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

1997/0321(SYN) - 18/06/1997 - Document attached to the procedure

OBJECTIVE: to propose recommendations for improving the quality of apprenticeship in Europe, which is a key to the employment of young people in the EU. SUBSTANCE: Quality apprenticeship substantially improves the likelihood of young people finding employment. The unemployment rate tends to be below average among young people who have successfully completed apprenticeships. In Belgium, for example, the unemployment rate among ex- apprentices is 16%, which is lower than the national youth unemployment rate. In Ireland, 95% of apprentices find jobs. In Austria, it is unemployed ex-apprentices who find work again most quickly (in 6 days, as against 80 days for those with other training). Encouraged by these figures, the Commission proposes a five-point strategy for promoting apprenticeship in the EU: 1) expanding and developing new forms of apprenticeship training: the aim is to develop new forms of apprenticeship training, particularly in growing sectors and emerging jobs. In order to do so, Member States should continue to give financial incentives to industry to provide more training places. They should also encourage businesses to participate in apprenticeship schemes by means of a more flexible legal framework. The possibilities presented by multimedia should also be exploited. The Commission, meanwhile, will carry out a survey to identify good practices and important innovations in this field; 2) raising the quality of training: close cooperation must be encouraged between teaching establishments and businesses and between teaching and training staff. Member States should adapt programmes so as to link initial and continuing training. The Commission will place more emphasis in the Leonardo da Vinci programme on fostering qualitative improvements in apprenticeship by means of the exchange of trainers/tutors and other relevant actors in enterprises and educational institutions; 3) encouraging the mobility of apprentices: differences in the status of apprentices between Member States are an obstacle to international mobility. The Commission is currently working on a proposal to develop a common legal framework for apprenticeship training in Europe. When revising the Leonardo programme, the Commission will place special emphasis on a mobility scheme for apprentices (along the lines of Socrates/Erasmus). The Commission and Member States should also promote opportunities for mobility through a system for gathering, coordinating and supplying information on possibilities for transnational placements, in particular within the EURES system (information network on employment and training operated by the Commission); 4) involving the social partners in apprenticeship: the Commission and Member States should set up networks of pilot projects for fostering apprenticeship training in growing and innovative sectors and give the social partners a responsible role in their operation. It also seems essential to step up discussions on apprenticeship training within the social dialogue; 5) formulating and implementing real European strategies for apprenticeship training: differences between national apprenticeship schemes must not be allowed to hamper the search for common approaches to common problems. The Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, could draw up regular reports on apprenticeship training in the EU. The Commission is also considering establishing a benchmarking system for apprenticeship training.