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

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Two years on from the entry into force of Decision 51/1999/EC, the state of implementation can be summarised as follows: The implementation mechanism has been established and is running smoothly, in particular: -all Member States have designated one or more existing bodies -called national contact points (NCPs) - as being responsible for implementing the "Europass Training" Initiative; -the Commission has fostered co-ordination and exchanges of information through meetings of NCP representatives; a non-binding cooperation charter has been agreed by the Commission and NCPs. The actual dissemination has started in almost all countries. About 19300 "Europass Training" documents have been issued. In general they were issued to record European pathways that complied with the criteria set out in the Decision. The available data indicate that: -all countries have hosted European pathways. English-speaking countries are the most favoured destinations; -duration of the traineeship abroad varied between 3 and 15 weeks; -a slight majority of "Europass Training" holders were women (about 55%); -a majority are about 20 years old (17 to 23); -about three quarters of holders are in education or training at secondary or upper secondary level; lower and higher levels of education each account for 10-15% of cases; -hotel, restaurants and tourism is often the most popular sector, although all sectors are covered by one or more pathways; -SMEs (other than education and training bodies) are not usually involved as sending bodies, although they often host European pathways; -a good number of European pathways come under the "Leonardo da Vinci" programme, though its weight varies considerably from one country to another (30% to 100%). Other Community programmes (Socrates, Youth and Equal) have a marginal role, while in some countries bilateral or national initiatives account for upto 50% of the European pathways. Information and promotion issues have been addressed by launch conferences, the dissemination of information booklets and fliers, participation at relevant events and the Internet. Representatives of the European social partners attend the co-ordination meetings, and often serve on steering committees at national level.