From Barcelona to Wuppertal: How Nerea Found Her Dream Job in Germany and Built a Successful Career

Even while living in Barcelona, Nerea Barroso Claros had a clear goal: She wanted to work as an early childhood educator in an environment that combines Waldorf education with learning through nature. She was particularly fascinated by the opportunity to support children through outdoor free play while encouraging their individual development.
“I wanted to learn more about outdoor and Waldorf education,” she recalls. Germany therefore increasingly came into focus for her, as it is a country where these educational approaches are widely established in many regions. “Working conditions for early childhood educators are also better than in Spain,” says Nerea.

The Decisive Turning Point and a Trusted Companion: EURES

Before joining the programme, Nerea had already gained several years of professional experience in early childhood education. However, due to the difficult labour market situation for early childhood educators in Spain, she became unemployed and registered as a jobseeker.
At that time, the 31-year-old received an email from the Spanish State Public Employment Service (SEPE) providing information about the “Welcome to the Kindergarten” programme, organised by the German Federal Employment Agency’s International Placement Services (ZAV) in cooperation with EURES. The message arrived at exactly the right moment and opened the door to a new opportunity for Nerea.

Throughout the process, Nerea received dedicated and reliable support from Elizabeth Vicho and Johannes Gruner, two career advisers from the “Welcome to the Kindergarten”-programme team. Despite some initial challenges, their guidance enabled her to successfully enter the programme’s selection process.

Looking back, Nerea particularly appreciates that not only her professional qualifications, but also her personal preferences were taken into account when identifying a suitable employer: “I felt very well supported throughout the entire process, and my preferences regarding both my place of work and where I wanted to live were taken into consideration.” Nerea had specifically expressed her wish to work in an anthroposophically inspired educational setting while living in an area surrounded by nature. Thanks to EURES, both wishes became a reality.

Financial support through the EURES Targeted Mobility Scheme (EURES TMS) also played a key role. Funding for language courses, job shadowing, relocation, recognition of qualifications and the training programme gave her the confidence to take this important step.

“Welcome to the Kindergarten”

The programme recruits early childhood education professionals from other EU Member States to work in Germany.
To achieve this, the German Federal Employment Agency (BA) works in cooperation with local authorities, municipalities, private childcare providers and EURES. The International Placement Services (ZAV) identify interested candidates in other EU countries - primarily Spain - and recruit them for positions in German day-care centres. Groups of around 15 to 20 qualified professionals are then formed to take up employment together within a specific region of Germany.

Information for employers
Information for professionals

EURES TMS

The EURES-Targeted Mobility Scheme (TMS) supports cross-border professional mobility within Europe with financial grants and personal advice.

There are support modules for both job seekers and employers.

“Receiving financial support throughout the process was very important to me. Without this support, I would not have been able to afford the costs of relocating, attending a German language course and completing the job shadowing”, Nerea narrates in retrospect.

A Dream Job in a Waldorf Day-care Centre

Since 2025, Nerea has been working at a newly established Waldorf day-care centre in Wuppertal. The centre’s integrative and inclusive concept corresponds exactly to the educational philosophy she had already developed in Spain: “For many years, I have been interested in similar educational approaches. I am very happy to have found a kindergarten where I can work according to this educational philosophy. It is important to me to value the individuality of every child and to enable children to experience and appreciate nature consciously.”
Her part-time Master’s degree in Music, specialising in Acoustic Ecology in Education, also contributes indirectly to her work.

Becoming a Group Leader Within One Year

Within just her first year, Nerea was allowed to take on additional responsibilities thanks to her commitment and passion for her work, and was soon promoted to Group Leader. “I am very eager to learn and like to take the initiative by contributing ideas and supporting the continued development of the day-care centre”, Nerea explains.
This mindset was a key factor in her rapid professional development.

A New Chapter in Life – Professionally and Personally

Professionally, Nerea feels she has truly “arrived”: “The educational concept is caring and respectful towards children. I am also very content with my colleagues and the management of the day-care centre.”

She has also settled well into her private life in Wuppertal. She found her flat through a colleague at work, in the close proximity to a forest. What she appreciates most about her new home region is “a lot of nature, as well as the very good connectivity to my city and to other major cities.”

Her first friendships developed during her German language course. She soon expanded her social circle through her work, shared hobbies such as aerial hoop and aerial silks, as well as through online platforms for people with similar interests.

A Bold Step That Is Worth Taking: What Nerea Has Learned from Her Experience

Looking back, Nerea describes her move to Germany as a great adventure: “Moving to another country requires a great deal of energy and patience, especially when it comes to the language. Openness and a willingness to learn are very important. I can only recommend that everyone experiences something like this at least once.”

Nerea has grown enormously, both professionally and personally, through her courageous decisions and patience. “I would like to continue living in Germany over the coming years and keep learning and growing in this day-care centre”, Nerea states.

Her former university in Spain (Universidad de Manresa) also showed great interest in her professional journey to Germany. In May 2026, she was invited to give a presentation about her experience. Together with representatives of ZAV, she introduced the “Welcome to the Kindergarten” programme.

She hopes that her story will encourage other professionals across the European Union to pursue new opportunities with the support of EURES – even if taking the first step may initially seem challenging.

Nerea’s Practical Tips for Taking the Next Career Step Abroad

Based on her own experience, Nerea has the following advice for anyone considering a professional move to another European country:

- **Be patient with the language:** Learning a new language takes time, but perseverance pays off.
- **Be open to new structures:** Work culture and everyday life may differ considerably from those in your home country. An open mind will help you adapt more easily.
- **Make use of EURES support services:** Programmes such as “Welcome to the Kindergarten” organised by ZAV, and financial support through EURES TMS make the transition significantly easier – and, in many cases, make it possible in the first place.
- **Build your network:** Contacts made during language courses, at work or through shared hobbies can make a significant contribution to successfully integrating into your new home region.
- **Take the courageous step:** Feeling uncertain is part of the journey – but courage is rewarded. The personal and professional growth you gain is immense and well worth the initial challenges.

Dear Nerea, we wish you all the very best for your future in Germany!