

Citizens' summary

'Quality framework for traineeships'

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

Traineeships can help make young people more employable by providing a stepping stone to the world of work. Increasingly, however, a range of stakeholders have voiced concerns about the effectiveness and quality of traineeships in general, and open-market traineeships in particular (involving only the trainee and the host organisation). Various studies and surveys have recently confirmed these concerns, particularly the problems of low learning content and substandard working conditions. A significant proportion of traineeships in today's Europe are substandard, and many of them replace entry-level jobs. Finally, the proportion of trainees who take training abroad remains very low. One of the main reasons is a lack of information about national traineeship rules and regulations.

WHO WILL BENEFIT AND HOW?

The initiative's main beneficiaries will be trainees and, more generally, young people starting their careers. In addition, host organisations will benefit from clear guidance about what makes a traineeship high-quality. This will be achieved by

- (1) increasing the number of high-quality traineeships
- (2) combating abusive practices, while limiting compliance costs for host organisations
- (3) improving information about transnational traineeships and access to them.

WHY DOES THE EU NEED TO TAKE ACTION?

The EU has an interest in promoting quality traineeships because it has two broader objectives:

- bridging the gap between education and work, and
- enabling young people to move around more easily within the EU.

Although EU countries could conceivably improve trainees' working conditions and the learning content of traineeships off their own bat, a mere handful have initiated reforms so far. Yet problems with traineeships are reported EU-wide. EU coordination could help speed up action in this area.

Another advantage of a coordinated EU-wide approach is that it will help extend the European Job Mobility Portal (EURES) to traineeships.

Finally, traineeships provided under a Youth Guarantee must be high-quality if they are genuinely to make young people more employable and help them enter the world of work. The best way to achieve this is to define and enforce EU-wide standards for the quality of traineeships..

WHAT EXACTLY WILL CHANGE?

EU countries will be asked to ensure that open-market traineeships meet a set of quality standards. These guidelines will result in traineeships that provide sound learning content, decent working conditions, greater openness as regards remuneration or compensation, social security coverage and recruitment opportunities once trainees have finished their placements.

Standardised rules should also increase the proportion of transnational traineeships, which will lead to more young people taking up jobs abroad.

WHEN IS THE PACKAGE LIKELY TO COME INTO EFFECT?

EU countries are expected to adopt the proposed recommendation in the first 6 months of 2014 and start implementing the Quality Framework for Traineeships as soon as possible, and by the end of 2014 at the latest.