



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Youth employment: Commission welcomes adoption of Quality Framework to improve quality of traineeships

The European Commission welcomes today's adoption by the EU's Council of Ministers of a Quality Framework on Traineeships 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. The Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships in particular calls 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. The Commission will now carefully monitor the implementation of the Quality Framework in all Member States.

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 November 2013 Eurobarometer survey ([IP/13/1161](#)). Many of these substandard traineeships are used by employers to replace entry level jobs.

"Traineeships are essential to ensure smooth school to work transitions. However, they are of value to young people only if they offer quality learning content and safe working conditions. Trainees should not be used as a free or cheap source of labour; they should not replace permanent workers. Instead, traineeships should be considered as an investment, being of value to the employer and the trainee. While I welcome the compromise text that the Council adopted today, some of the elements could have been more in line with the Commission's ambitious proposal. It is crucial that all Member States now fully and concretely implement the quality framework as soon as possible, with the active involvement of employer and employee representatives", said László Andor, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

The guidelines will 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 will be paid or otherwise compensated and whether they will qualify for social security). Indeed, traineeship providers will be asked to disclose in the vacancy notice whether the traineeship will be paid.

The Commission consulted a wide range of stakeholders, including small businesses, in order to ensure that the Quality Framework for traineeships is neither too prescriptive nor too burdensome.

By setting common quality standards for traineeships, the Quality Framework for Traineeships will support the implementation of Youth Guarantee schemes by Member States. It will 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 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/14/13](#)).

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 November 2013 [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

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

[László Andor's website](#)

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