Work-linked training, apprenticeship: European pathways, EUROPASS-training formal recognition

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The Committee welcomed the initiative taken by the Florence European Council. It endorsed the Commission communication, subject to a number of comments and suggestions. It noted with interest the innovative aspect of the communication which rightly highlighted the positive role which apprenticeship training could play in contributing to young people's integration into employment. However, the Committee put forward the following main comments and suggestions: specific actions should be carried out for firms on the quantitative development of apprenticeship training. This depended ultimately on the will and/or capacity of firms to increase the number of apprenticeship training places. The Commission and the Member States should initiate information and awareness campaigns for young people, parents, teachers, career advice centres and the social partners in order to improve the image of apprenticeship training. To this end the role of Cedefop should be reinforced. Practical workplace training needed to be continuous. In particular it must be ensured that apprentices were not assigned to menial tasks unrelated to the training which they were supposed to be receiving. The development of apprenticeship training and its extension to other vocations could be fully achieved only if this was not an end in itself. Apprenticeship training should open the way to further studies, in particular offering ways of transferring to higher or university education, whilst taking account of the vocational training systems of the various Member States. Emphasis should be placed on the essential links between: the apprentice and his family on the one hand, and the apprentice's supervisor and teacher on the other; the workplace supervisor (whose status, role, knowledge required for the job and ways of preparing for this, and rights and obligations should be clearly defined) and the teacher. The European Union should encourage the shared responsibility of the social partners (employers and workers) for the operation of apprenticeship training, particularly within training bodies. The Committee wanted to see a quality survey launched. This should set out reference values or minimum criteria with a view to identifying the essential features of a European apprenticeship training model. It would also be useful to measure the impact of apprenticeship training on labour market integration and employment.