Quality traineeships in the EU

2020/2005(INL) - 14/06/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 404 votes to 78, with 130 abstentions, a resolution containing recommendations to the Commission on quality traineeships in the European Union.

Parliament called on the Commission to submit a **proposal for a directive** of the European Parliament and of the Council on a framework for quality traineeships, and a proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a quality framework for traineeships undertaken with the aim of obtaining educational qualifications.

According to Members, the new directive will set **minimum quality standards**, including rules on the duration of traineeships, as well as on compensation and access to social protection, in accordance with national schemes. Trainees covered by the Decision should have access to adequate compensation determined by each Member State on the basis of national socio-economic conditions and the cost of living. It should cover at least **basic living needs** such as food, accommodation and transport. It should be financial or otherwise complemented by in kind benefits.

High-quality traineeships

Members called on the Commission and the Member States to facilitate and improve access for young people to high-quality, **paid, inclusive traineeships**, particularly for those coming from vulnerable backgrounds, with a view to achieving the Union's objective of social cohesion and inclusion. Stressing the need for high-quality traineeships to enhance the skills and employability of young people, Members stressed the need to offer traineeships in areas linked to **skills needs**, labour shortages and future oriented sectors in view of both the green and digital transitions.

To avoid supporting poor-quality and unpaid traineeships, Parliament stressed that 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

Parliament 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.

Assistance and awareness-raising

Parliament condemned the **use of traineeship status for contracting highly skilled and specialised workers**, when in reality they are employees and their employment relationship should be recognised as such. It considered that such abusive practice often results in job insecurity, lower pay and a lack of social protection, in particular no paid holidays, sickness protection or parental leave, and also no end-of-year bonuses. The importance of not allowing such practices to be formalised and legitimised is stressed.

Members recalled the central role that the **European Social Fund Plus** (ESF+), the Recovery and Resilience Facility and its associated scoreboard linking funding to policies for the NextGenerationEU instrument, and the Youth Guarantee can play in contributing to an increase in the number of high-quality traineeships including those that are accessible to disadvantaged groups.

The Commission is invited to: (i) raise awareness at national, regional and local level of available **Union funds** to ensure the accessibility by all to high-quality traineeships; (ii) support the exchange of **best practices** between the Members States in the area of high-quality traineeships that are accessible to all; (iii) convey **guidelines** for adequate monitoring schemes to ensure uniformity of data collection.

Parliament called on the Member States to put in place **adequate monitoring systems** to ensure the quality of trainees' first work experience. It also asked **national labour market inspectorates** to ensure compliance with existing regulations on quality traineeships.

Accessibility

The resolution 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.

Members 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 persons who are neither in employment nor in education or training (NEETs). They 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.