

## TRANSNATIONAL STUDY ON MENTORING NEEDS



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## FOREWORD

The project MENTOR, co-funded by the European Union under the Erasmus+ program, is coordinated by ADICE (France) and implemented in partnership with ASPEm (Italy), VCS (Macedonia), PiYA (Türkiye) and Curba de Cultura (Romania).



*1 This project is co-financed by the European Union. The views and opinions expressed are, however, those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the funding authority can be held responsible for this.*

### PARTNER 1: ADICE

Founded in 1999 in Roubaix, ADICE promotes equal opportunity by facilitating international mobility for those with fewer opportunities. Through various French and European mobility programmes, ADICE aims to develop the social, vocational, and intercultural skills of participants, ultimately enhancing their employability.

### PARTNER 2: ASPEm

Based in Cantù, Lombardia, ASPEm has been involved in international cooperation, humanitarian aid, sustainable development, global citizenship education, youth mobility, and volunteering since 1979. The organization believes in the transformative power of volunteering for personal and professional development, fostering cultural bridges and active citizenship.

### PARTNER 3: VCS

Established in 2006, the organization has implemented over 70 projects under the «YiA» and «Erasmus+» programmes, as well as initiatives funded by local, national, and international donors. Focused on connecting, engaging, and empowering young people through volunteering, VCS promotes European values and offers diverse opportunities for youth participation.

### PARTNER 4: PIYA

Founded in 2014 in Izmir, PiYA aims to develop knowledge, skills, positive attitudes, and behaviors among Turkish youth. The association aligns its activities with decisions from the European Union, Council of Europe, and the United Nations, emphasizing universal sensitivities, human rights, participation, and environmental issues. PiYA prioritises youth work.

### PARTNER 5: CURBA DE CULTURA

NGO based in Izvoarele, committed to non-formal learning, culture, and community engagement. With a focus on improving education levels and community engagement in rural environments, the organization operates as a pilot initiative addressing issues of rural development, educational access, and opportunities for youth. Curba de Cultură utilizes non-formal education to complement the formal educational system for young people in Romania.

# INTRODUCTION

## CONTEXT

This study is carried out within the project Mentors' engagement through Training and Oriented Results (MENTOR). The MENTOR project aims to strengthen the capacity of youth organisations by providing them with tools to facilitate the implementation of mentoring activities within their projects. Given the growth of mentoring in Europe and the fact that mobility projects are seen as a real non-formal education opportunity, it is important to assess the impact of mentoring on international mobility participants.

The specific objectives of the project are:

- to valorise existing needs and expectations on mentoring in the youth sector;
- to create a pedagogical tool for youth organisations/professionals to implement mentoring activities in their own organisation;
- to develop a training course to train and engage future mentors;
- to enable mentors and mentees to follow the progress of their pair.

The first beneficiaries of the MENTOR project are the future mobility participants (mentees), who will benefit from better support throughout their mobility project through mentoring. In addition, the project is aimed at former international mobility participants and/or any person who has already lived abroad for at least 3 months and who wishes to enter into a mentoring relationship with future participants. Finally, youth workers will benefit from the tools developed during the project to help them implement a mentoring system in their own organisation.

## RELEVANCE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

In 2023, the unemployment rate for young people (under 25) in Europe was around 14,7%, compared with an average rate of



## Glossary

### MENTORING

According to the European Mentoring & Coaching Council (EMCC) [1], mentoring is a learning relationship, involving the sharing of skills, knowledge, and expertise between a mentor and mentee through developmental conversations, experience sharing, and role modelling. The relationship may cover a wide variety of contexts and is an inclusive two-way partnership for mutual learning that values differences.

### MENTOR

A mentor is a trusted and experienced supervisor or advisor who by mutual consent takes an active interest in the development and education of a younger, less experienced individual (Crosby, F. J., 1999) [2].

### MENTEE

A mentee is a person who realises her/his ambitions with the support of someone who has travelled a similar path before. Due to the mentoring relationship, mentees recognise their opportunities and learn not to give up. [3]

7.4% in the United States and 4% in Japan. Disparities within European Union countries are observed, with rates as low as 4.8% in Germany and as high as more than 27% in Spain [4]. These differences are the result of contextual factors between countries, regions and social classes. To tackle these disparities, a wide variety of initiatives are being initiated by stakeholders from the youth sector across multiple levels. International mobility has been widely acknowledged as an appropriate response to this issue and is being supported by numerous institutions.

Yet, mobility programs also face challenges which arise from the socio-economic factors and other hindrances produced by modern societies. In spite of decades of international mobility programs implemented across the EU, participants experiencing difficulties in their access to employment, have social and/or economic struggles, and who may be subject to discrimination are still less inclined to participate in international mobility opportunities.

To tackle these challenges, **Mentorship has been acknowledged as an appropriate response.** Mentoring programs have been progressively adopted across Europe and are widely supported by the EU<sup>2</sup>. Mentoring is promoted as an initiative that enables young people to be better supported in their development until the realisation of their future project, removing potential obstacles. By benefitting from a personalised support, young people are given the chance to overcome socio-economic or personal challenges to enter the labour market.

However, despite the growth of mentoring in Europe and its effectiveness in certain areas, it is not a method that is systematically implemented, especially when it comes to international mobility. Motivations to implement or to be involved in a mentoring programme varies widely between populations and countries. There remains therefore a need to assess the key motivations and needs of people who are inclined to take part in a mentoring programme, and understand the

factors that enable mentors and mentees to ensure a successful experience in the context of an international mobility.

Through this study, the MENTOR project aims **to understand the needs and expectations of mentors and mentees in order to develop a mentoring system adapted to international mobility experiences at the EU level.** The objective of the project is to give all the keys to youth professionals to inform, train and prepare former mobility participants and all those who have already lived abroad and want to get involved, to become mentors. By supporting future mobility participants, mentors will make European mobility more accessible and allay the fears of participants with a specific focus on the most disadvantaged young people and those who have never had the opportunity to go abroad.



**This study provides the elements for the development of subsequent products and activities, which will be implemented within the MENTOR project:**

- **Guide for youth professionals** to engage them to contribute to the implementation of a mentoring programme on a European scale, in line with the ambitions of the European Commission and the Erasmus+ programme;
- **Training for future Mentors:** Mentors, either former international mobility participants or people who have already lived abroad for at least 3 months, will be trained in their role as mentors and provided with training and tools

<sup>2</sup> For example, during the European Mentoring Summit of 2022, <https://mentoringsummit.eu/>

to enable them to have all the necessary keys for their role as mentor and properly accompany mentees (future international mobility participants);

- **Mentors & Mentees Portfolio** for them to be informed and guided on how to accompany or to be accompanied.

This transnational study collects and analyses the responses obtained with the dissemination in **France, Italy, Macedonia, Türkiye and Romania** of two questionnaires which had the objective of investigating the existing needs and expectations regarding mentoring in the youth sector.

Thanks to the contribution of the survey participants, the project partners have the possibility to identify effective strategies and tools that will be used to create a guide for youth workers to successfully implement mentoring activities within their organisations.

The transnational study on mentoring will be disseminated not only in the five partner countries but **throughout the European Union**, with the intent of allowing extensive dissemination of the mentoring needs of youth professionals in relation to international mobility projects.

All tools developed will be open source, freely available for consultation and download via the partners' websites in English, French, Italian, Macedonian, Turkish and Romanian.

## THEORETICAL REFERENCES OF THE SURVEY

To develop a substantial and effective mentoring programme, the consortium relied on two main theories to enable positive and healthy youth development. It intends to use these theories as a basis for the development of the model. The concept of mentoring has always existed and is an integral part of everyone's positive personal development. The origin of the word «mentor» comes from Homer's *Odyssey* [5], where one of the first mentoring relationships is highlighted: the development of a young person towards adulthood through the guidance of another. Mentor, the name of the transitional figure, is the term used to describe a person who plays an important role in the personal development of a young person.

**Decades of research have shown that the positive development of young people is linked to their successful transition to adulthood.** This is notably brought up by the theory of youth development, which assesses that an effective development comes with the accumulation of numerous factors such as the creation of a positive environment that supports growth, provides incentives to take responsibility for development and supports to develop skills needed to deal with the challenges, issues and decisions that may be faced up along the way. Successful youth development can therefore be achieved through the support of adults, significant people who play a mentoring role to support the youngsters along with their experience. According to R. Lerner and al.(2009) [6], the theory of youth development identifies 5 characteristics (5Cs) that define the behaviours that indicate healthy youth development: **competence, confidence, character, connection and caring.**

Through the observation of these characteristics in young adults, it is conceivable to discern the advantages stemming from positive development during the learning process.



Another significant theory regarding youth development is the **Social Learning Theory**, formulated by the Canadian psychologist A. Bandura (1977) [7]. This theory posits that the process of observing others and assimilating these observations into one's own behaviour can exert a positive influence on personal development. Individuals can thus advance their development by engaging in the observational, imitative, and modelling practices of their peers or mentors.

Based on these approaches, mentoring comes as a complement to the already existing figures important within an international mobility project. **The relationship between the mentor and mentee is meant to create a framework of trust and support within which young people can develop positively.**

During international mobility, participants are often supervised by tutors, professionals or project managers. The latter provides the framework needed to ensure that the participant's placements run smoothly and that he or she grows personally and professionally throughout the project. Mentors should therefore come as the final component that should enable mentees to overcome any integrated challenges ungraspable by other actors of the international mobility project.

To adapt the mentoring programme to the context of international mobility, the 5Cs will be used as a methodological basis that Men-

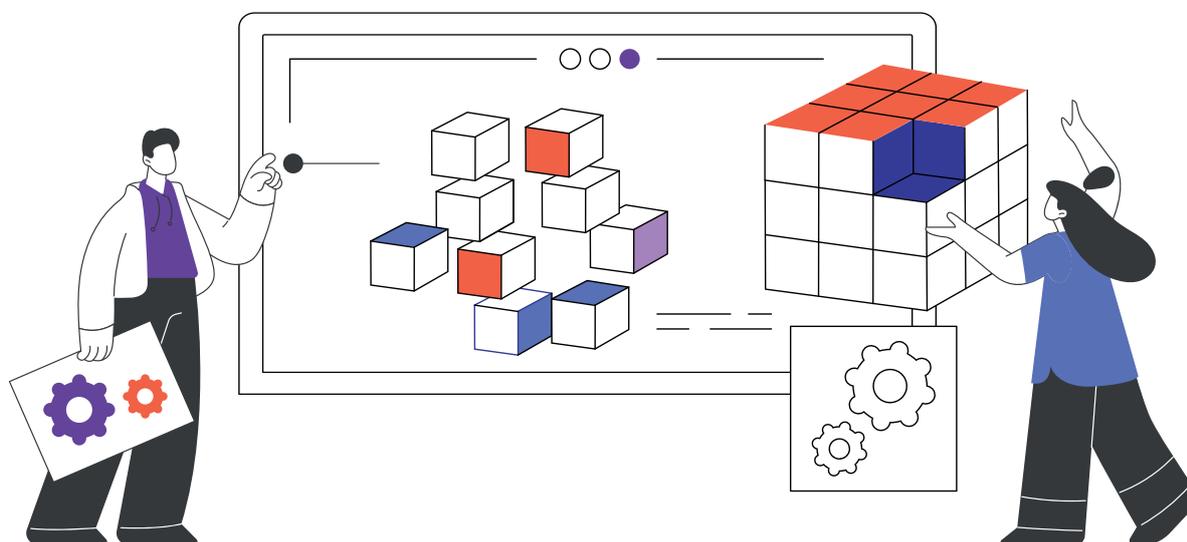
tors can rely upon to ensure that all aspects of the youth development are addressed during the mobility period of the participants. The Social learning theory fuels this approach by providing the theoretical and behavioural methods that mentors should adopt to provide a sensitive and meaningful support to the participants.

**To that end, the transnational study will particularly address the role of the 5Cs highlighted by the Youth Development theory and Social Learning theories to assess their importance during an international mobility and frame the mentoring programme accordingly.**

By gathering the feedback of mentors and mentees, the MENTOR consortium expects that the study will participate in the elaboration of a mentoring programme that is adapted and provides the necessary tools to youth professionals across the EU to implement their own programme.

The results of the study will support the consortium to develop mentoring processes for youth professionals, that will help participants to adapt their behaviour and deal with the daily challenges that they may face during their international mobility.

Secondly, the support provided to the participant through the sharing of past experiences and constructive advice encourages the participant to introspect and analyse what is good to keep, reproduce or not.





## ORGANISATION OF THE SURVEY

To create this study, the consortium's partners have produced a survey to collect data that have been analysed to better understand mentoring needs in Europe. The survey was carried out between June and July 2023 and the last review of the study was completed in September 2023.

The project partners participated in the development of the questionnaires, which focused on the project objectives and the information needed for the subsequent activities and the construction of the planned tools. The aim of the questionnaires was to collect information and data about mentors and mentees in the field of international mobility projects.

As all 5 participating organisations have experience in international mobility as sending and/or hosting organisations, they were able to disseminate the questionnaires through their own channels and networks as a large majority of their beneficiaries are young people (young people who have participated in voluntary projects, including international ones, or who have taken part in active citizenship activities)

On the basis of the proposed methodology, the project partners carried out research to define the subject of the study and to develop a questionnaire adapted to the daily work of **youth professionals across Europe working in the youth sector, and particularly international mobility.**

To ensure that the study remained focused on the needs of mentors and mentees, the project partners identified **six themes related to the daily practice of mentoring.**

The following framework was collectively evaluated based on each project partner's experience and in-depth research to assess the relevance of a discussion on each selected topic.

### PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

To collect relevant results, information was first gathered on the respondents to better frame their answers. (e.g. specific types of previous international mobility experiences, age groups and their motivations for becoming a mentor).

### ROLE

As emphasised in the Youth development theory, the importance of supportive adults in fostering positive development is crucial, and mentors should play such a role in this regard. The significance of role models in shaping behaviour through observation and imitation is also emphasised in the Social learning theory.

**Defining the roles of mentors and mentees provides clarity and structure, ensuring that the mentoring process aligns with the intended developmental outcomes.** This clear demarcation aids in establishing a framework wherein mentors can effectively guide and mentees can actively engage in the learning process.

### COMPETENCIES

**Both theories underscore the development of competencies as a key aspect of positive youth development.** The Youth Development Theory identifies competence as one of the 5Cs crucial for healthy development.

By addressing competencies within the mentoring program, mentors can assist mentees in acquiring and refining skills necessary for personal and professional growth during and after their mobility period.

This aligns with the Social Learning Theory, which posits that individuals enhance their

development by observing and modelling the behaviour of competent others. **Thus, an emphasis on competencies within the mentoring context serves as a catalyst for the holistic development of the mentees.**

### RESPONSIBILITIES AND LIMITS

The establishment of clearly defined responsibilities and limits is informed by both theoretical perspectives. The Youth Development Theory advocates for the creation of a positive environment that supports growth, encourages responsibility, and equips individuals with the skills to navigate challenges. **By delineating responsibilities and acknowledging limits within the mentoring relationship, the programme adheres to the principles of positive development.** Moreover, the Social Learning Theory emphasizes the importance of setting boundaries and expectations to guide behaviour. Addressing responsibilities and limits ensures ethical and effective mentorship, fostering an environment conducive to optimal developmental outcomes.

### MATCHING

The concept of matching is imperative for the successful implementation of a mentoring program. Both theories underscore the influence of significant adult figures in observational learning, suggesting that effective matching facilitates the modelling of positive and healthy behaviours.

By aligning mentors and mentees based on shared interests, goals, and experiences, the programme optimises **the potential for meaningful connections and impactful mentorship, contributing to the overall positive development of the participants.**

### OTHER RELEVANT ELEMENTS

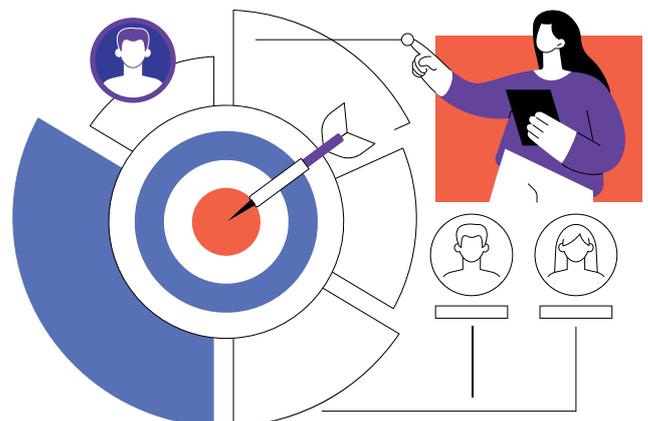
Understanding how prospective mentors plan to make use of the mentoring experience provides an opportunity to further **explore how the mentoring experience can be made as formative and useful as possible in the professional but also in the personal sphere.**

## TARGET GROUP

The study is designed **to support youth professionals working at the EU level.** It is designed to support them to implement relevant mentoring activities by providing an overview of what is needed and expected of both mentors and mentees. This target group includes a wide variety of profiles with different skills, competences and responsibilities: **youth workers (such as project managers, directors, administration), teachers, trainers, educators and other professionals.** They are essentially professionals responsible for implementing youth development programmes in different contexts, such as leisure centres, youth information centres, job placement organisations, etc.

Youth workers play an important role in the personal development of young people and are therefore an important target group for the study. Firstly, they are key players in the educational support of young people. Whether they are teachers or job placement counsellors, they accompany young people on their journey. Secondly, they can influence their personal development and the achievement of their goals.

Through this study, the MENTOR project aims to equip them **to have a significant impact on young people and support them in their professional and personal development.**



## MENTORING INSIGHTS DURING INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY IN EUROPE

The questionnaires were created using on-line tools to facilitate their distribution. They were translated into the five languages of the partner countries (French, Italian, Macedonian, Romanian and Turkish) so that respondents could complete them in their own language.

