

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

QUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR TRAINEESHIPS

11th July 2012, Brussels



RESPONSE TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON QUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR TRAINEESHIPS

Presentation of Earlall

EARLALL – European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning – is an international non-profit association registered in Belgium and established in 2001 under the initiative of Regional Governments willing to building a solid cooperation in the field of lifelong learning. Today it represents 33 members, among institutes for lifelong learning and Regional Authorities with institutional competences, legal power and a financial role in the field of LLL policies. Some of them have a planning and management role concerning the ESF.

EARLALL believes that Regions and Local Authorities have a privileged role in designing and implementing strategies on Lifelong Learning and Labour policies since they are in direct contact with citizens, educational institutions and business environment.

EARLALL has been constituted with three main objectives: Seeking to influence EU policies relevant for lifelong learning and increasing the role of the Regions in the field; Facilitating the cooperation between its members in order to promote the exchange of experiences and best practice between European regional and local authorities; Encouraging the development of joint actions.

The board is currently composed by 7 members:

- President: Gianfranco SIMONCINI, Regional Minister for training, labour and economical development, Regione Toscana (IT)
- Vice-president: Georgette BREARD - Brittany Region (FR)
- Treasurer: Karsten Uno PETERSEN - Region of Southern Denmark (Denmark)
- Member of the Board: Francisco José ALVAREZ DE LA CHICA - Junta de Andalucia (ES), Irene RIGAU OLIVER - Generalitat de Catalunya (ES), Gabriele WARMINSKI-LEITHEUßER - Baden-Württemberg (DE), Lena BACKELIN - Jamtland Region (Sweden)

Contact details

Miss Flavia BUIARELLI
Business Manager
www.earlall.eu
earlall@regione.toscana.it
earlall@earlall.eu

Rond Point Schuman, 14
1040 Bruxelles – Belgium
Tel +32 (0)2 2868566
Fax +32 (0)2 2868568
Gsm +32 (0)478 643300

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Earlall welcomes the Commission's initiative on traineeship in the framework of the Employment Package and the Youth Opportunities Initiatives.

Earlall believes that traineeships represent an important tool for several reasons:

- Young people can experience the world of work and evaluate their goals and skills before entering the labour market;
- Traineeships can have a key role in increasing the access of young people to the labour market.
- Traineeships can bridge the gap between the theoretical knowledge gained in education and the skills and competences needed at a workplace and in this way increase the chances of young people to find a job.
- Enterprises can take advantage from the presence of a young person with fresh skills and enthusiasms as well as a way for training future employees;
- This represents also a way for the labour market in general to introduce in a sustainable and fair way young and skilled professionals while providing them the necessary skills.

Scope of the initiative

Earlall agrees with the scope of the framework but wishes a similar reflection will be made for apprenticeships as well to design a European minimum common framework: in some countries indeed a legislative structure for apprenticeship is missing and abuses are more difficult to avoid. Examples can be taken from Regions that have implemented complex apprenticeship structures.

In addition Earlall underlines that traineeships shouldn't generally replace regular jobs and condemns the abuse of traineeships. In a context of high unemployment rate in many EU countries with fewer employment possibilities, young university graduates are often forced to accept traineeship contracts, even if the training part is missing or they are trained enough to have regular job contracts.

A common EU initiative would also make the designing of transnational traineeships easier for sending and hosting partners as well as for the student/young graduate that will be guaranteed with the same rights and obligations then in their country of residence.

The form of the initiative at EU level

The state of art shows the differences among the Member States but also among Regional Governments in the same country; such differences are increased by the diversity of professional profiles and their respective curricula of studies.

Those diversities should be fully respected as well as the national and regional competences, especially in labour market and education legislation. However a European common understanding is needed to guarantee the quality of the experience and the respective rights and obligations of the trainee and the company.

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This common understanding might be taken the form of a recommended Charter that guarantees the minimum standard necessary for ensuring the quality of the experience. The Charter should include some principles ensuring at the same time the flexibility needed for respecting the diversity in member states and regions and in the different professions.

In this concern, Earllall would like to underline that many Regional Governments have already designed and adopted quality framework for traineeships: any European action should not negatively affect such local initiative but should take inspiration and harmonise them.

Links to Regional charters for traineeships and apprenticeships:

Tuscany Region: http://www.regione.toscana.it/regione/export/RT/sito-RT/Contenuti/sezioni/lavoro_formazione/formazione/rubriche/atti_delibere/visualizza_asset.html/674414837.html

Brittany Region: http://www.bretagne.fr/internet/upload/docs/application/pdf/2012-03/guideapp_modeemploi_web.pdf

Elements of high quality traineeships

The elements identified by the European Commission in the Staff Working Document “*Quality Framework for Traineeships*” are relevant for ensuring high quality experience. They should be included in the above mentioned Charter and be the basis for any traineeship; certain flexibility is recommended to allow SMEs – with limited human and budget capacity – to host trainees; however they should not consider themselves exempt from accompanying the student/young graduate in the experience, in particular for what concerns the learning and tutoring side of the experience.

Earllall generally welcomes the elements identified in the document; in particular Earllall suggests the following:

- Traineeship agreement: the agreement should be compliant with the national legislation and the academic institution requirements in order to guarantee future recognition; the agreement should mention duration, functions, general learning objectives, remuneration, academic credits, tutor, rights and obligation of the parties involved;
- Professional learning objectives and tutoring: the quality framework should ensure that the general learning objectives are clear elements of the experience; the general character is important to respect the diversity of countries, professions, the size and capability of hosting enterprise; the tutoring should be in any case be guaranteed;
- Recognition of traineeship through a certificate is an important element often forgotten by the hosting company; however this should show the professional competences acquired through the training experience;
- Reasonable duration: the traineeship should last long enough to give the person the possibility to get into the new situation but not too long in order to avoid the replacement of regular jobs with traineeships;

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- Social protection and remuneration: national legislation should ensure that trainees are covered with work insurance and are entitled to apply for unemployment status after the traineeship; remuneration should be according to the qualifications of the trainee and their contribution to the business, even though a minimum should always be guaranteed in order to allow people from poor backgrounds and students that need to work to undertake a traineeship period relevant for their career;
- Rights and obligations: Earllall points out the need for an increased cooperation between universities and enterprises to designing quality traineeships.

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