

Quality and effective apprenticeships: Council adopts European framework

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The Council today adopted a recommendation on a framework for quality and effective apprenticeships which will help young people to enter the world of work.

The recommendation encourages the development of a highly skilled and qualified workforce which is responsive to the needs of the labour market. By applying common criteria for the quality and effectiveness of apprenticeships, member states will be better able to develop and promote their national apprenticeship schemes.

It's very positive that in a short period of time the Council managed to reach a common understanding for the quality and effectiveness criteria to be used to maintain and develop the national apprenticeship schemes. It's a step in the right direction to support further young people's entry in the labour market, as well as adults' career progression and transition into employment.

*Biser Petkov, Minister for Labour and Social Policies of Bulgaria
and President of the Council*

Apprenticeships are an essential element in vocational education and training systems. They are of benefit to both employers and learners. They strengthen the link between the world of work and the world of education and training.

In addition to providing a pathway to excellence, quality apprenticeships also help encourage active citizenship and social inclusion by integrating people of different social backgrounds into the labour market.

The recommendation foresees different criteria for learning and working conditions, including the following:

- a written agreement should be concluded to define the rights and obligations of the apprentice, the employer and, where appropriate, of the vocational education and training institution within a clear and consistent regulatory framework,
- there should be clear results leading to recognised qualifications,

- apprentices should be paid or otherwise compensated,
- apprentices should be entitled to social protection,
- career guidance, mentoring and learner support should be provided to apprentices both before and during the apprenticeship in order to ensure a successful outcome,
- pedagogical support should be provided to teachers, trainers and mentors, specially in micro-, small and medium-sized companies.

The framework is a follow up to the Council declaration on the 'European Alliance for Apprenticeships' of October 2013.

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