*55 people responded to the questionnaire directed at mentors. The respondents were people who had already participated in international mobility projects and professionals, who would like to be mentors in the future:*

**12** from **France**  
(21,82% of respondents)

**11** from **Italy**  
(20% of respondents)

**10** from **Macedonia**  
(18,18% of respondents)

**9** from **Romania**  
(16,36% of respondents)

**13** from **Türkiye**  
(23,64% of respondents)

*104 people filled in the questionnaire aimed at mentees. The respondents were young people who have participated or wish to participate in international mobility experiences.*

**47** from **France**  
(45,19% of respondents)

**15** from **Italy**  
(14,42% of respondents)

**14** from **Macedonia**  
(13,46% of respondents)

**10** from **Romania**  
(9,62% of respondents)

**18** from **Türkiye**  
(17,31% of respondents)

The data collected through the questionnaires was analysed with the collaboration of all partners. To this end, the results from each country were cross-referenced to provide an extensive overview of the responses. In the course of the analysis, the hypotheses formulated during the theoretical phase were verified and further reflections and considerations were developed, which are included in the study.

**159 RESPONDENTS FROM A VARIETY OF MENTORS AND MENTEES ACROSS FIVE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

The survey conducted among mentors and mentees already involved in a mentoring relationship received 159 responses from five countries (France, Italy, Macedonia, Türkiye and Romania). The sample size being significant enough to represent faithfully mentees and mentors, the consortium is able to draw relevant conclusions from the collected data.

The study conducted from the survey aims to understand the needs of mentoring in Europe for an international mobility project.

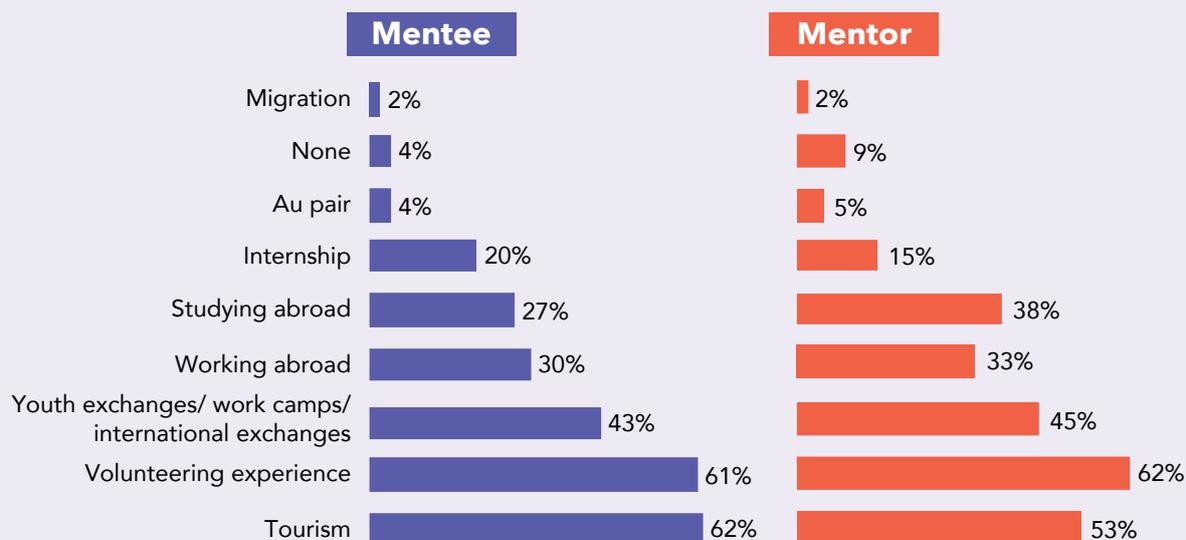
Regarding the age group of participants, there is a predominance of respondents between 21 and 23 years old. For the mentor group, another significant number of respondents was 30 years old and older. For mentees however, the first larger number of respondents was situated between 24 and 26 years old.

This information is relevant to acknowledge as the project partners' intention is to emphasize mentoring for youth workers as a relationship between two young people.

## AGE GROUP



## SCOPE OF PREVIOUS INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY



The majority of the mentors (62%) had already had a previous volunteering experience.

More than half of the respondents underwent international mobility through tourism, and 45% through youth exchanges, work camps or international exchanges.

Another significant number of mentors answered studying and working abroad as their international experience (38% and 33%).

Mentees mostly experienced an international mobility experience through tourism (62%) and secondly through a volunteering experience (61%).

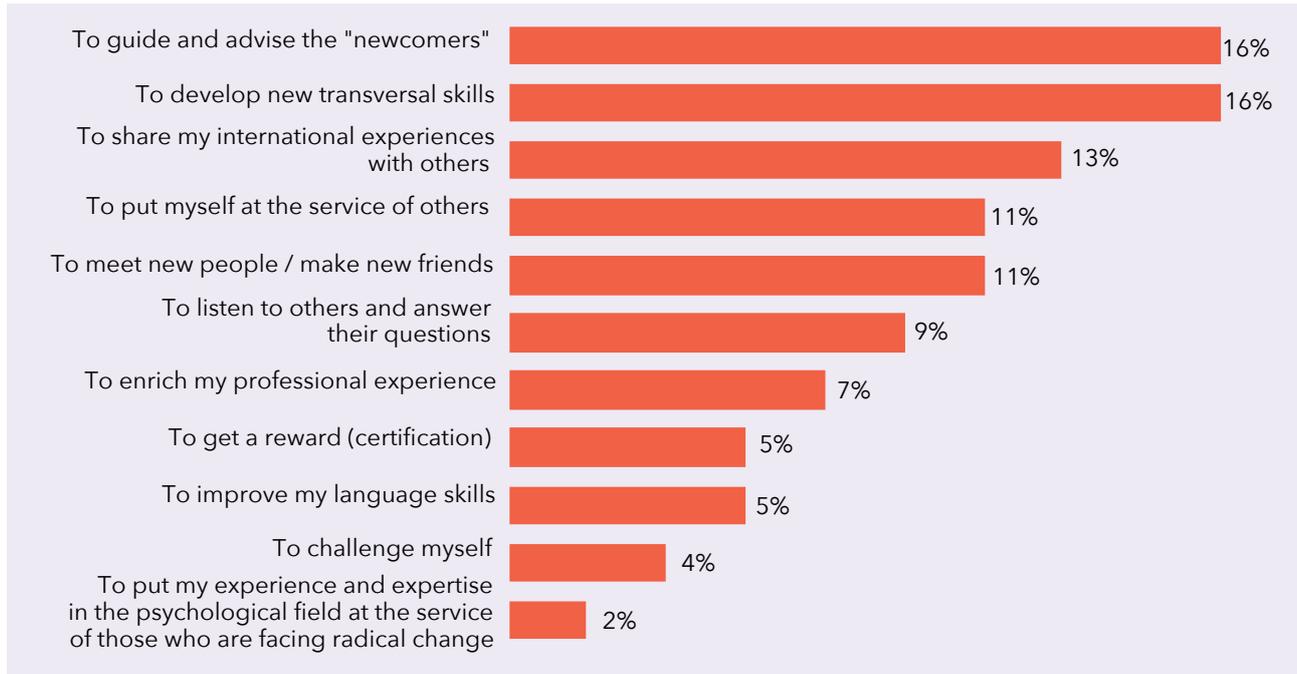
A minority of respondents took part in youth exchanges, work camps or international exchanges (43%).

Moreover, a fair few of mentees worked (30%), studied (27%), or had an internship (20%) abroad.

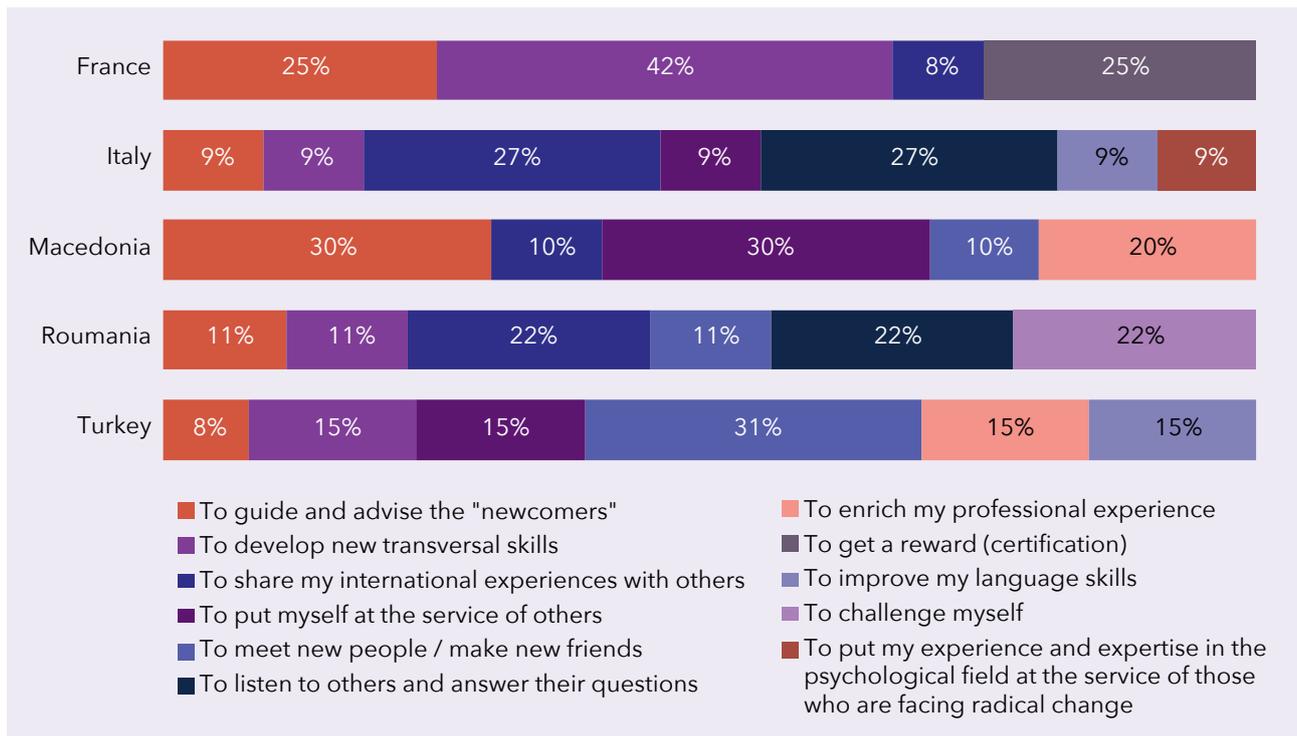
## PERCEPTION OF MENTORS' ROLE AND COMPETENCIES

16% of mentors' main motivations are to guide & advise the newcomers and to develop new transversal skills.

### MENTOR'S MOTIVATION



### MENTOR'S MOTIVATION PER COUNTRY



First and foremost, the majority of mentors pointed out that their main motivations to become a mentor are to guide and advise the newcomers (16%) and to develop new transversal skills (16%).

Taking into account country-specific results, differences in motivation are observed. 42% of mentors in France stated that developing new transversal skills is their main motivation to become a mentor while 31% of mentors in Türkiye said that meeting new people/ making new friends is their motivation. In Italy, the main motivations to become a mentor are listening to others and answering their questions (27%)

and sharing their international experiences with others (27%).

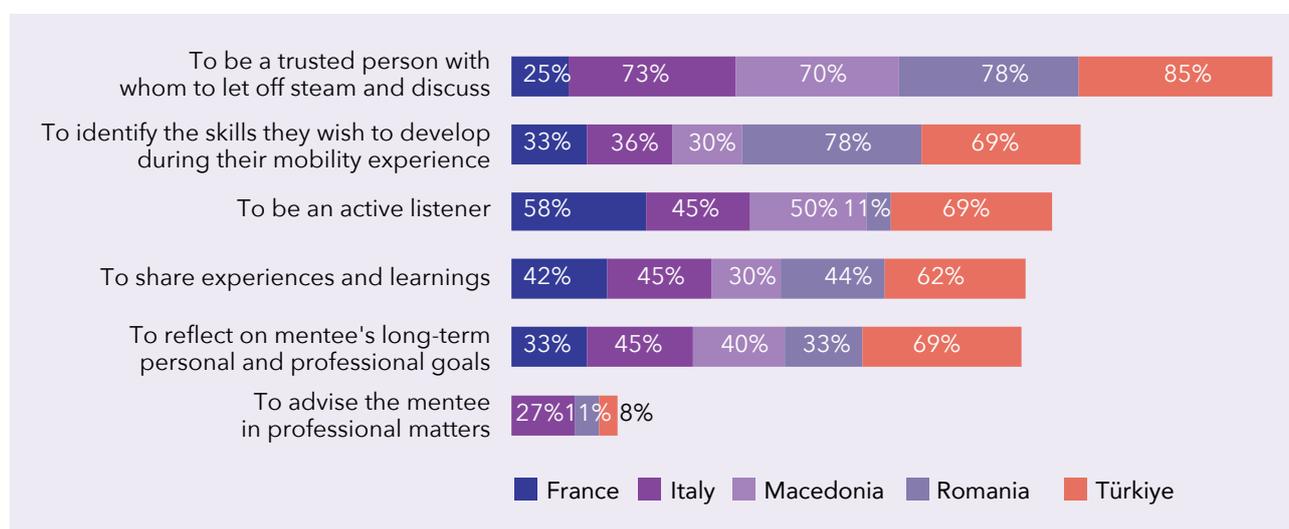
In Macedonia, mentors pointed out both guiding and advising the newcomers (30%) and putting themselves at the service of others (30%) as their main motivations. Lastly, challenging themselves (22%), listening to others and answering questions (22%), and sharing their international experiences with others (22%) are the main motivations to become a mentor for Romanians.

These disparities in results should be considered when drafting a mentorship programme satisfying all mentors.

## MENTOR'S ROLE



## MENTOR'S ROLE PER COUNTRY

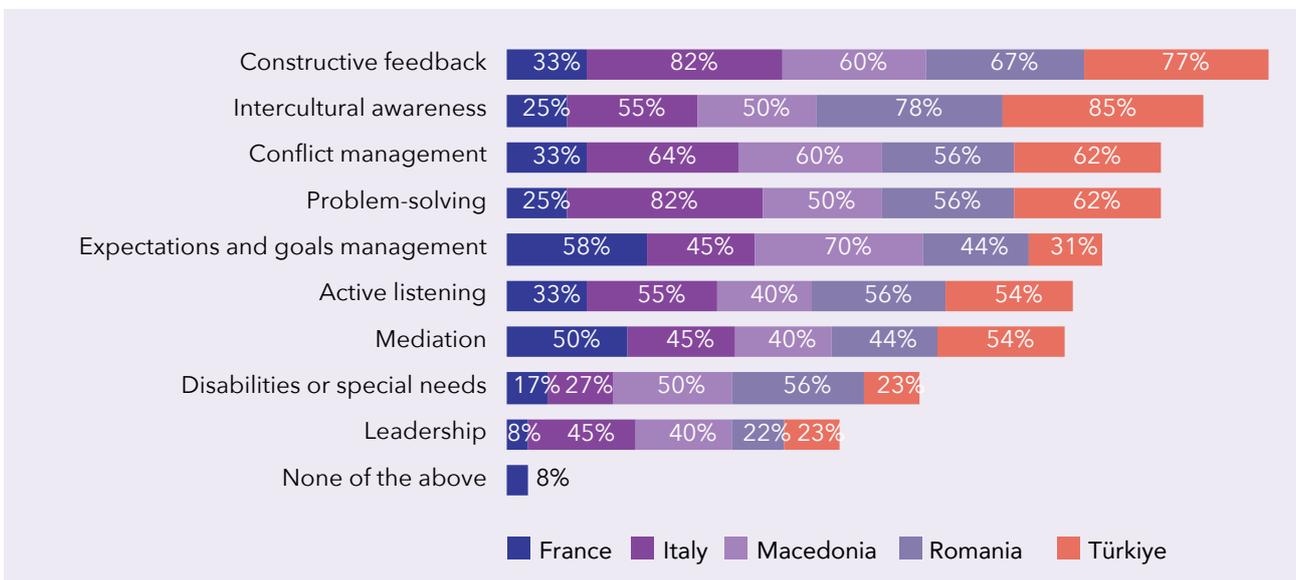
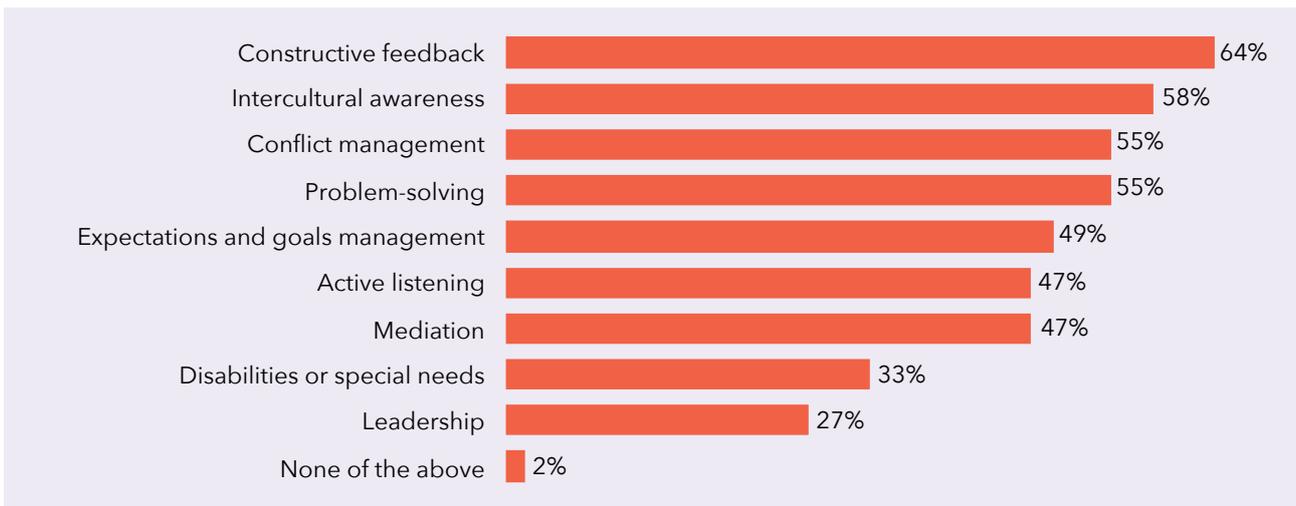


The main role that mentors should have has been identified by respondents as being a trusted person with whom to let off steam and discuss (65%). This role is particularly emphasized by results from Türkiye (85%), Italia (73%), Romania (78%) and Macedonia (70%), as it is their most chosen answer.

