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PRESS RELEASE

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Youth employment: Commission proposes standards to improve quality of traineeships

Guidelines to enable trainees to acquire high-quality work experience under safe and fair conditions, and to increase their chances of finding a good quality job, have been proposed today by the European Commission. The proposal for a Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships would in particular call on Member States to ensure that national law or practice respects the principles set out in the guidelines, and to adapt their legislation where necessary. Traineeships are a key element of the [Youth Guarantee](#) proposed by the European Commission in December 2012 and adopted by the EU's Council of Ministers in April 2013. Currently one in three traineeships is substandard with regard to working conditions or learning content, according to a recent Eurobarometer survey ([IP/13/1161](#)). Many of these substandard traineeships are used by employers to replace entry level jobs.

"Traineeships are crucial for improving the employability of young people, and to ensure a smooth transition from school to work. It is unacceptable that some trainees are currently exploited as free or cheap labour. Member States must ensure that trainees receive valuable training and experience to get a job. These proposed guidelines would enable trainees to acquire high-quality work experience under good working conditions", said László Andor, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

The guidelines would increase transparency with regard to traineeship conditions, for example by requiring that traineeships be based on a written traineeship agreement. The agreement should cover learning content (educational objectives, supervision) and working conditions (limited duration, working time, clear indication whether trainees would be paid or otherwise compensated and whether they would qualify for social security). Indeed, traineeship providers would be asked to disclose in the vacancy notice whether the traineeship would be paid.

By setting common quality standards for traineeships, adoption of the Quality Framework for Traineeships would support the implementation of Youth Guarantee schemes by Member States. It would also encourage more transnational traineeships and help the extension of [EURES](#) to traineeships, as requested by the European Council in its [June 2012 Conclusions](#).

The proposed Framework does not cover traineeships that form part of university degree or that are mandatory to access a specific profession.

Background

The Quality Framework for Traineeships is one of the initiatives announced in the [Youth Employment Package](#) of December 2012 (see [IP/12/1311](#), [MEMO/12/938](#) and [SPEECH/12/910](#)).

The Youth Guarantee aims 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. Good quality traineeships are essential for its effective implementation ([MEMO/13/968](#) and [MEMO/13/984](#)).

Over the past two decades, traineeships have become an important entry point into the labour market for young people. Although they increasingly represent a standard feature in our labour markets, their spread has also 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.

A recent [Eurobarometer survey on the quality of traineeships](#) reveals that traineeships are widespread: around half of respondents (46%) have done a traineeship, and high share of them has done multiple traineeships. It also indicates that 35% of traineeship providers do not offer a written traineeship agreement and 23% of trainees are offered to renew the traineeship in the end, instead of being properly recruited. And the survey shows that only 9% of traineeships take place abroad.

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

[News item on DG Employment website](#)

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

[László Andor's website](#)

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