



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 26 November 2013

Traineeships: survey reveals shortcomings in working conditions and learning content

A significant number of trainees feel that their working conditions could be improved and that the learning content of their traineeship is insufficient, according to a Eurobarometer survey on the quality of traineeships in the EU published today. Even if the majority of trainees consider their experience useful, the survey shows that almost one in three traineeships is substandard with regard to working conditions or learning content.

These issues are due to be addressed in a forthcoming proposal for a Quality Framework for Traineeships to be proposed by the Commission in December this year.

"Traineeships are crucial to facilitate the transition from school to the labour market. With the current high levels of youth unemployment in the EU, it is vital to ensure that trainees receive the best training and experience to get a future job and that they are not exploited. This is why the Commission will present a proposal for a Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships, which will set out guidelines to enable trainees to acquire high-quality work experience under safe conditions", said László Andor, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

The Eurobarometer study shows that:

- Traineeships are widespread: around half of respondents (46%) have done a traineeship, and a high share of them has done multiple traineeships.
- Almost six out of ten trainees (59%) did not receive any financial compensation during their last traineeship. Among those who were paid, less than a half consider it was enough to cover basic living costs.
- Four out of ten trainees did not have a written traineeship agreement or contract with the host organisation or company.
- Almost one in three traineeships (30%) is substandard either with regards to learning content or working conditions. Close to 25% report that their working conditions were different from that of regular employees and 20% consider they have not learned anything professionally useful during their traineeship.
- Training abroad is still rare, with only around 10% of traineeships taking place abroad.

An analysis based on the Eurobarometer results found a significant correlation between the quality of traineeships and the employment outcome. In other words, those that had completed a substandard traineeship were significantly less likely to find a job afterwards.

Background

Over the past two decades, traineeships have become an important entry point into the labour market for young people. However, although they increasingly represent a standard feature in our labour markets, their spread has been accompanied by growing concerns as to learning content and working conditions. If traineeships are really to facilitate access to employment, they must offer quality learning content and adequate working conditions, and should not be a cheap substitute for regular jobs.

The Eurobarometer survey was conducted in May 2013 in all EU Member States and Croatia in order to gather sufficient evidence on the problems related to the quality of traineeships. A total of 12,921 people in the age group 18-35 were interviewed on their personal traineeship experience.

As announced in the [Youth Employment Package](#) of December 2012 ([IP/12/1311](#), [MEMO/12/938](#)), the Commission is due to present in December 2013 a proposal for a Quality Framework for Traineeships. This would support the implementation of the Council Recommendation on Establishing a Youth Guarantee that called on Member States to ensure that *'all young people up to the age of 25 years receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education'*. The Youth Guarantee is one of the most crucial and urgent structural reforms that Member States must introduce to address youth unemployment and to improve school to work transition (see [MEMO/13/968](#) and [MEMO/13/984](#)).

The development of a Quality Framework for Traineeships would also help the extension of EURES to traineeships, as requested by the European Council in its June 2012 conclusions.

A study on traineeships in all EU Member States was published by the Commission in July 2012. It recommended that traineeships offer more guarantees in terms of quality and perspectives for young people, and should be more responsive to labour market requirements (see [IP/12/731](#)).

For more information

Eurobarometer "[The experience of traineeships in the EU](#)"

[László Andor's website](#)

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