It is not the case for France as the main role of a mentor chosen is to be an active listener (58%).

Very few respondents (9%) replied that advising the mentees for their future professional projects is the role of a mentor. It shows that only a handful of the mentors were considering that mentoring programmes could also include providing support on a professional level. This particular approach to mentoring is quite telling of how mentoring programmes have been perceived in the international mobility sector, and the results from mentees will later demonstrate that there is indeed a disparity between both profiles on that matter.

### Mentor training needs before starting their mentoring role

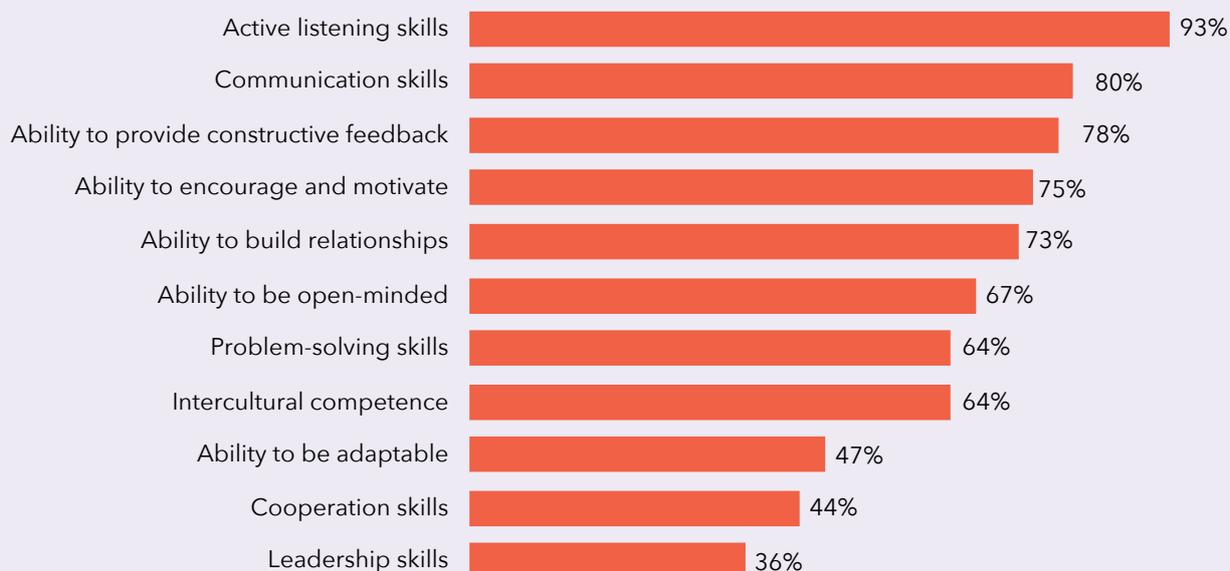


Although most of the topics suggested were selected when asking mentors what they would like to be trained in before they started their mentoring role, according to the majority of the respondents, it is necessary to be trained on the ability to give constructive feedback (64%), intercultural awareness (58%), conflict management (55%) and problem solving (55%). The least chosen answer was

the necessity of leadership training with only 27% of votes.

Training subjects are a significant feature influencing the quality and relevancy of a mentoring programme. Country specific variations and most highlighted training programmes should be considered when designing and implementing a mentoring programme.

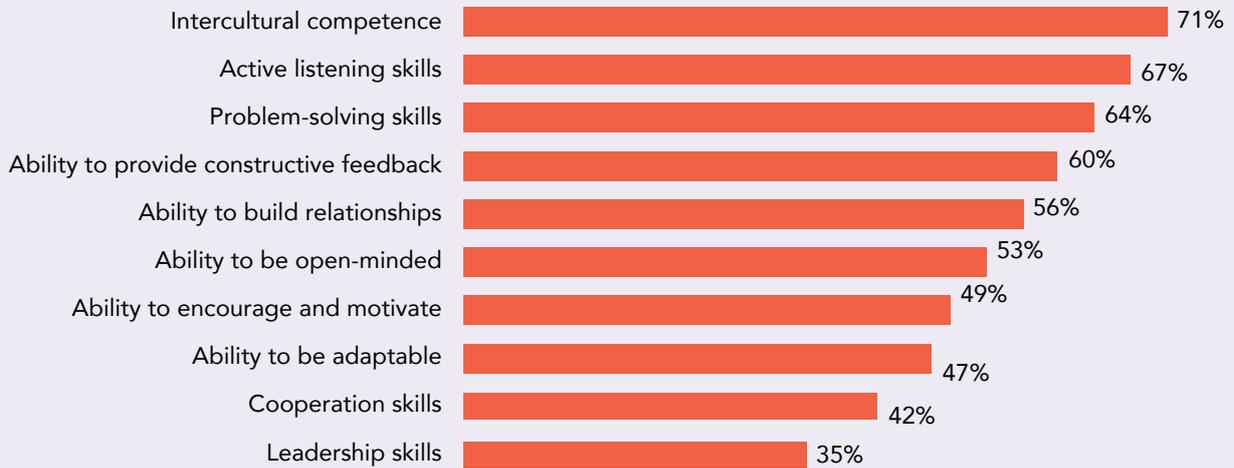
**93% of mentors think that they need to have active listening skills to be a good mentor.**



According to the global results, 93% of mentors said that 'active listening' is a skill mentors need to be a good mentor. In order, 80% of mentors chose 'communication skills' as another skill they need. This was followed by 'ability to give constructive feedback' at 78%.

75% of mentors chose 'ability to encourage and motivate' and 73% chose 'ability to build a relationship'. Leadership was the skill least selected by mentors as necessary to be a good mentor, with 36% selecting it.

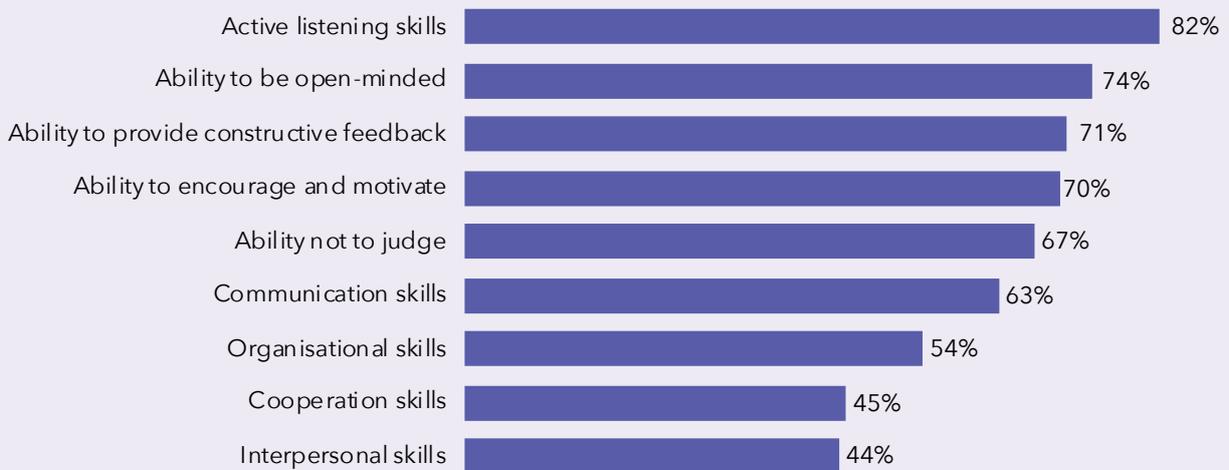
**71% of mentors think that they can develop their intercultural competence while being a mentor.**



While supporting a mentee, mentors want to develop in priority their soft skills such as intercultural competences (71%), active listening skills (67%) and problem-solving skills (64%). In addition, leadership competences are the least developed skills while mentoring (35%) according to mentors, as it is the answer with the lower rate of votes.

These results suggest that mentors emphasis on skills that have a pragmatic approach to mentoring: providing feedback to support the mentee upon arrival, problem-solving whenever needed, support for the local integration, with members of the community.

**Mentees expect their mentors to be active listeners and open-minded.**



The survey results reveal that mentees expect from mentors to have mostly active listening skills (82%) and the ability to be open-minded (74%) over an extensive list of competences.

These findings support perceptions of mentors' roles and the skills they require for a successful relationship.

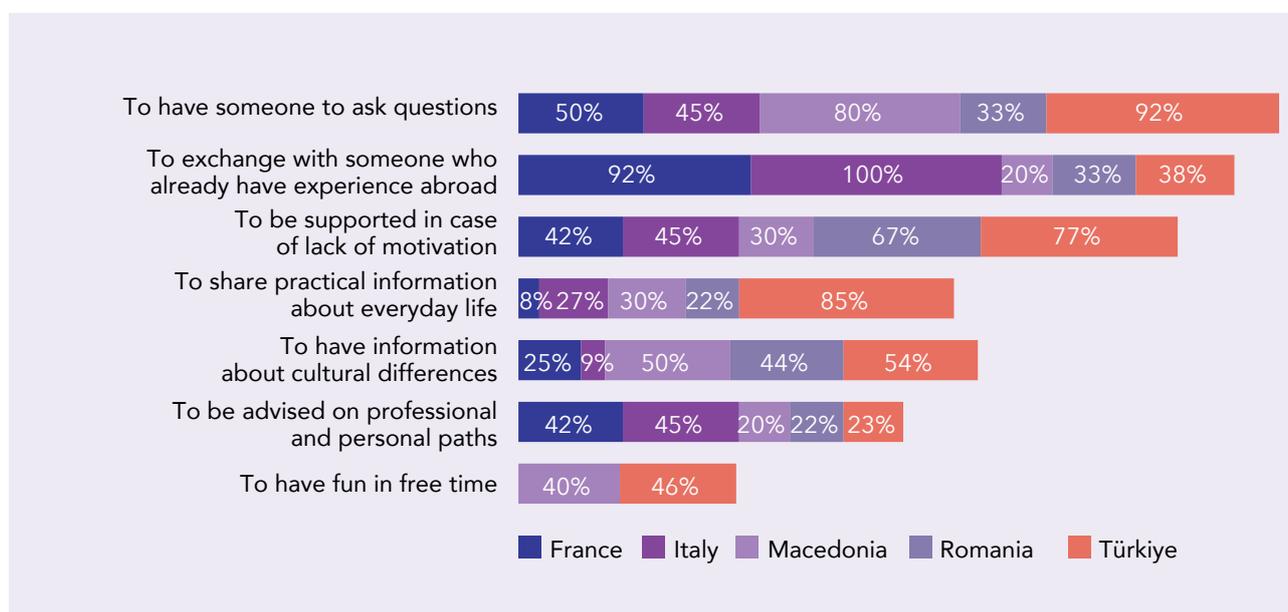
## NEEDS

According to the mentors, mentees have 3 main needs

### NEEDS OF MENTEES



### NEEDS OF MENTEES BY COUNTRY



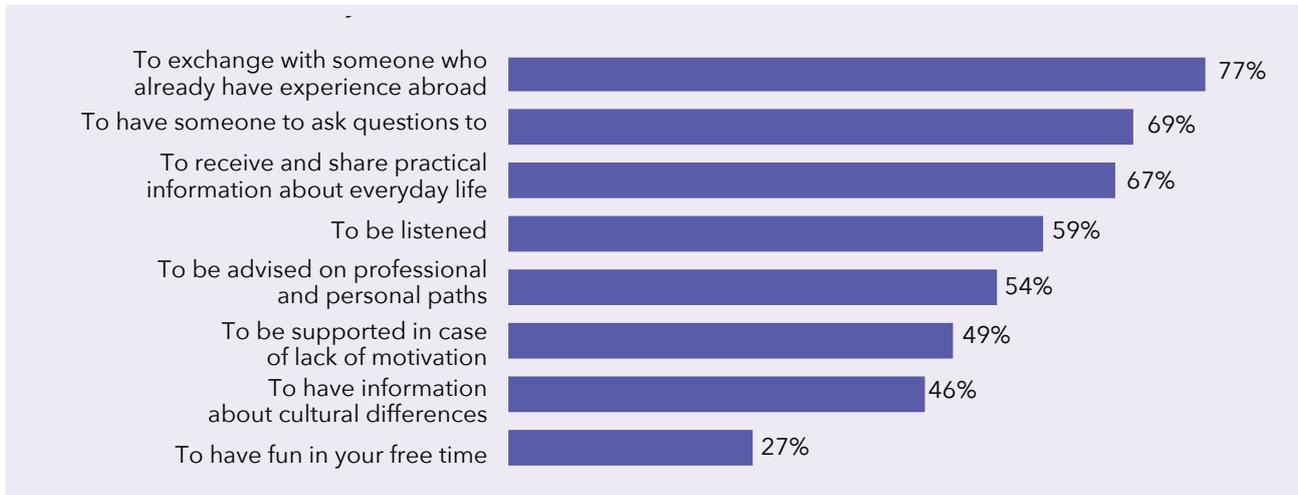
On average, mentors identified the main needs of mentees as to be supported in case of lack of motivation (53%), to have someone to ask questions to (62%) and to exchange with someone who already have experience abroad (58%).

To detail country-specific results, 92% of Turkish mentors and 80% of Macedonian men-

tors replied that the mentees' main need was to have someone to ask questions to, while the French and Italians replied that their main need was to exchange with someone who already had experience abroad.

Moreover, 67% of Romanian mentors replied that being supported in case of lack of motivation is the mentee's main need.

**NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY MENTEES**



Overall, mentees identified their main needs as having someone to ask questions to (69%), to receive and share practical information about everyday life (67%) and to exchange with someone who already has experience abroad (77%).

The needs identified by mentees are very practical and specifically linked to international mobility: get useful information, advice and answers that mentors can provide before, during and after their mobility, conse-

quently being able to benefit from mentors' experiences abroad.

The statistics regrouping both categories (mentors and mentees) revealed some interesting findings. It was observed that there are two main needs identified by both categories which are the need to exchange with someone who already had experience abroad and to have someone to ask questions regarding the culture and tradition of the host countries.

**65% of mentors believe that a mentee needs information about the culture and traditions of the host country.**

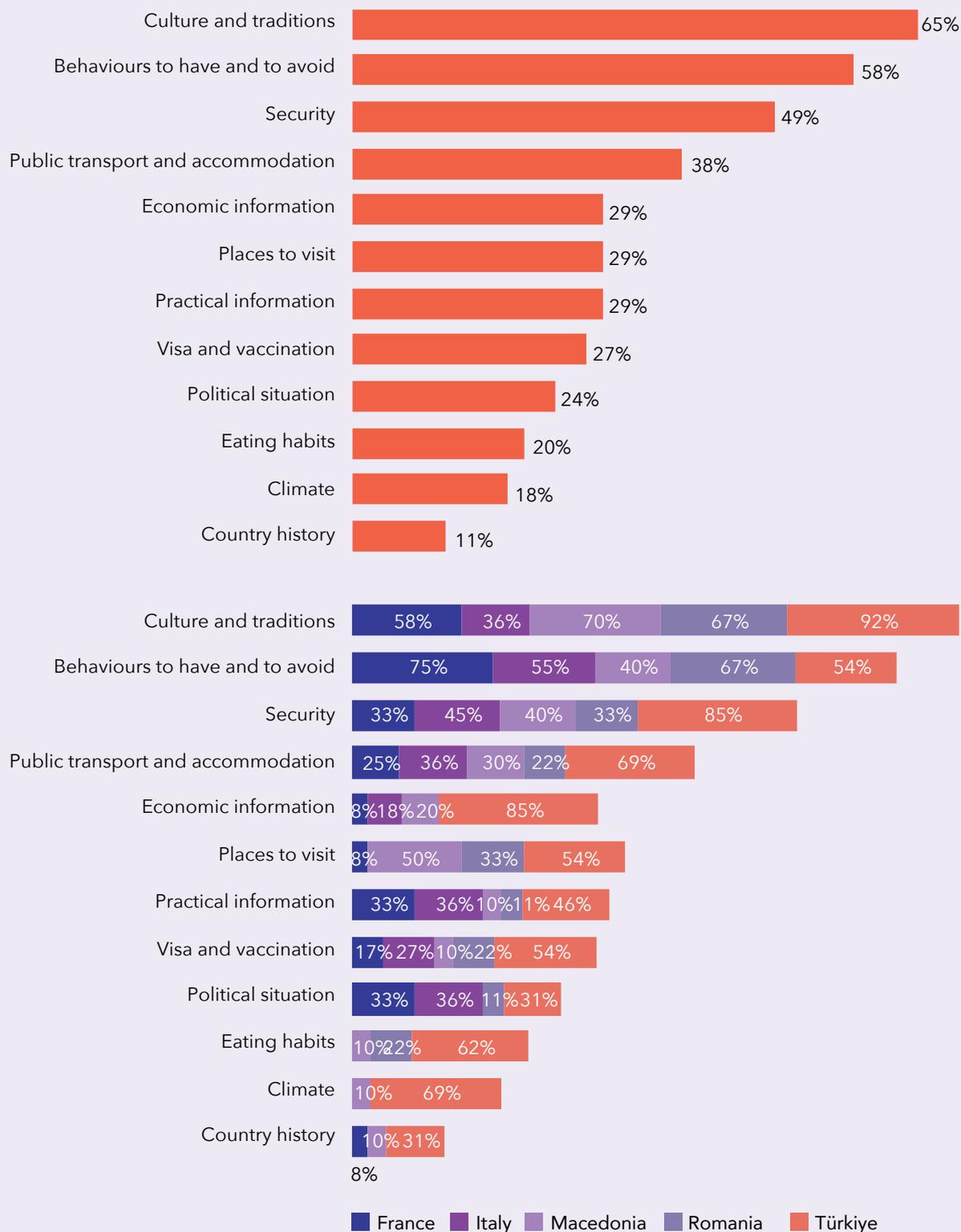
According to mentors, the 3 main information that mentees would require for their mobility experience are on culture and traditions (65%), behaviours to adopt or to avoid (58%), and security (49%).

