



TOGETHER FOR A FAIR DEAL FOR WORKERS

TJ/LS/ey
Brussels, 30 October 2024

Urgent call for a change in direction for the Traineeship Directive

Dear Deputy Permanent Representatives,

We are reaching out after reviewing the latest compromise proposal on the Traineeship Directive as presented by the Hungarian Presidency. As workers' representatives and advocates for fair working conditions and opportunities for young people **we wish to express our significant concerns regarding the direction this file is taking.**

The initial proposal for this Directive, as introduced by the European Commission, came in response to years of calls from young workers across Europe—those who cannot afford to work for free or face ongoing precarity due to exploitative and often bogus traineeships. The current compromise proposal, presented by the Hungarian presidency, however, overlooks these urgent appeals, failing to establish a baseline definition of quality traineeships. Instead, it defers to the enforcement of existing workers' rights—a measure that alone does not protect trainees or prevent the misuse of traineeship programs.

We urge you to redirect this proposal toward real change by incorporating a dedicated chapter on quality criteria for traineeships. Such criteria are essential, as they would allow authorities to assess whether a traineeship meets standards or is in reality a form of disguised employment. A defined maximum duration, remuneration, and entry requirements are minimum standards necessary to ensure that traineeships are genuine and that they prepare young people for a job in the labour market, as outlined in the accompanying Council Recommendation.

Furthermore, we insist that a traineeship is a tool that supports the transition from education to the labour market and should never replace workers' training.

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) fully supports those questioning the current proposal's added value and insists that the traineeship directive should cover all traineeships, ensure fair treatment and end the replacement of entry-level jobs by long-lasting, often prolonged traineeships that are often poorly paid and advertised to people who already have (substantial) working experience. Those practices must stop and by adding a chapter with quality criteria to the Directive, we have a unique opportunity to do so.

We advise you to bring the proposal closer to the EP resolution (June 2023) which outlined definitions and scope that provided a ground for significant change and level playing field for young people entering the labour market.

The current proposal would not only prevent improvement for young people in their transition to the labour market, but would leave the real problems of traineeships



unaddressed and could even further harm them, as it would legitimise the precarity and uncertainties on what quality traineeships are.

As representatives of workers and defenders of fair opportunities and quality jobs for young people, we call on you not to vote or support the text proposed by the Hungarian Presidency as it is currently written.

We count on you to stand with young workers and take a strong step toward quality, meaningful traineeships.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tea Jarc', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Tea Jarc
Confederal Secretary