



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
Impact Assessment Board

Brussels,  
D(2012)

**Opinion**

**Title**

**DG EMPL - Analytical document accompanying the second stage consultation of the social partners on a Quality Framework for Traineeships  
(draft version of 12 September 2012) \***

**(A) Context**

Despite the benefits of traineeships, concerns about the effectiveness and quality of traineeships have been recognized by European Institutions. In 2010, the European Parliament called specifically for better and secured internships; for a European Quality Charter setting out minimum standards for internships to ensure their educational value and avoid exploitation; and for young people to be protected from those employers who are "exploiting the willingness of young people to learn without any future prospect of becoming fully established as part of their workforce". In 2011, the European Commission foresaw in its Youth Opportunity Initiative the launch of a Quality Framework on Traineeships by the end of 2012. The purpose of this analytical document is to support the decision of a possible launch of the second stage consultation with the social partners on the content of a possible EU initiative in this area. In order to fully respect the autonomous decision-making of the social partners, this document does not compare policy options or identify a preferred policy option. In case that the European social partners decide not to start negotiations in response to this consultation or do not reach an agreement, a full impact assessment report will accompany any further EU action in this area.

**(B) Overall assessment**

**As this document forms also part of the Commission's decision making process, it should be significantly improved in several important respects. First, the report should clarify the policy context of the second stage consultation and the regulatory situation in the Member States. It should then strengthen the problem definition by providing a better indication of the concrete problems to be addressed and by presenting a more developed baseline scenario showing the evolution of the problem drivers given the current economic situation and future outlook. Second, the document should better demonstrate the need and value added for EU action, by demonstrating why Member States cannot sufficiently address the main problems. Finally, the document should provide more details on the potential (compliance) costs and benefits, for all actors involved, of the envisaged concrete measures and policy avenues, in order to be better informed on the advisability and value added of a potential EU level initiative.**

**Given the nature of the Board's recommendations, the Board asks DG EMPL to submit a revised version of the document, on which it will issue a new opinion.**

\* Note that this opinion concerns a draft impact assessment report which may differ from the one adopted

### **(C) Main recommendations for improvements**

**(1) Clarify the policy context and strengthen the problem definition.** The document should give a more detailed overview of the policy context of the second stage consultation and should provide a clearer indication of the existing problems, such as underlying market failures and the regulatory situation in the Member States. This could be achieved by including some figures or magnitudes on the scale of the transnational (coordination) problems, and by providing more concrete evidence. It should better distinguish between the key problems which can justify an EU action (e. g. cross border traineeships) and other issues (e. g. lack of compensation or low pay and proper social protection coverage). In addition, it should present the shortcomings identified in the traineeship study in more detail and more consistently throughout the text. Finally, the document should present a more developed baseline scenario by providing a clear description of how the individual problem drivers would evolve in the absence of further EU measures and by describing how the situation might be exacerbated by the current economic situation and outlook.

**(2) Better demonstrate the need for EU action.** On the basis of a strengthened problem definition, the document should better demonstrate the necessity, added value and proportionality of EU action, by better concentrating on the (key) objectives of the initiative (addressing quality concerns and traineeship conditions), and by clearly showing why Member States alone cannot sufficiently address the problematic issues. In doing so, it should better describe the possible legal bases and the justification for their use.

**(3) Better present the policy options and indicate the effectiveness and efficiency of the outlined key elements of a possible EU initiative.** Given the fact that the purpose of this analytical document is also to allow the College to decide whether EU action is advisable to address the identified problems and whether the second stage of consultation on the content of such an EU initiative should be launched, it should explain in more detail the available measures and content of the presented policy avenues. The document should also present upfront any alternative feasible combinations of option elements. Furthermore, it should provide more details on and the pros/cons of the concrete measures of such an initiative, including the expected impacts in economic, social and environmental terms. It should be indicated to what extent the outlined policy avenues (and combinations thereof) and other elements of a possible EU initiative would be effective in relation to the key objectives and also their efficiency in achieving them in the Member States, paying particular attention to SME's. This analysis should be extended to allow the College to consider (compliance) cost implications for host organisations, companies and Member States alongside the estimated benefits and thus to be better informed on the added value of a potential EU initiative.

*Some more technical comments have been transmitted directly to the author DG and are expected to be incorporated in the final version of the impact assessment report.*

### **(D) Procedure and presentation**

The document should report the outcome of the formal first stage social partner consultation - once concluded on 23 October 2012 – and inform to what extent it is in accordance with the opinions of the Social Partners expressed in the public consultation. The document should avoid using unexplained abbreviations and explain the content and context of technical terms for the non-expert reader. It should include relevant studies and/or their executive summaries in the annex.

<b>(E) IAB scrutiny process</b>	
Reference number	2012/EMPL/2013
External expertise used	No
Date of IAB meeting	3 October 2012