In addition, results show that Turkish respondents are mostly interested in the economic situation of the welcoming country, while Italy put their interests in its political situation. Romanian and Macedonian respondents are mainly interested in places to visit, while French respondents are equally interested

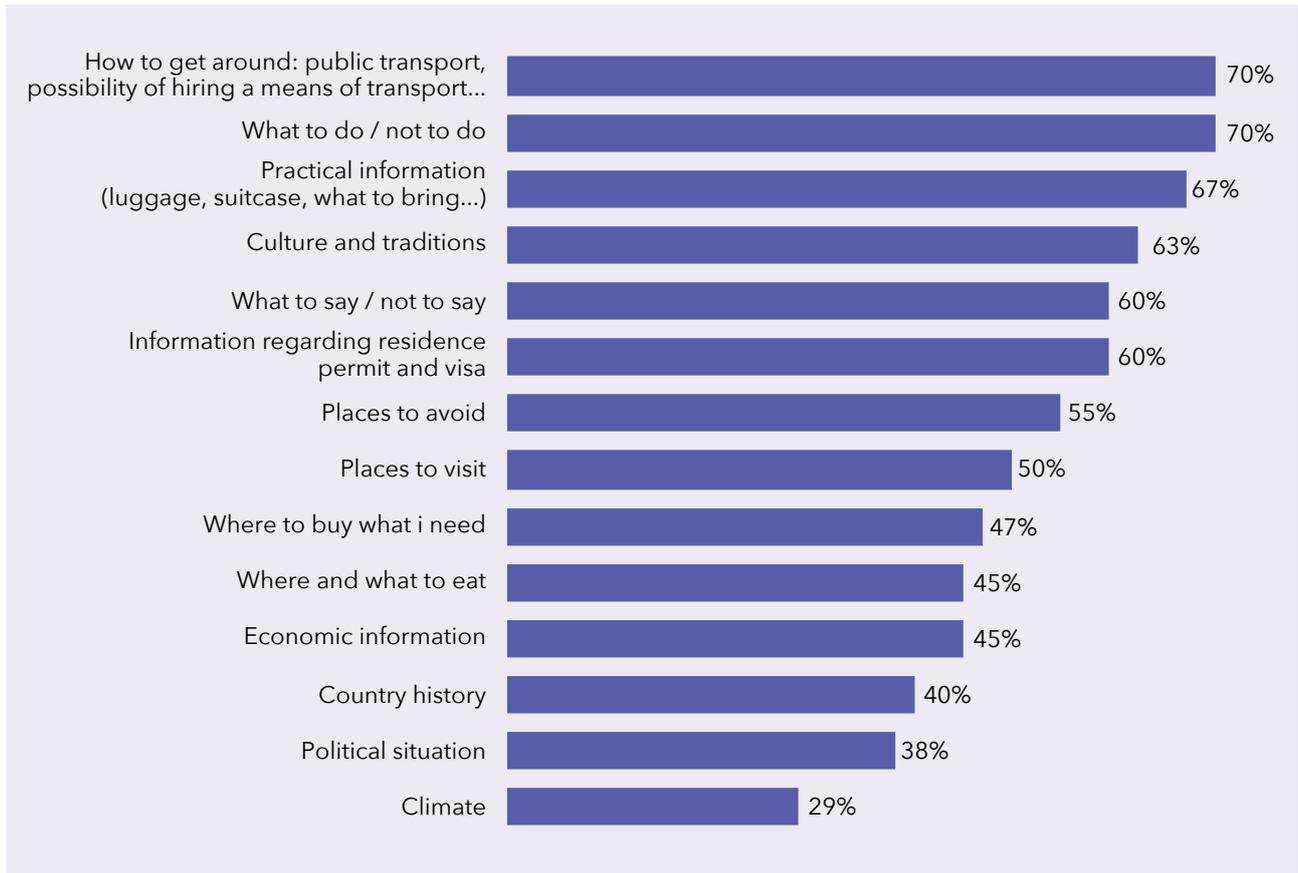


in receiving information on safety, practical information and the political situation in the country.

## WHAT INFORMATION DO MENTORS BELIEVE MENTEES REQUIRE FOR THEIR MOBILITY EXPERIENCE? »



**What general information do mentees expect to receive from the mentor?**



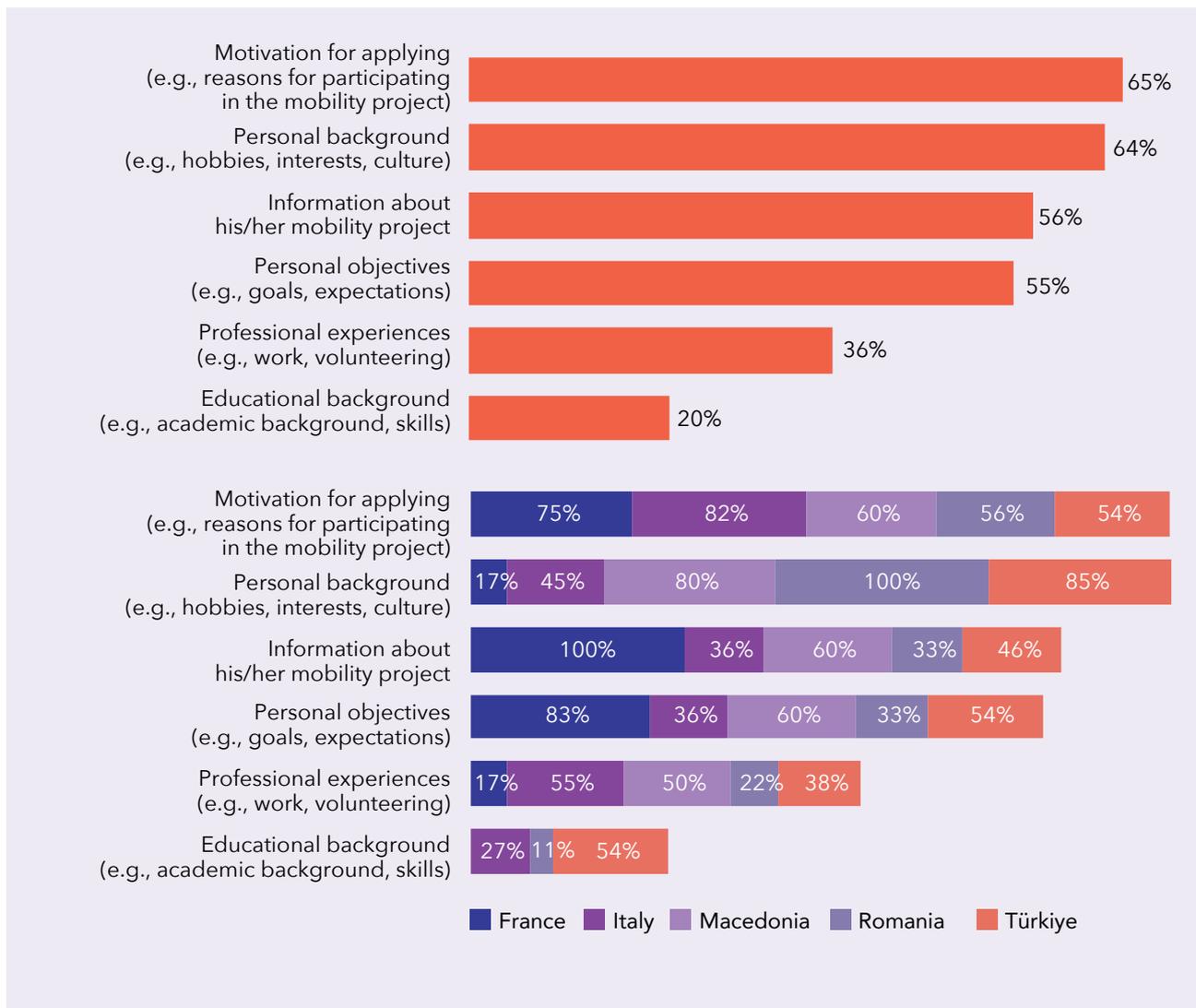
Looking at mentees’ responses, a larger number of options were chosen, what to do and not to do as well as how to get around representing 70% of the selections of the respondents, followed closely by all kinds of practical information (67%) and culture and traditions (63%). The other options are pretty close in results, representing over 40% of votes. This could be translated into a general requirement for the mentees to be as prepared as possible for a mobility abroad.

To get country-focused, all Italian respondents mentioned that information about how to get around is very relevant, whereas all the Romanian respondents mentioned that the most relevant information to obtain is about culture and traditions.

Mentors and mentees overall agree on the necessity to share information on culture, how to avoid misunderstanding, how to act and what should or shouldn’t be done. However, some disparities can be noticed. Mentees want to be reassured about the place and the culture they are getting into and mentors are more focused on sharing information on how to function practically in the local community. In the end, for mentors, personal learnings and challenges faced during their mobility experiences are the most important facts to share with their mentee.

## DIFFERENT PRIORITIES: PERSONAL CONNECTIONS (MENTORS) VS PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (MENTEES)

### WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE MENTEE DO A MENTOR NEED TO FULFIL THEIR ROLE AS A MENTOR?

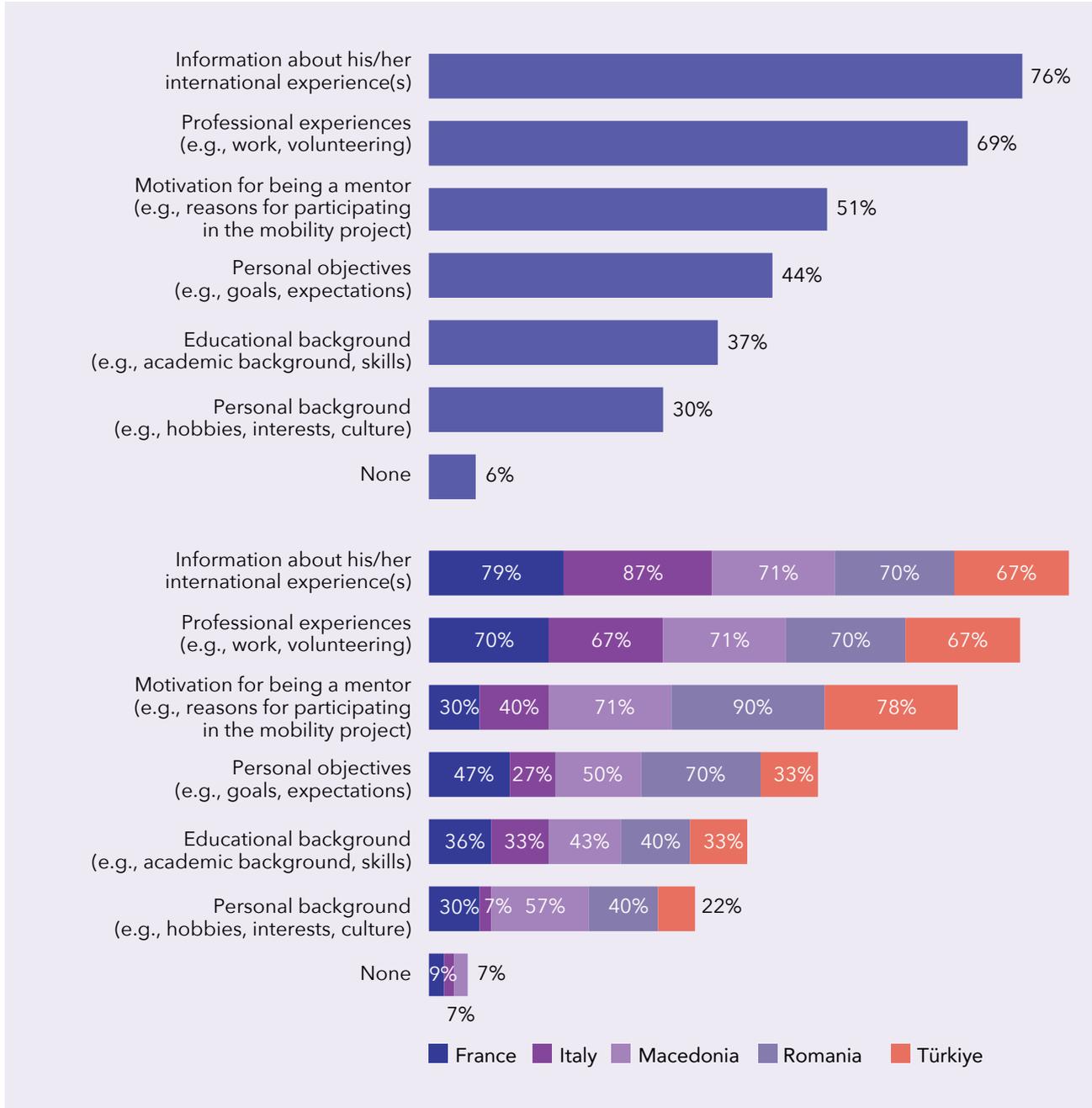


In general, the information that most mentors would like to know about their mentee concerns their motivation for applying in an international mobility project (65%) and their personal background (64%).

Responses from Italy and Romania reflect this trend; Macedonians and Turkish mentors show more interest in personal objec-

tives (60% for Macedonia and 54% for Türkiye) and educational background (54% for Türkiye); the responses from French participants, on the other hand, show more interest in knowing information about previous mobility project (100%) and personal objectives (83%).

### WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION MENTEES NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THEIR MENTOR?



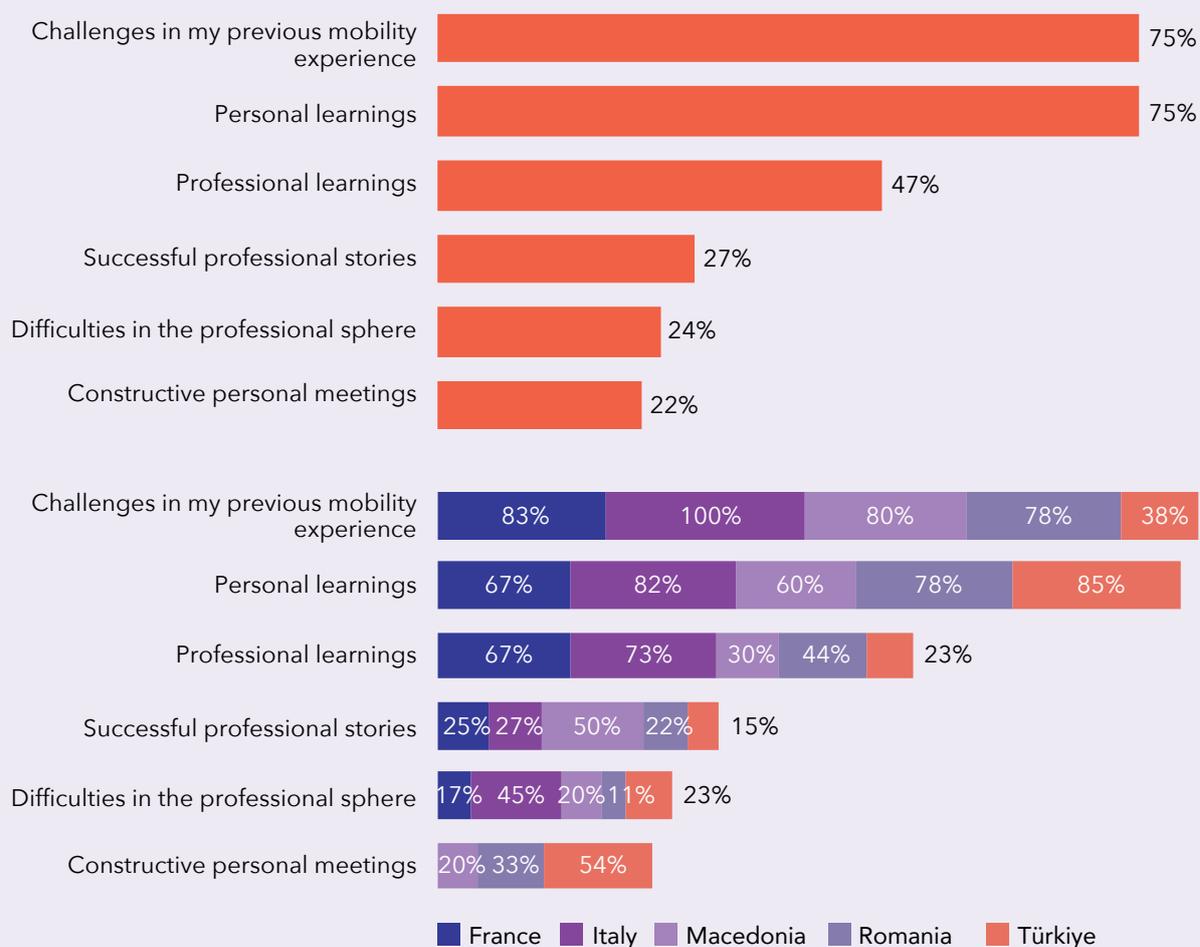
In general, the information that most mentees would like to know about their mentor relates to their international experience(s) (76%) and professional experience(s) (69%). A very low percentage of mentees (6%) do not wish to know any information about their mentor.

