



11 July 2012

QUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR TRAINEESHIPS

KEY MESSAGES

- 1 Traineeships can play an important role in enabling young people to get practical work experience that will ease their transition into the labour market by broadening their skills set and providing a first experience of a working environment. They should, therefore, be about learning, not earning.
- 2 Minimum requirements for traineeships should not be set at the European level. Notably, the EU has no competence on the issue of “remuneration” which is a national competence according to article 153.5 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union.
- 3 A first stage consultation on the proposed quality framework for traineeships should have been conducted with the social partners before a public consultation was launched. BUSINESSEUROPE requests the Commission to fill this gap by publishing a first stage consultation of social partners before any further steps are taken.

WHAT DOES BUSINESSEUROPE AIM FOR?

- It is vital that, in addressing youth unemployment, the skills mismatch that is currently evidenced between young people entering the labour market and the needs of employers is reduced. Traineeships and apprenticeships can play a useful role to that end.
- A clear understanding is needed of the differences between traineeships and apprenticeships. According to the Commission’s studies published in July 2012¹:
 - Apprenticeships are those forms of Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) that formally combine and alternate company based training (periods of

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1599&furtherNews=yes>

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES

There are over 24.5 million unemployed people in the EU, including 5.5 million people under 25 years old.	There are 4 million job vacancies in the EU.	14.1% of the 18-24 population left education and training with at most lower secondary education in 2010.
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practical work experience at a workplace) with school based education (periods of theoretical/practical education followed in a school or training centre), and whose successful completion leads to nationally recognised initial VET certification degrees.

- A broad diversity of definitions of traineeships exists at national level. The common defining characteristics of legal frameworks relating to traineeships are: (i) the general educational purpose; (ii) the practical element of learning in a workplace; and (iii) the temporary character of the traineeship.
- At the same time, traineeships and apprenticeships share the characteristics of providing young people with a practical work experience and of having an educational purpose. Consequently:
 - There is no justification to address one of the two issues at European level in the form of a quality framework on traineeships and leave the other at national level, as currently proposed by the Commission.
 - A clear distinction should be made between, on one side, apprentices and trainees, and on the other, employees. The concept of remuneration/pay should not be used in relation to apprentices and interns.
- The status of apprentices and trainees should be organised by Member States in accordance with the diversity of national industrial relations and educational systems and taking into account the educational purpose.
- Traineeship and apprenticeship schemes should not be overburdened with too many legalities or administrative procedures that discourage companies from taking on trainees/apprentices, thus depriving young people of valuable work experience opportunities.
- Guidelines governing apprenticeships/traineeships must also take into account the responsibilities that trainees/apprentices have towards companies, namely as concerns treating confidentially the information that they have access to and behaving in a responsible way.
- While education is a Member State competence, the EU can contribute too, such as through targeting funds and exchanges of knowledge, information and best practices. In this respect, we call for the allocation of funds for setting up effective dual learning systems under the ESF and Erasmus for all programme.
- BUSINESSEUROPE is engaged to spread good practices among its membership to promote the dual learning approach in all countries who want to establish or improve dual learning systems². Greater involvement of employers' organisations and companies is key to maximise the experience and potential future benefit that apprentices/trainees can take from such placements.

² Creating Opportunities for Youth (2012),
<http://www.businesseurope.eu/Content/default.asp?pageid=568&docid=29967>