies will be invited to join the “*Experiencing Europe*” initiative.

For companies that participate in the first wave of “*Experiencing Europe*”, the timeline will be as follows:

Each *company* can set up its own programme from August to October. In order for the *Bildungsträger* to be able to plan accordingly, a commitment towards the participation of a company is needed by the end of August. Companies will then have until the middle of October to determine how many internship spots they want to offer. Interested internship candidates will be able to apply simultaneously after the application processes for permanent apprenticeship positions are closed. The preparation of the internships with the *Bildungsträger* will start in September. Therefore, selected participants will be able to begin their journey to the host locations from November onwards.

WHO IS ALREADY PARTICIPATING?



Programme design and pilot project
"We I.o.v.e. Europe" (June 2017)



Supporting "Experiencing Europe" central
coordination and on-boarding of new corporations



Supporting "Experiencing Europe"
communication strategy



Selection of candidates



Participating company



Participating Bildungsträger



Participating Bildungsträger

Interested in participating? For further information, please contact our

Core Team Experiencing Europe

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