The general trend is particularly reflected through the responses from France (79%) and Italy (87%). Participants from Macedonia

(71%), Türkiye (67%) and Romania (71%) also confirm the interest towards international and professional experiences. The respondents from those same three countries additionally express a strong interest in knowing their mentor’s motivation to join a mentorship. Finally, the responses from Romania add an additional interest in knowing their mentor’s personal goals (70%).

*75% of mentors think it would be useful to share the personal learning and challenges they have encountered during their previous mobility experiences.*

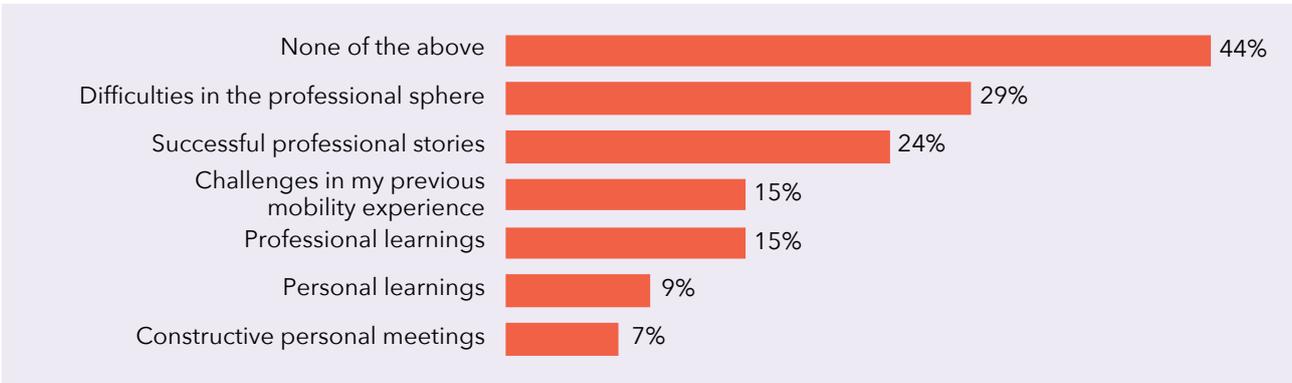
#### WHAT KIND OF LEARNINGS WOULD BE HELPFUL TO SHARE WITH THE MENTEE?



According to global results, 75% of mentors find that the personal learnings and challenges they experienced would be helpful to share with mentees. Apart from these two learnings, professional learnings are considered useful to share by 47% of them. However, according to the results per country, 54% percent of mentors in Türkiye

and 33% of mentors in Romania consider that constructive personal meetings is a learning which would be helpful to share with the mentee. Furthermore, 50% of mentors from Macedonia stated that sharing successful professional stories would be helpful for the mentee.

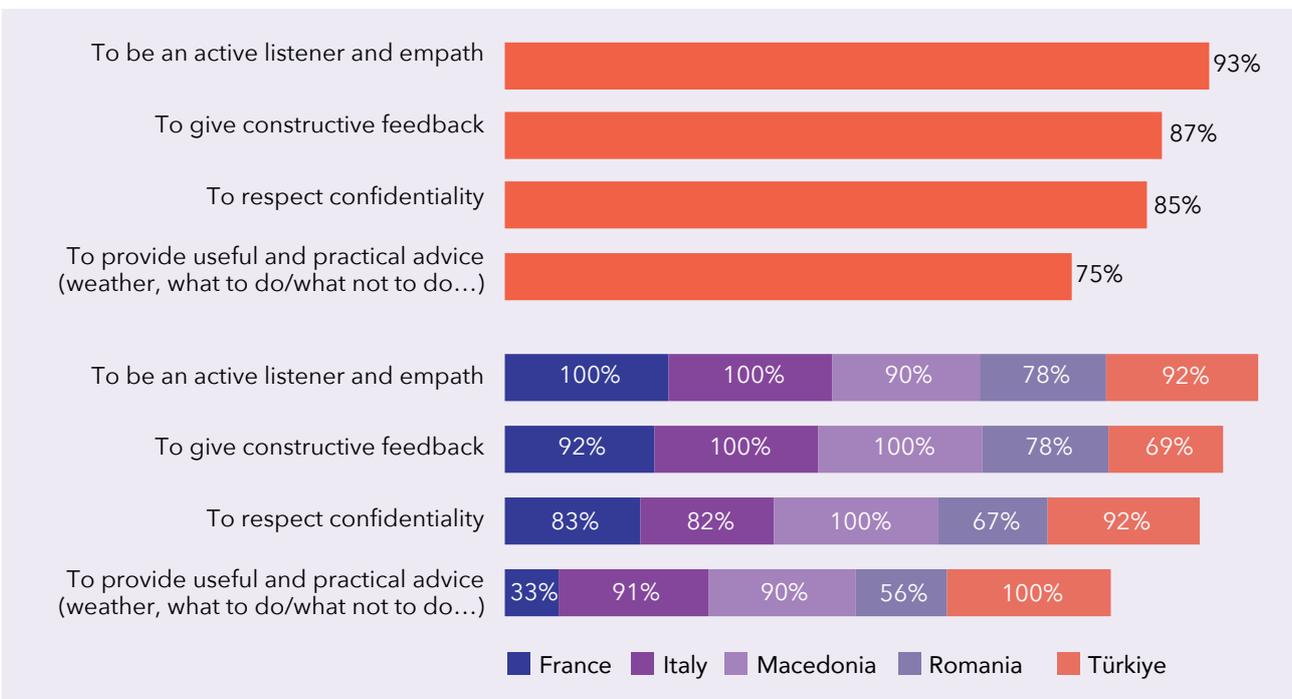
### What kind of learnings or information do you feel are not appropriate to share with your mentee?



44% of mentors responded that they found none of the mentioned topics to be inappropriate. This implies that mentors are open to discussing these subjects with their mentees if they find it relevant or necessary.

On the other hand, mentors reported that discussing professional difficulties (29%) and sharing professional success stories (24%) were considered inappropriate topics for discussion with mentees.

### What do mentors see as their responsibilities?



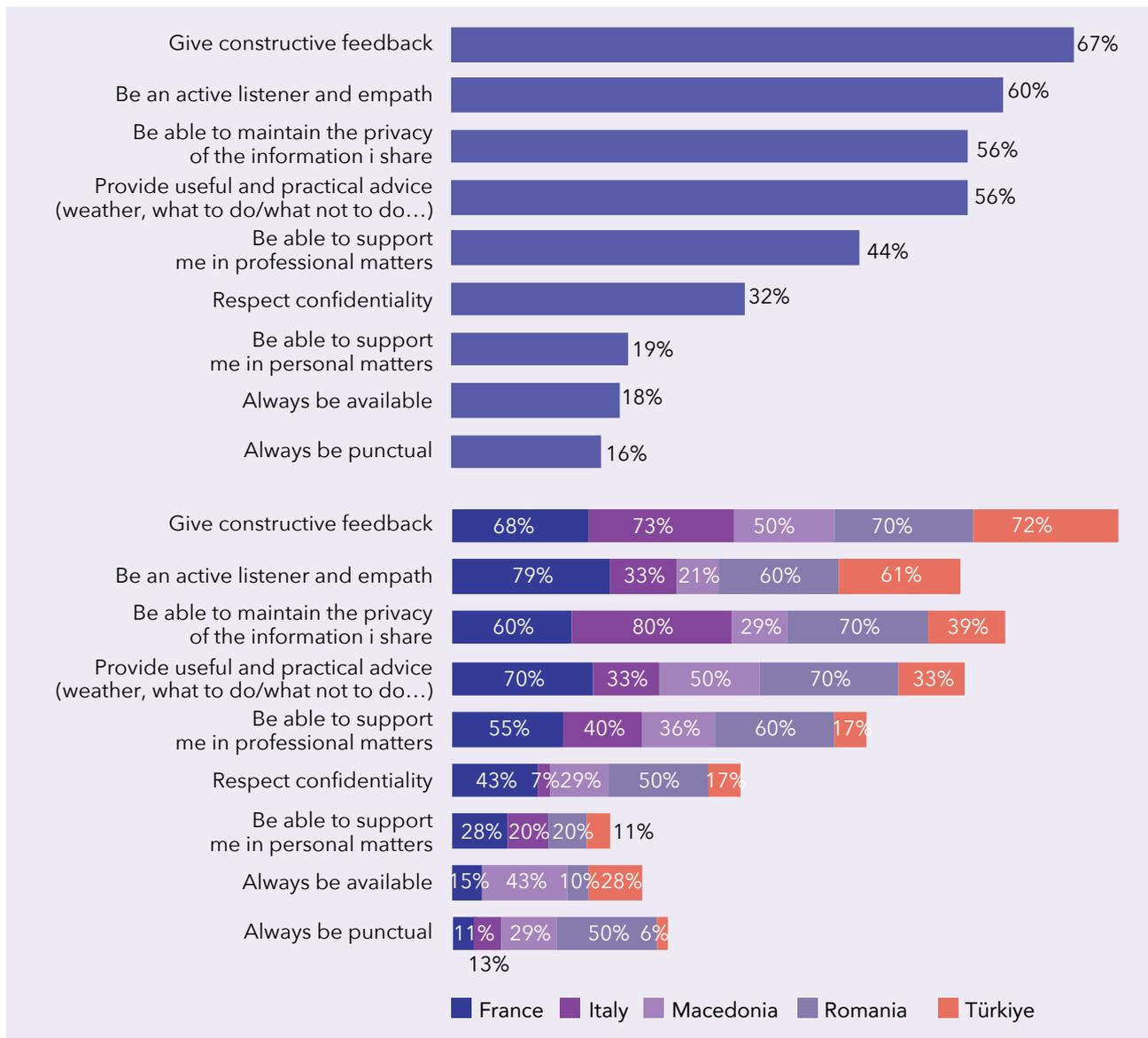
Essentially, respondents identified the following responsibilities as the most important for the mentor: to be an active listener and an empathetic (93%), to give constructive

feedback (87%), to respect personal spaces (87%), to respect confidentiality (85%), to provide useful and practical advice (75%).

The answers given by the participants from the five countries involved in the study confirm the average; only respondents from

France and Romania reported less frequently the responsibility for providing useful and practical advice.

### What do mentees see as mentors' responsibilities?



Generally, respondents identified the following as the main responsibilities that the mentors should have: give constructive feedback (67%), be an active listener and empathetic (60%), be able to maintain the privacy of the information shared (56%), provide useful and practical advice (56%) and be able to support mentees in professional matters (44%).

The less frequent answers are to be able to support mentees in personal matters (19%), always be available (18%) and always be punctual (16%).

This general trend is confirmed when looking at country-specific results, even though respondents from Macedonia (43%) and Türkiye (28%) highlighted the option "always be available", contrary to the general tendency.

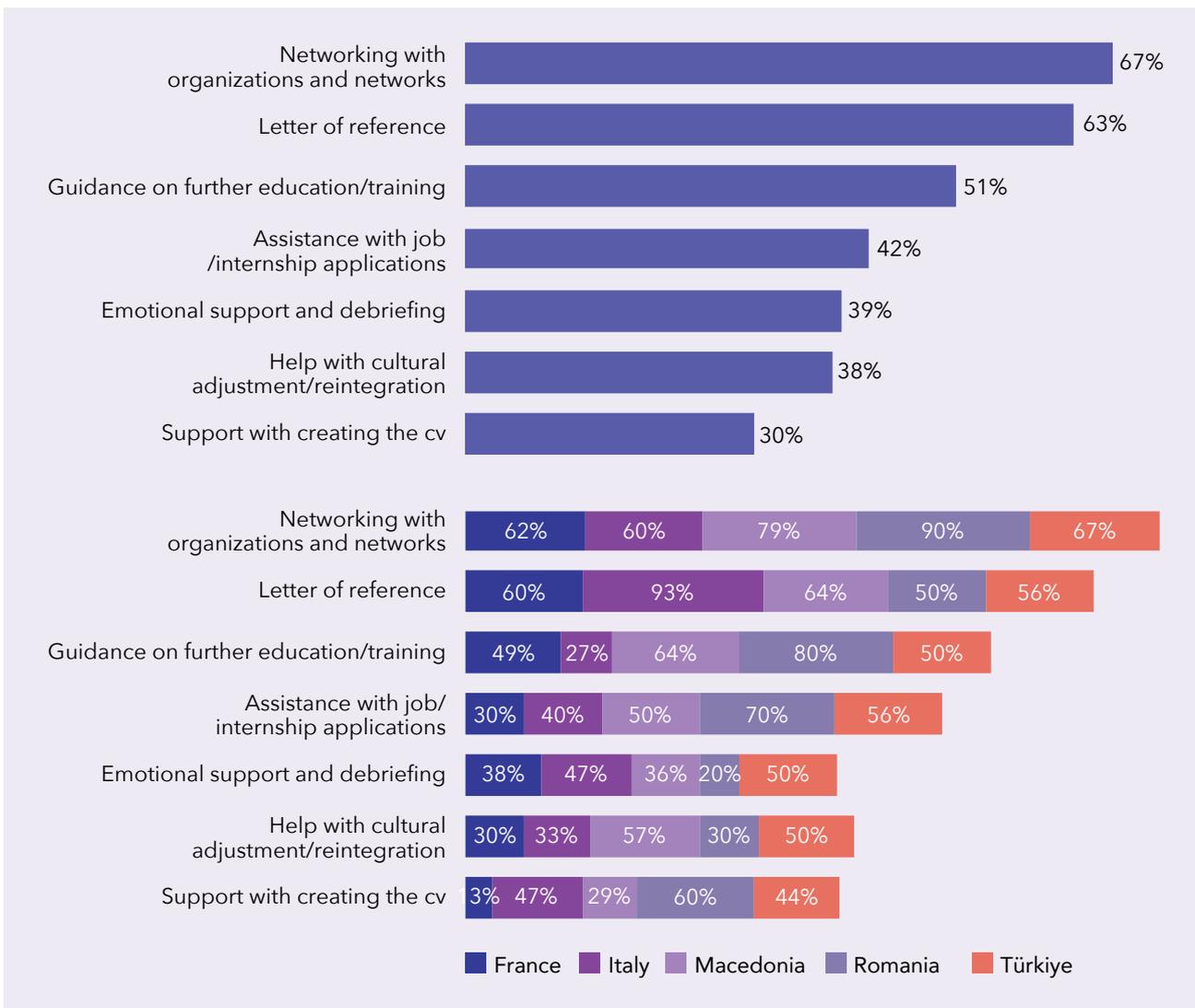
The fact that the answers “be able to support mentee in personal matters, “always be available” and “always be punctual” were the least selected, leads to suppose that, on one hand, the mentees consider the mentors as professionals with whom to share a relationship based on support, trust and mutual knowledge but, on the other hand, from whom it is a priority to receive support for professional issues rather than personal. With these answers, mentees demonstrate that they acknowledge the need for limits

and boundaries in the role of the mentor, as they do not expect them to be constantly available.

If we compare the responses of mentors and mentees, it appears that the two groups share similar expectations for a mentoring programme. Amongst the responsibilities that both groups assign to the role of a mentor, giving constructive feedback, being an active listener, empathetic and providing useful and practical advice are the most emphasised.

*Mentees are looking to obtain letters of recommendation and expand their network.*

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES AT THE END OF THE MOBILITY**



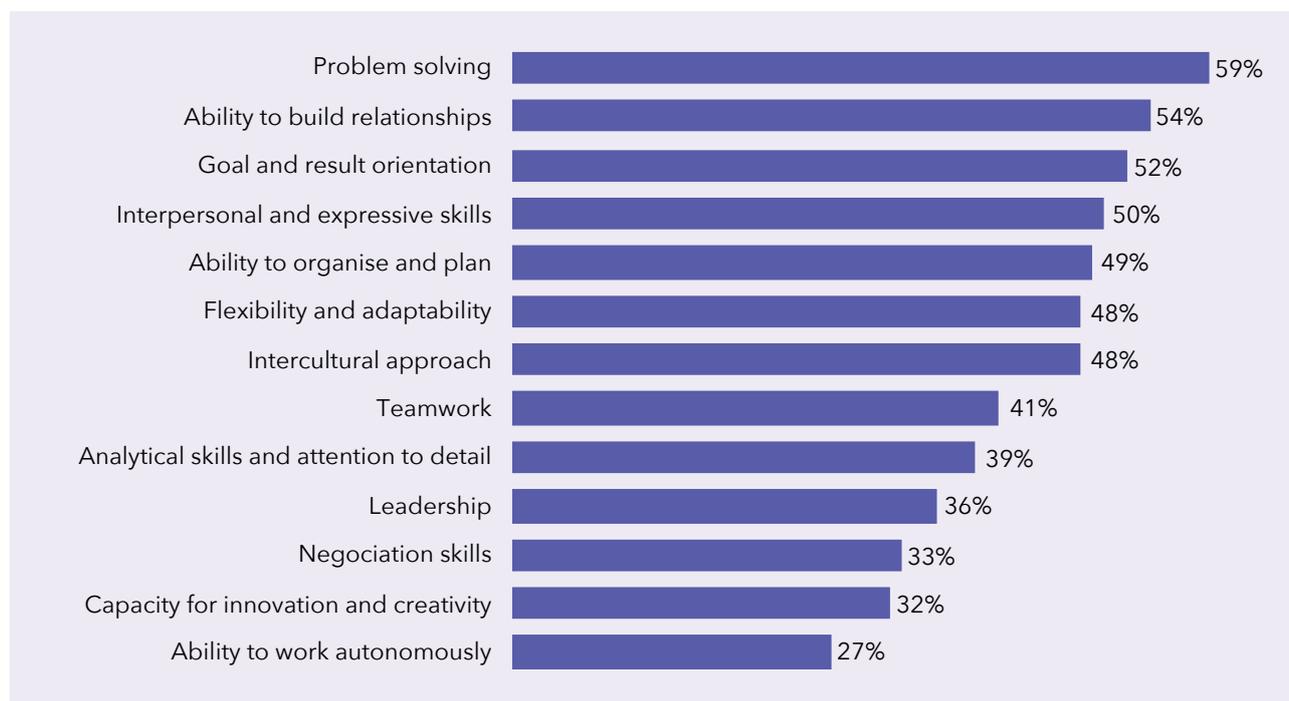
Mentees' answers demonstrate that they would still expect and need support from mentors at the end of the mobility project. Mentees would like to benefit from the mentors' support for their future professional projects: 63% of respondents wish to benefit from their mentor's experience by receiving letters of reference. 67% of respondents also would like to be put in touch with other organisations or networks the mentor has contact with on their return and 51% of respondents express the need for guidance on further training or education.

