Quality traineeships in the EU

2020/2005(INL) - 23/05/2023 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs adopted a legislative initiative report by Monica SEMEDO (Renew, LU) containing recommendations to the Commission on quality traineeships in the EU.

Members stressed that traineeships are primarily a learning experience that should not replace entry-level jobs. They called on the Commission and the Member States, in close cooperation with the social partners, to facilitate and improve access for young people to **high-quality, paid, inclusive traineeships**, particularly for those coming from vulnerable backgrounds.

The report highlighted the need for quality traineeships to improve young people's skills and employability, as well as the need to properly educate and train young people for the needs of the labour market in order to tackle skills mismatches. There is a need to offer traineeships in areas linked to skills needs, labour shortages and future oriented sectors in view of both the green and the digital transition.

To avoid supporting poor-quality and unpaid traineeships, employers should only receive public support and be able to use it if they comply with quality criteria, legislation and collective agreements. It is also necessary to prevent young people from doing several consecutive traineeships by strictly monitoring the use of contracts aimed at ensuring the transition between education and the labour market.

Revision of the current framework

The report called on the Commission to **update and strengthen the 2014 Council Recommendation** and to turn it into a stronger legislative instrument. The Commission should also include the following additional principles in an updated quality framework for traineeships:

- access to adequate compensation in line with the cost of living;

- access to social protection by trainees in accordance with national schemes,

- increased access to traineeships for trainees from vulnerable backgrounds, including trainees with disabilities, using an intersectional approach;

- accessible workplaces

- compliance of any remote part of a traineeship with quality criteria;

- clear learning objectives and access to adequate mentorship and to the guidance of trained mentors to ensure intergenerational transfers of skills;

- in cooperation with the national labour inspectorates and relevant authorities, report malpractice and poor conditions during the traineeship period by means of established channels.

The Commission is called on the Commission to **propose a directive** on open labour market traineeships, traineeships in the context of active labour market policies (ALMPs) and traineeships that are a mandatory part of professional training, in order to ensure minimum quality standards, including rules on the duration of the traineeships, access to social protection in accordance with national law and practice as well as remuneration that ensures a decent standard of living in order to avoid exploitative practices.

Assistance, awareness-raising, good practice

While condemning the use of trainee status for contracting highly skilled and specialised workers, the report highlighted the central role that the **European Social Fund Plus** (ESF+), the Recovery and Resilience Facility and its Scoreboard, which links funding to Next Generation EU measures, and the Youth Guarantee can play in increasing the number of high-quality traineeships, including for disadvantaged groups.

The Commission is invited to: (i) raise awareness at national, regional and local level of the EU funds available to ensure access to quality traineeships for all; (ii) support the exchange of best practice between Member States on quality traineeships for all; and (iii) provide assistance to Member States on legal issues related to the implementation of a quality framework for traineeships.

The report called on Member States to put in place **adequate monitoring systems** to ensure the quality of trainees' first work experience, and invited the Commission to convey guidelines for adequate monitoring systems to ensure uniformity of data collection. It called on national labour market inspectorates to ensure compliance with existing regulations on quality traineeships. It also called for better and more comparable data on traineeships to be collected at Member State and EU level.

Accessibility

The report stressed that quality traineeships must be **inclusive and accessible to all**. In particular, it stressed the need to help people with disabilities gain access to quality traineeships while ensuring that the recruitment process is inclusive. It called for traineeships to be accessible to people of all ages, while stressing the need to provide opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, in particular young NEETs. It called on the Member States to do more to encourage traineeships abroad and, in this respect, highlighted the potential of EURES as a tool for matching training and placement.

In conclusion, the Commission is asked to:

- present a **proposal for a Directive** of the European Parliament and of the Council, based on Article 153 (2)(b) TFEU, in conjunction with paragraph 1(b) thereof, on a framework for quality traineeships;

- submit a **proposal for a Decision** of the European Parliament and of the Council, based on Article 166 (4) TFEU, on a quality framework for traineeships.