When focusing on results per country, the majority of respondents from Türkiye (67%),

Romania (90%), Macedonia (79%) and France (62%) identify that their main need after their mobility is to be supported to access professional networks. However, 93% of Italian respondents answered that they would need a letter of reference with their mentor's help.

Considering the results on the whole, it seems that mentees are looking for support from mentors beyond the pragmatic monitoring they can offer before and during mobility. They express the desire to benefit from the mentoring experience after their mobility to help valorise the experience professionally and benefit from personalised professional guidance and support.

### What soft skills mentees expect to develop with the support of the mentor?

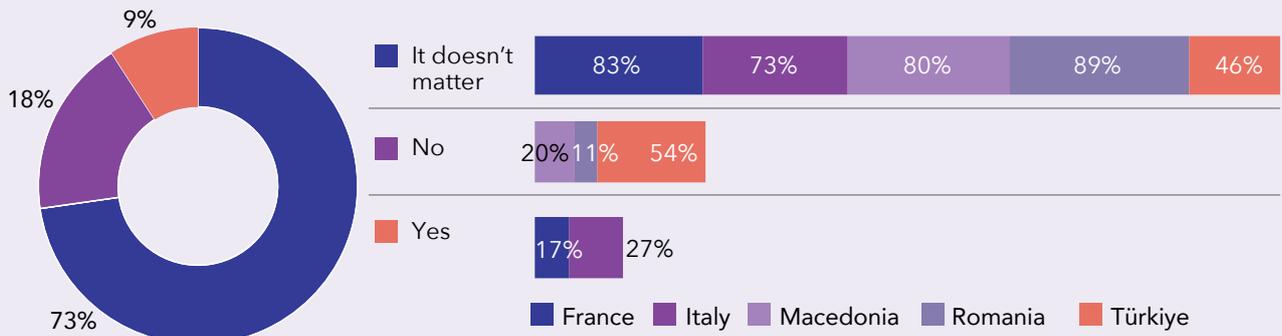


The principal soft skills that mentees expect to develop with the support of the mentor are: problem solving (59%), ability to build relationships (54%), goal and result orientation (52%), interpersonal and expressive skills (50%), ability to organise and plan (49%), flexibility and adaptability (48%), intercultural approach (48%).

Although some options have been chosen more often than others, all the competences indicated in the questionnaire have been selected numerous times: this reflects the current tendencies to consider soft skills as important / essential skills to acquire in someone's professional, personal, and social life.

*For 73% of mentors, it doesn't matter if their mentees have the same background as them.*

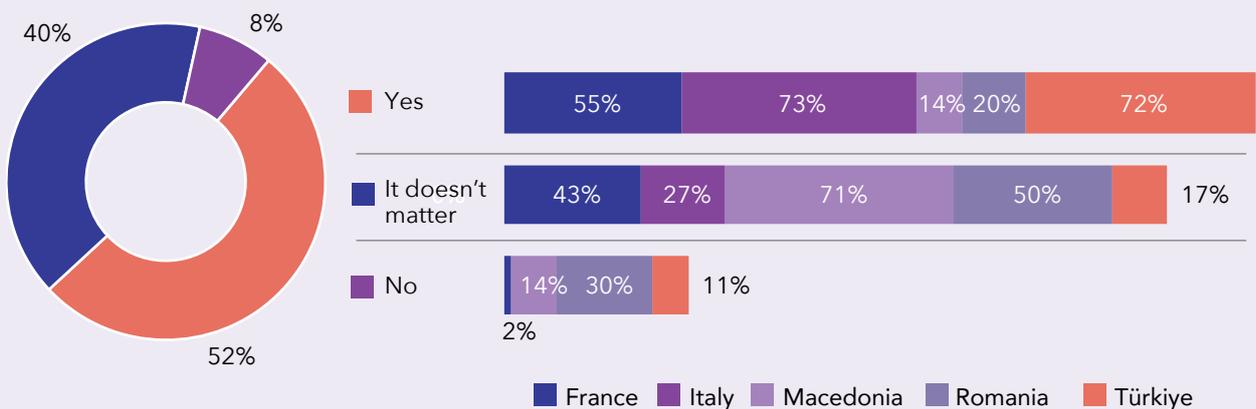
**DO MENTORS PREFER TO HAVE A MENTEE WITH THE SAME BACKGROUND AS THEMSELVES?**



On average, it seems that mentors do not necessarily wish mentees to have the same background as theirs. 73% of respondents expressed no preference on that matter. They are confident about the fact that the relationship can be fruitful and relevant even if their background is different.

In detail per country, more than 70% of French, Italians, Macedonians, and Romanians replied that "it does not matter". However, Turkish respondents had a more definitive opinion, with 54% of them believing that mentees could not have the same background.

*52% of respondents expressed that they would prefer to have a mentor who had had a similar experience to their own.*



52% of respondents expressed that they would prefer to have a mentor who had had a similar experience to their own. 40% replied that it does not matter.

Results per country display significant disparities. French, Italian, and Turkish respondents

prefer for their mentors to have a similar experience while Macedonian and Romanian consider that it does not matter. 30% of the Romanian respondents even replied that they do not want their mentors to have a similar experience.

Results from mentors and mentees correlate with tendencies identified in previous questions. While 73% of mentor's respondents replied that they do not care if their mentees have a similar experience, 52% of mentees

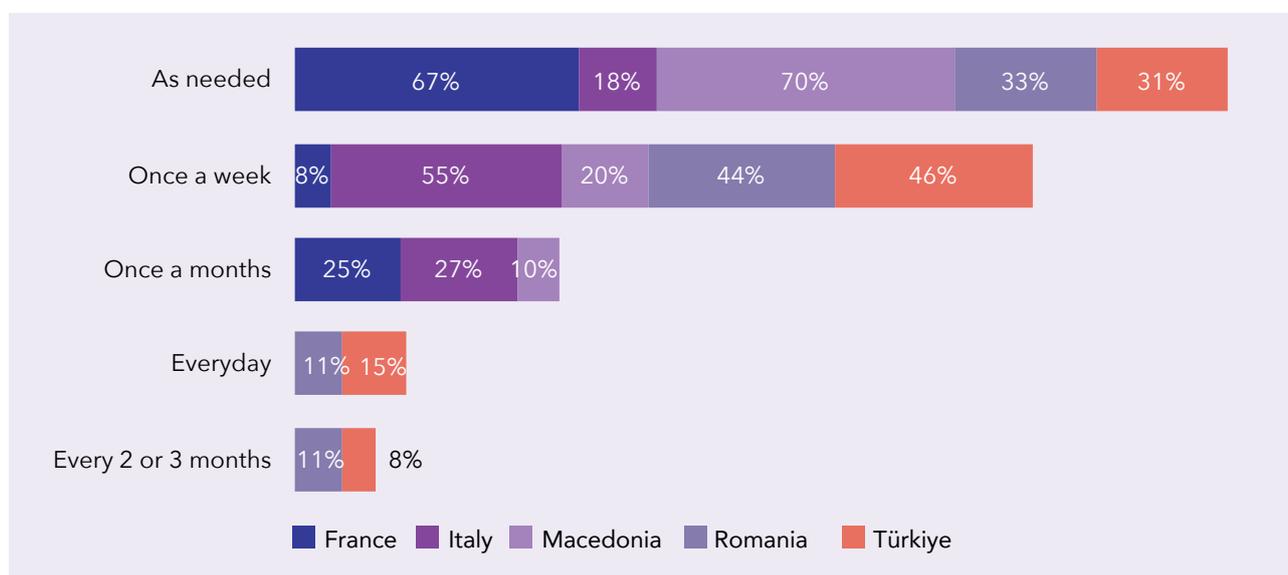
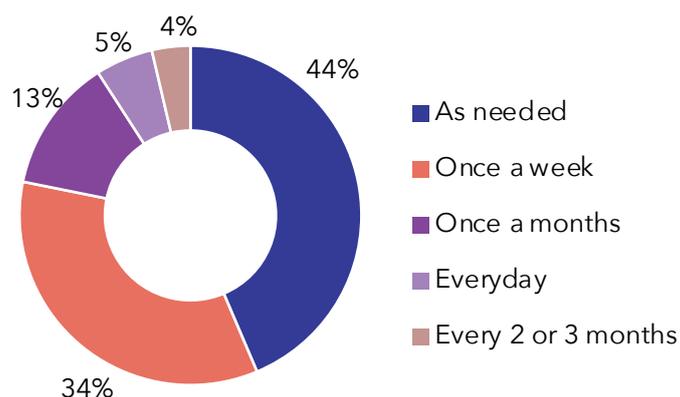
replied that they would prefer it. This difference in expectations could be explained by the need expressed from mentees to benefit from professional guidance and support from mentors.

## AVAILABILITY, BOUNDARIES AND COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

### How often are mentors available to support the mentee?

Overall, 78% of mentors express that they are available for their mentees whenever they are needed or at least once a week (45% per option both generally and per country). Respondents from Macedonia and France demonstrate their eagerness to be committed more distinctly than the ones of the other participating countries.

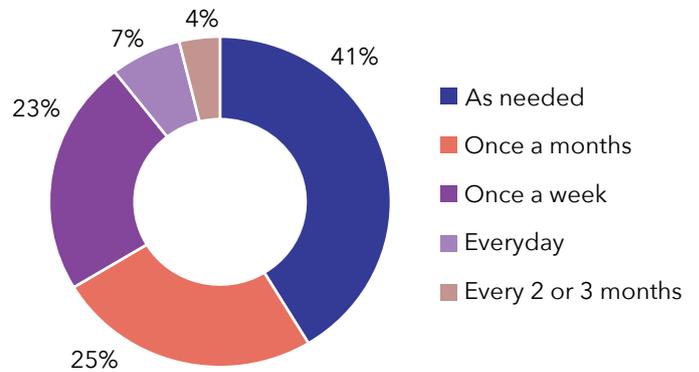
If mentors are available as needed or once a week, only Turkish (15%) and Romanian (11%) respondents are available every day to support their mentees with none of the Macedonian, French and Italian respondents choosing this option.



**41% of mentees expect to have contact with their mentors as needed.**

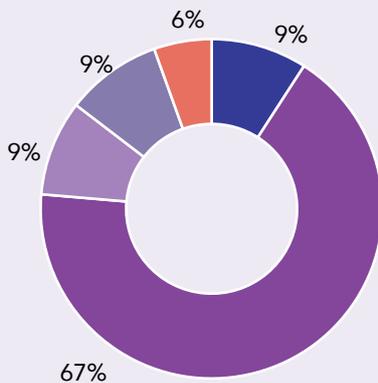
41% of mentees expect contact with the mentor when they need it. Furthermore, 23% and 25% of mentees expect contact with their mentors respectively once a week and once a month.

Both mentors and mentees agree on the frequency of contact, with around 41% of respondents of both groups stating that they need to have contact with each other when needed. Mentors are more likely to be available once a week, while mentees place equal importance on being contacted once a month.



**Mentors are willing to be available for the duration of the mobility period, regardless of its length.**

**HOW LONG WOULD A MENTOR BE AVAILABLE?**

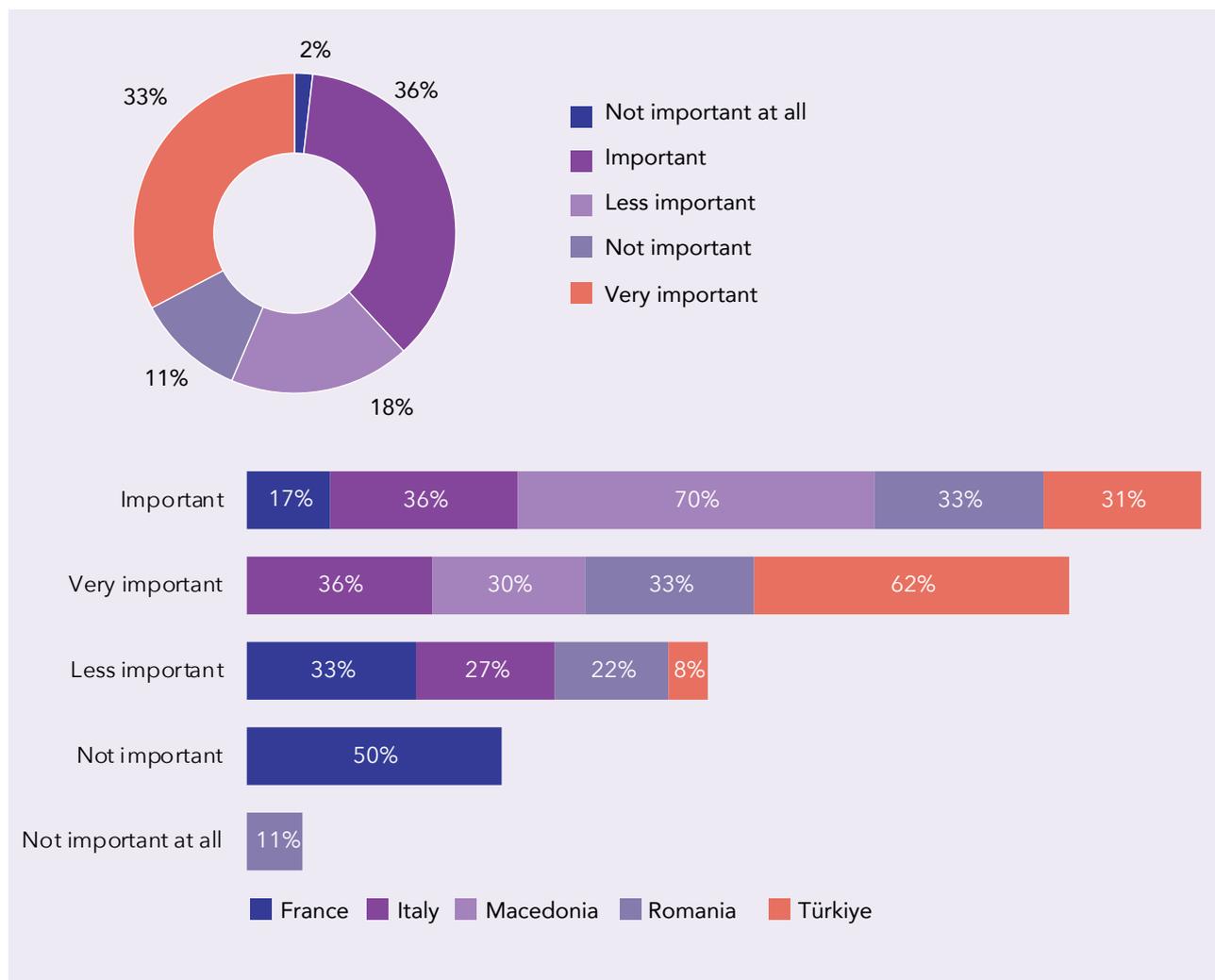


- For me it depends a lot on the context
- For the duration of the mobility period, regardless of its length
- From 3 to 6 months
- Up to 1 year
- Up to 3 months

The majority of respondents interested in taking on the role of mentor in the future express that they are committed to mentoring for the duration of the mobility period, regardless of its length (67%).



## The importance of being physically present in a mentoring relationship



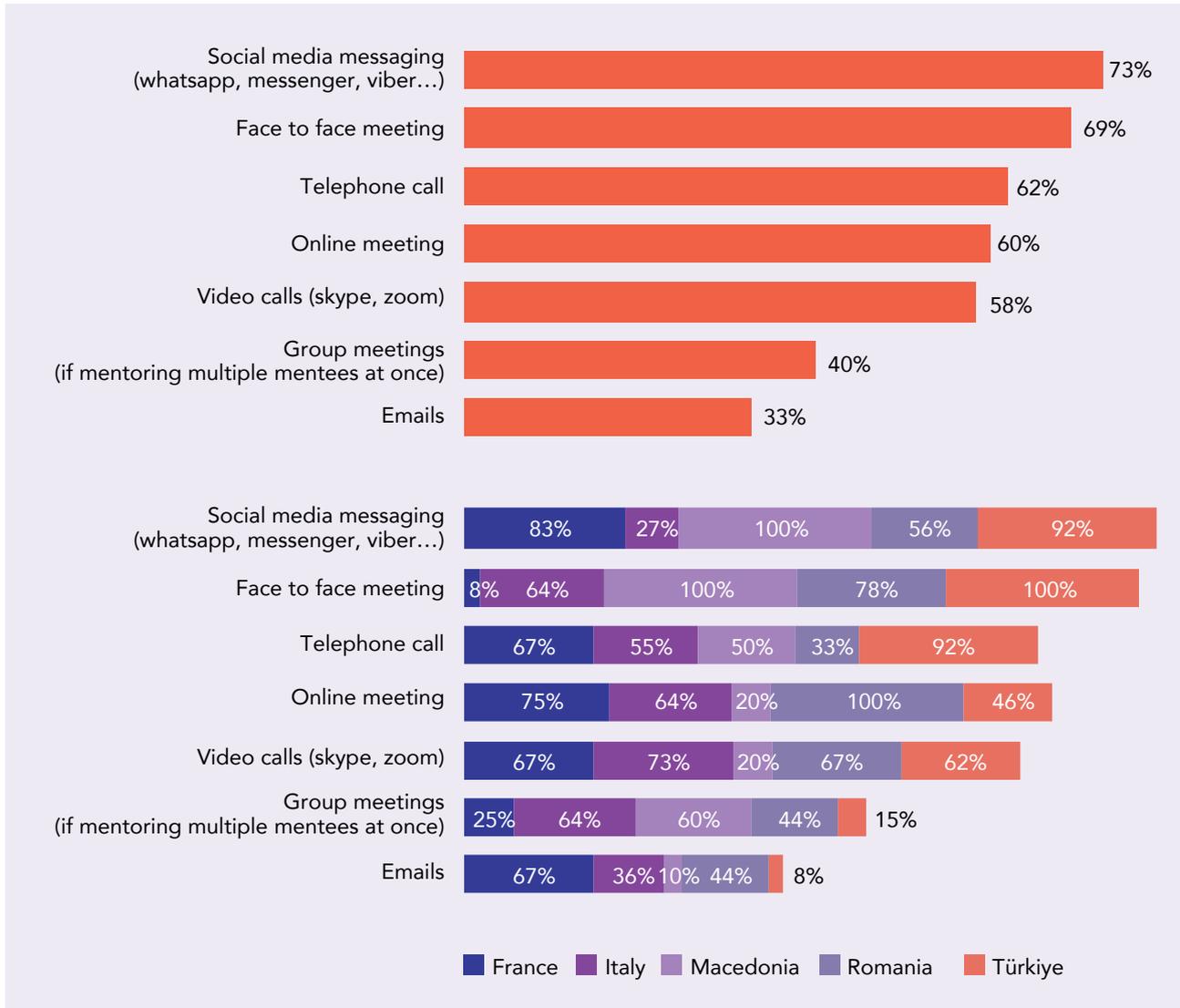
36% of respondents consider it important to be physically present to support the mentee, particularly for Macedonian who voted at 70% for this option. The second most selected option by 33% of respondents is that it is less important to be physically present (33% France, 27% Italy, 22% Romania).

This question can be related to the question following displayed on the favoured method of contact. 73% of mentors and 50% of mentees recommend social media messaging as a main form of contact whereas 69% of mentors and 58% of mentees would also prefer face to face meeting.

These responses demonstrate that both (online & in-person) methods of communication can be considered for mentoring.

Mentoring programmes should therefore address the question prior to the matching between mentors and mentees and enable each party to choose the most adapted means of communication.

### Different types of communication channels for Mentors



Globally, 73% of the mentors would communicate with their mentees through social media messaging and 69% through face-to-face meetings. However, when looking at country-specific results, differences are noticeable. 100% of Macedonian respondents favour social media messaging for communication contrary to only 27% of Italian respondents. 100% of Macedonians also chose the option of face-to-face meetings with their mentees, while only 8% of French respondents voted for this option.

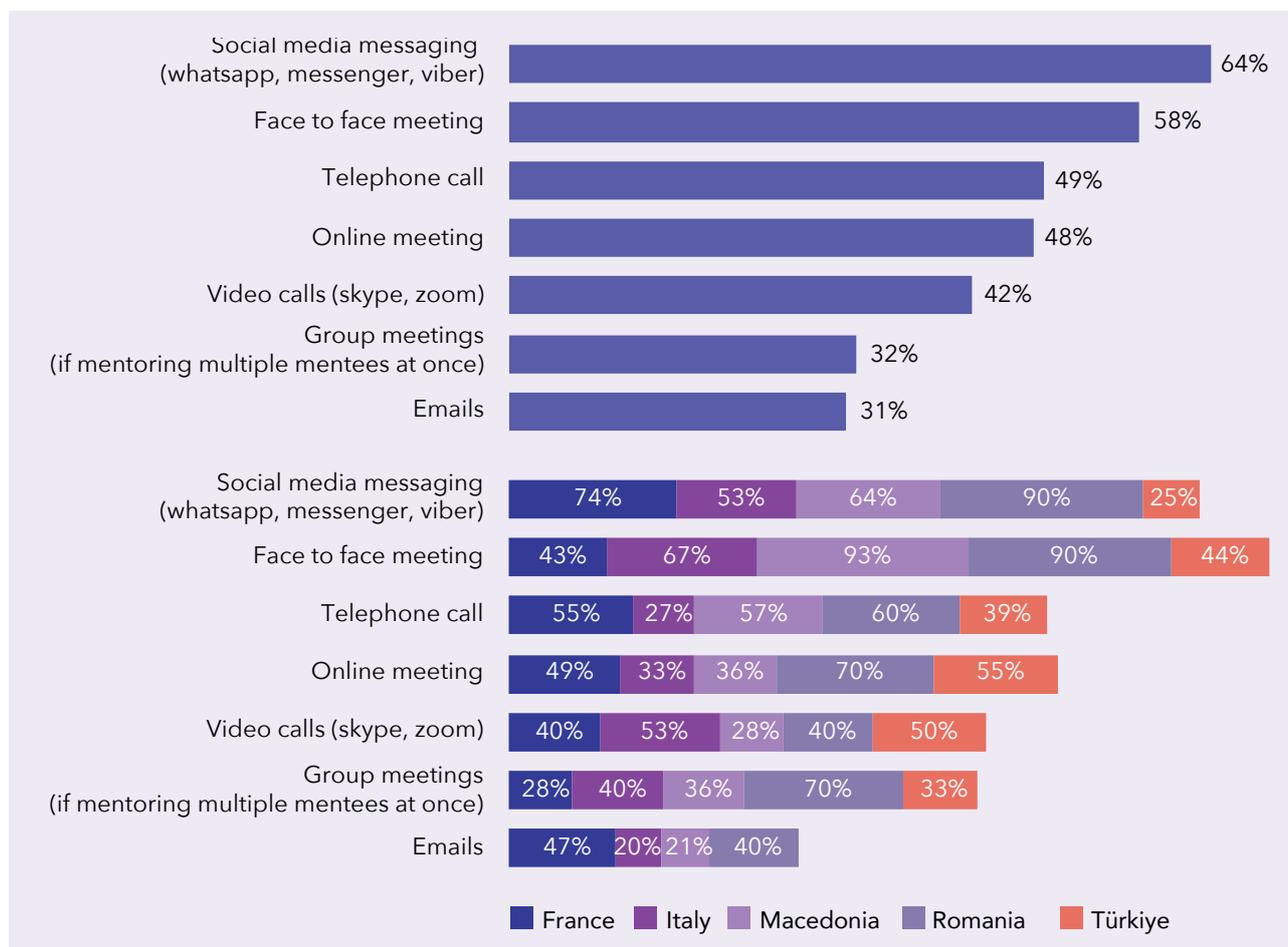
Another significantly chosen method of communication is phone calls.

Internationally, 62% of respondents opted for this option. However, there are again consequent differences between countries: phone calls would be implemented by 92% of Turkish respondents but only by 33% of Romanian respondents.

Finally, French respondents would almost exclusively communicate almost online while Macedonian and Turkish would prefer more direct forms of contact like meetings in person. These country specifics should be considered when developing a mentoring programme.

## HOW TO MAINTAIN CONTACT?

*Face-to-face meetings and messages on social media are the main way of maintaining contact for mentees.*



In general, 64% of mentees would prefer to communicate with their mentors via social media. This is closely followed by 57% of mentees who would prefer face-to-face meetings. For face-to-face meetings, there are differences between countries, as over 90% of Romanian and Macedonian mentees would prefer face-to-face meetings, while only 44% of Turkish and 43% of French mentees would prefer this method of communication. The tendencies of mentors and mentees regarding the means of communication are different, but similar in terms of proportion. The majority of mentors and mentees from Macedonia and Romania would prefer face-to-face meetings, while the majority of Italians and French would prefer online communication. Mentees from Türkiye are less divided and consider online meetings

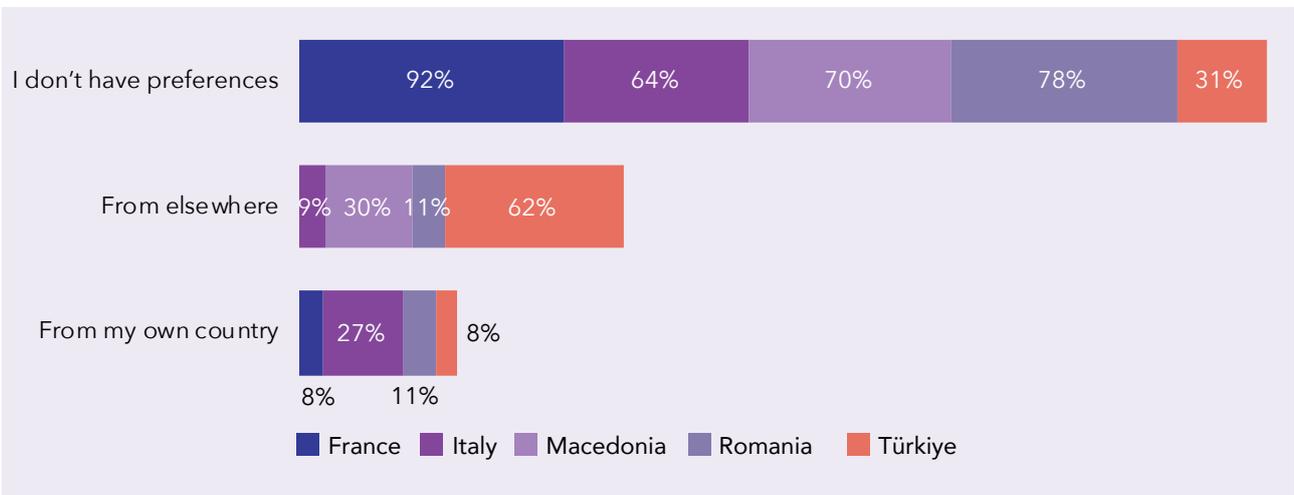
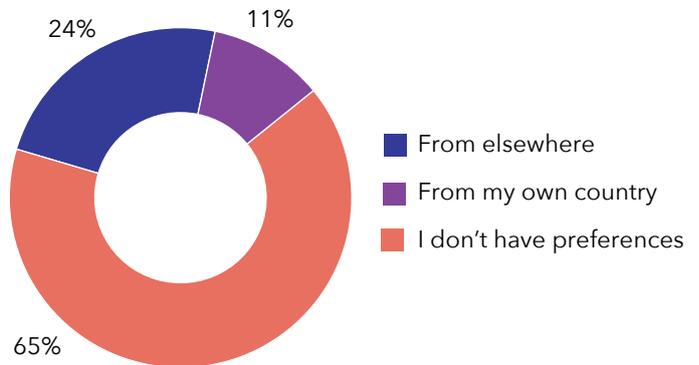
(55%) and video calls (50%) to be the main means of communication.

Although it is noticeable that face-to-face meetings are considered important, mentors and mentees are open to communicating online through different types of communication channels such as video calls, chat rooms, social media messaging, telephone calls or emails. It is clear that online means of communication remain crucial for an international mobility mentoring programme. However, the use of face-to-face meetings, where possible, remains an option that should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Mentors and mentees agree that social media messaging is the main means of communication.

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MENTORS AND MENTEES

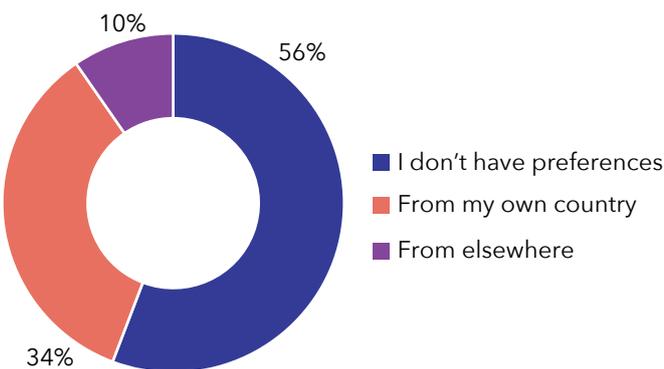
65% of mentors had no preference as to whether they chose a mentee from their own country or from elsewhere.



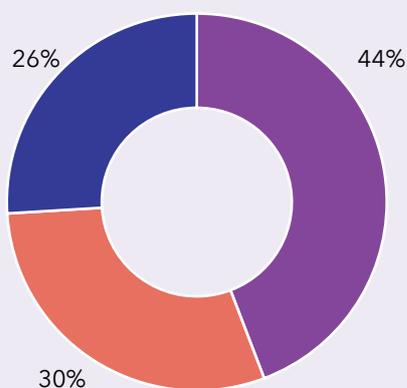
Globally, the vast majority of respondents (65%) stated that they had no preference regarding the country of origin of their mentee, they would therefore be willing to mentor both mentees from their own country or from another country.

Analysing the responses from individual countries, it can be seen that respondents from France (92%), Italy (64%), Macedonia (70%) and Romania (78%) confirm this trend, while respondents from Türkiye would rather prefer a mentee from another country (62%).

56% of mentees had no preference as to whether they have a mentor from their own country or from elsewhere.

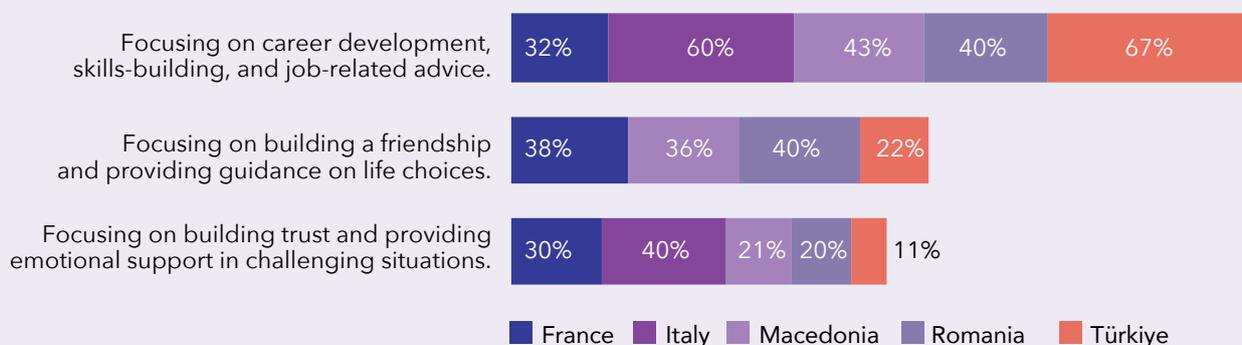


The majority of respondents, all countries considered, stated that they had no preference regarding the country of origin of their mentor (56%). Another large portion of respondents indicated that they would prefer to share the same provenance with their mentor (34%) and a significantly smaller portion would prefer a mentor who comes from another country (10%).



**44% of mentees want to focus their relationship on career development, skills-building and job-related advice.**

- Focusing on career development, skills-building, and job-related advice.
- Focusing on building a friendship and providing guidance on life choices.
- Focusing on building trust and providing emotional support in challenging situations.

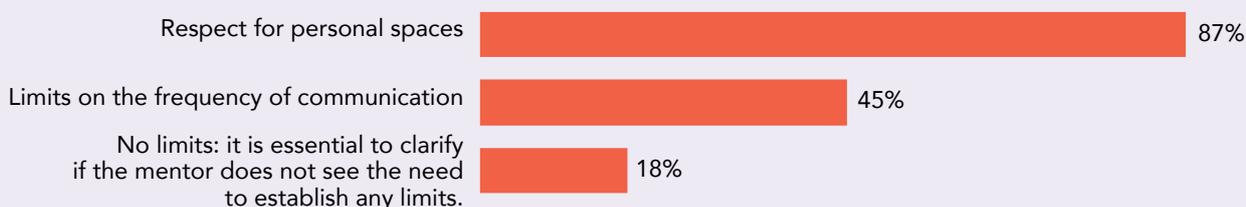


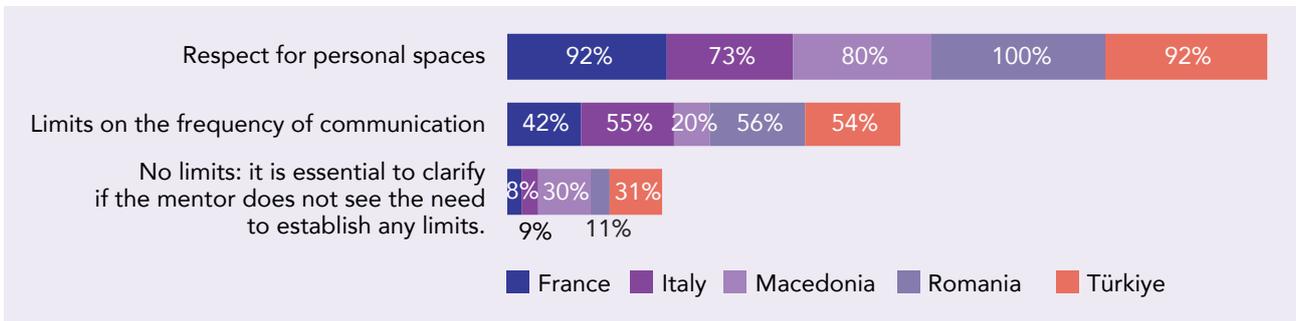
44% of mentees expect the mentoring relationship to be built on career development, skills building and job-related advice. Italian and Turkish mentees are frontrunners in this category with over 60% of them opting for this option, closely followed by Macedonian (43%) and Romanian (40%).

Mentoring relationships based on trust and emotional support or built on friendship and

guidance on life choices are of similar value to the mentees with respectively 26% and 30% of respondents saying that this is the type of relationship they would want to create with their mentor during their mobility period. It is noticeable that trust and emotional support is overall considered the least preferred mentoring relationship for mentees except in Italy.

### The respect of personal spaces, according to mentors.





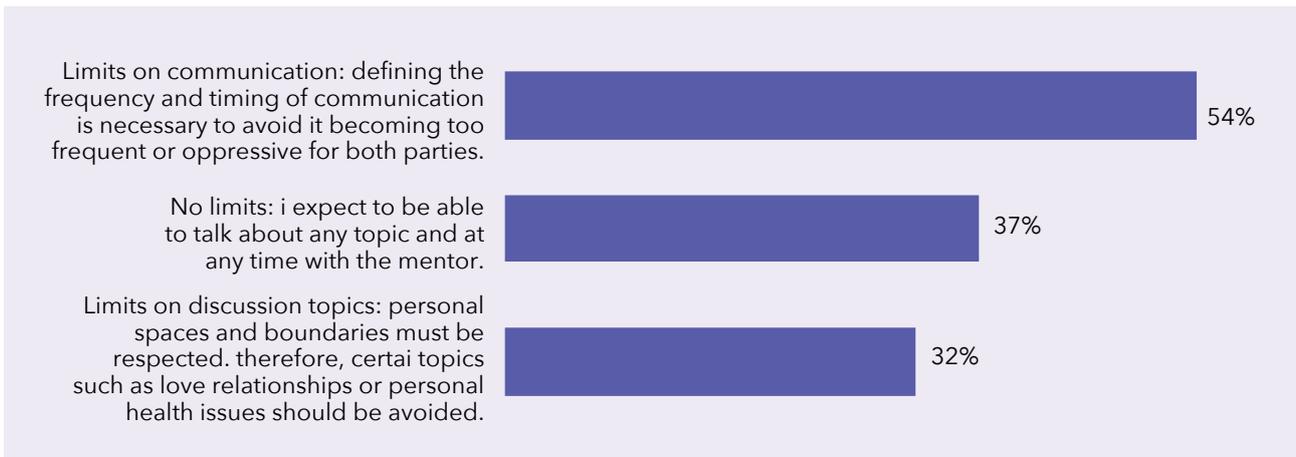
The majority of the mentors’ respondents (87%) indicated that the participants should respect each other’s personal space. This tendency is confirmed when looking at country-specific results: all of the Romanian and 73% of the Italian respondents answered that mutual respect for personal space is a boundary worth establishing.

Moreover, 45% of the respondents emphasise on the need to establish boundaries on the frequency of communication, even if they expressed in previous answers that they are available for their mentees whenever they are needed or at least once a week. Only 18% of the respondents considered that it is essential to clarify if the mentor does not see the need to establish any boundaries.

The options «limits on the frequency of communication» (45%) and «no limits: it is essential to clarify if the mentor does not see the need to establish any limits» (18%) were the least selected by the respondents from each country.

20% of the mentors in Macedonia responded for no limits while the mentors in other 4 countries chose around 50% (54% Türkiye, 56% Romania, 55% Italy and 42% France). Türkiye and Macedonia were two countries among the others with the biggest percentage (31% for Türkiye and 30% for Macedonia) that indicated that there is no need to put limits on the relationship.

**Setting limits on communication is essential for mentees.**



54% of the respondents indicated there should be limits on communication to avoid it becoming too frequent or oppressive for both parties. 37% pointed out that there should be no limits and they expect to be

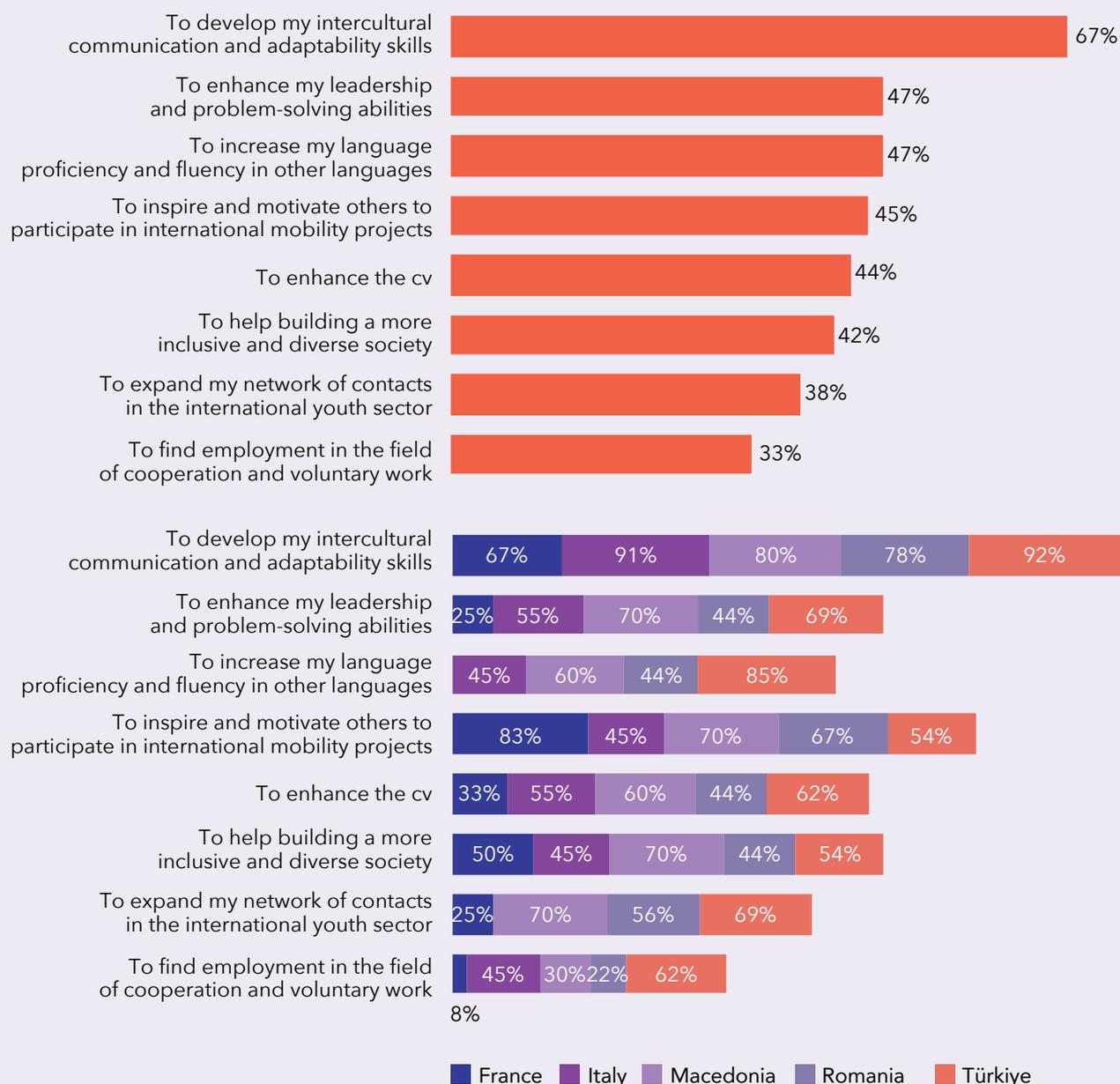
able to talk about any topic and at any time with the mentor. Limits on discussion topics which are personal spaces and boundaries must be respected such as certain topics like love (32%).

## AFTER THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

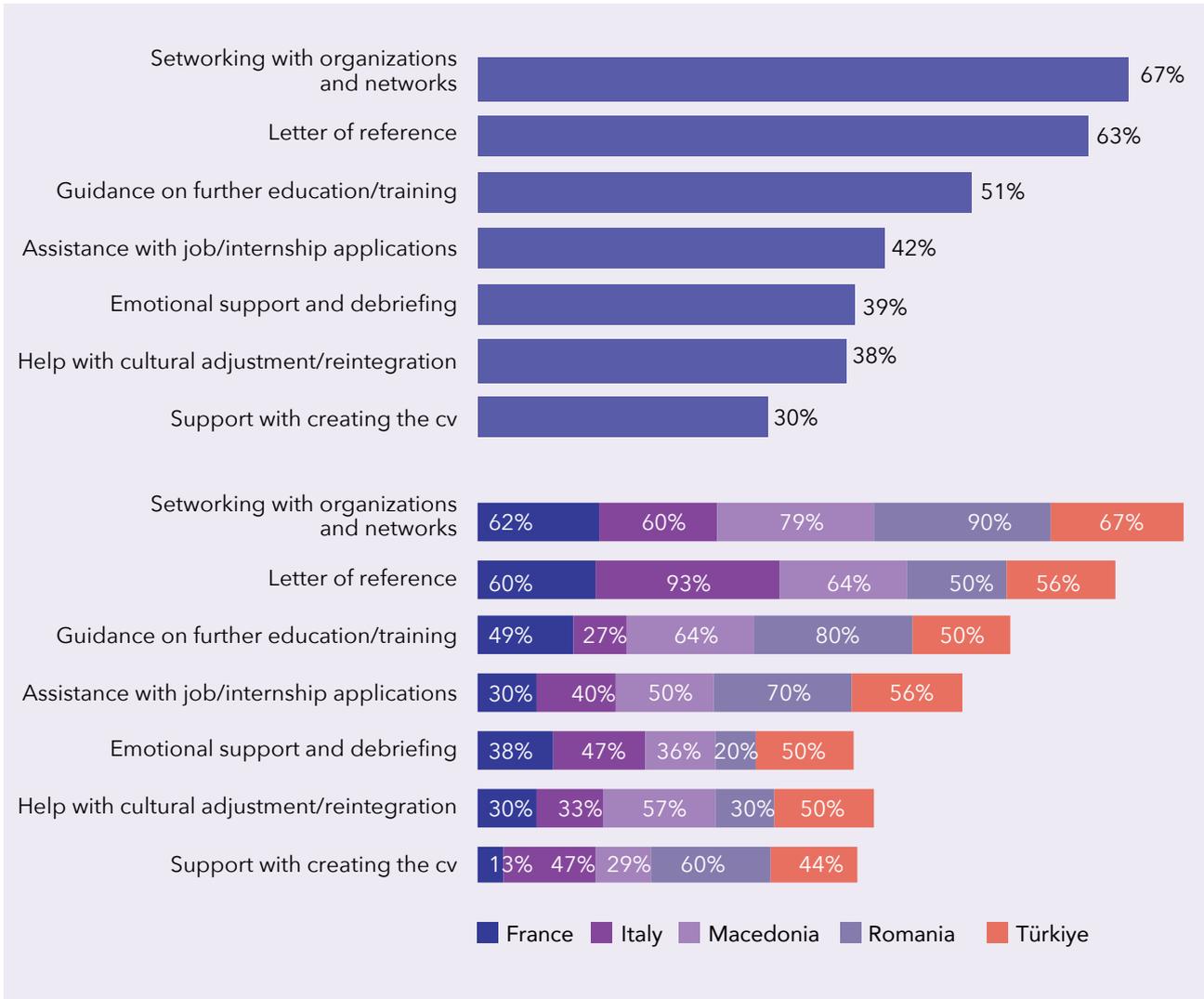
**67% of mentors would use this experience to develop their intercultural, communication and adaptability skills.**

Mentors expressed different ways as to how they could use their mentoring experience in the future, ranging from intercultural, communication and adaptability skills to soft skills such as language skills, leadership and problem-solving skills. There is a close connection between the motivation expressed to become a mentor and their future usage of the mentoring experience. This variety of expectations and similarities with motivations can also be observed evenly when looking at results per country.

### HOW CAN MENTORS USE THIS MENTORING EXPERIENCE IN THE FUTURE?



**What needs mentees might have at the end of the mobility experience? (question for Mentees only)**



In line with previous tendencies, mentees have expressed needs displaying how the mentoring programme could support them further professional-wise. 63% of the mentees have highlighted letters of reference, 67% mentioned networking with organisations or other networks. The third main need is to receive guidance on further education/training (51% of responses).

Looking at the differences between countries, for Turkish (67%), Romanian (90%), Macedonian (79%) and French (62%) respondents networking with organisations and networks is the top need, while it is to get a letter of reference for Italians (93%).

## DISCUSSION ON THE RESULTS

Results from the study demonstrate **alignments and variations between mentors and mentees' expectations and motivations**. These variations also occur across EU countries with slight discrepancies.

### MOTIVATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF MENTORS AND MENTEES

Throughout the study, there are significant commonalities worth mentioning: the primary motivations compelling mentors to engage in mentoring programs are **to offer guidance and advice to mentees**, and secondly, **to facilitate the cultivation of new transversal skills**. Predominantly, mentors express the desire to assume the role of **an active listener**, and **to establish themselves as trustworthy figures**. They also consider that skills such as active listening, ability to provide constructive feedback and intercultural skills are the main skills required for the role. To achieve such an objective, a large majority of the mentors express the **need for training and guidance on these communicational abilities**.

In the meantime, the needs expressed by mentees align with those expressed by mentors to some degree. Mentees posit that preeminent competencies for mentors should include adeptness in active listening, ability to deliver constructive feedback, and proficiency in intercultural communication. More specifically, there are similar needs identified by both categories present in the study such as **the need to exchange with someone who already had experience abroad** and **the need to learn more about the culture and tradition** of the host countries.

### PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO MENTORING

It seems that mentors and mentees both value **the capacity for mentoring programs to facilitate the exchange of pragmatic and detailed information about culture, adaptation, and integration of specific countries**. Mentees want to be reassured about the place and the culture they are getting into

and mentors also express the desire to share the information on how to interact within the local community. Similarly, mentors believe that personal learnings and challenges faced during their mobility experiences are the specific topics that should be shared with the mentee.

Both profiles of respondents agree on the functional and personalised practical support that can be provided during a mentoring experience, and both types of respondents, regardless of the country of origin, seem to mainly consider that **the utility of a mentoring programme for international mobility participants is to facilitate arrival and integration among a foreign community and culture**.

While it is not surprising that a pragmatic approach to mentoring is emphasised by both mentors and mentees - as it seems to be the ad-hoc benefits of a mentoring programme for international mobility - it is interesting to note that the needs and motivations expressed for the nature of the relationship between a mentee and a mentor vary significantly.

### NATURE OF MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

While mentors express the need for more personal connection like motivation, personal background, personal learnings, and



challenges in previous mobility, mentees would prefer to create a professional connection with the mentor that is focused on professional and international experience, networking, problem-solving and ability to build relationships that would benefit them professionally. Mentors are prepared to be available for mentees and actually support them also in emotional ways during their mobility.

**Mentees are interested in the contribution that mentors can make on the professional level** and expect that mentors can help them broaden their network, mentioning it as the most important thing to take back from mobility. When mentees were asked about the soft skills they expect to develop with the support of their mentor, all the suggestions received an almost similar response rate. In fact, none of the proposals received more votes than the others, at least not by a large margin. **This proves that mentees expect this mentoring relationship to help them develop all kinds of soft skills.**

Both mentors and mentees express that privacy is important, but they diverge in how to achieve the right balance during the mentoring programme. Mentees are prepared to have a relationship with the mentor and be open to talk about any topic with the mentor. On the other hand, mentors were very supportive of setting boundaries with their mentees in terms of respecting each person's personal space.

Overall, the discrepancies regarding the nature of the mentoring relationship should not necessarily prevent professionals from making relevant mentoring programmes and matches between participants. **Expectations from a mentoring relationship can be realigned if addressed throughout the mentoring programme (before, during and after).**

These variations rather expose that international mobility mentoring programmes should not remain solely pragmatic and should address the in-depth motivations and expectations of mentors and mentees to get extensive results and positive developments.

## BUILDING A COMPREHENSIVE MENTORING PROGRAMME

To ensure a comprehensive approach to mentoring, the MENTOR consortium advocates for the integration of the Youth Development theory and Social Learning theory to create a framework that aligns with the identified needs and expectations of mentees but also mentors. Effective and positive youth development is rooted in a supportive environment that encourages responsibility, fosters growth, and equips individuals with the skills necessary to navigate challenges. As highlighted by the study, **the programme should prioritise the alignment of needs and expectations of both mentors and mentees to ensure the development of the 5Cs (competence, confidence, character, connection, and caring) throughout the mentoring experience.**

Simultaneously, as highlighted by the Social Learning theory, mentoring programmes should emphasise the influence of observing and modelling behaviours of mentors on personal development. The mentoring programme should therefore leverage this theory by structuring mentor-mentee interactions to facilitate observational learning and align needs and expectations. **Mentors should be given the means to guide mentees in imitating positive behaviours and acquiring skills crucial for their personal as well as professional growth during international mobility.**

Results from the study demonstrate a distinct interest in mentoring programmes for international mobility. The MENTOR consortium then advocates that the programme should address ad-hoc benefits and explore beyond by providing adapted training to mentors and assessing their needs and expectations as well as those of the mentees. Relying on a comprehensive approach to mentoring will enable professionals to ensure long-term benefits for participants and for organisations that are involved in mentoring projects, build trustful relationships with international partners and ensure the overall quality and relevance of international mobility projects.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Mentoring programs should assess the needs of mentors prior to the matching with mentees.**

**Mentoring programmes should address personal as well as professional development for the mentors and mentees.**

**Mentoring programs should include specific training dedicated to mentors for them to align what they can offer with the needs of mentees.**



**Mentoring programs should offer a monitoring programme focused on developing the 5Cs for the mentees:**

- Competence
- Confidence
- Character
- Connection
- Caring

**Mentoring programs should focus on facilitating fluent and trustful mentor-mentee relationships.**

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