



## **Co-operation charter**

### **for the implementation of the Council Decision of 21 December 1998 on the promotion of European pathways in work-linked training, including apprenticeship (1999/51/EC)**

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## 1. OBJECTIVES

This Co-operation Charter identifies the common guidelines for the implementation of the “Europass Training” Decision<sup>1</sup>, as well as the methods of co-operation and exchange of information between the Member States and the Commission on the one hand, and between the national authorities of the different Member States on the other hand.

This Charter is a non-binding document, drawn up by mutual agreement between the Member States and the Commission, on the understanding that Member States will apply it on a voluntary basis.

## 2. GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE OF THE DECISION

The geographical scope of the “Europass Training” decision includes the 15 EU Member States and the three EEA countries (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein).

Each of these eighteen countries is entitled to a full participation and may thus be both a country of provenance and a host country of European training pathways.

## 3. OBJECT AND TARGET OF THE DECISION

The Decision establishes the “Europass Training”, a document “intended as a record at Community level of the period or periods of training which a person undergoing work-linked training, including apprenticeship, has followed in a Member State other than that in which his/her training is based [known as “European pathway(s)”]” (Article 1.1 of the Decision).

The final target of the Decision, i.e. persons who can become holders of the “Europass Training”, are then the “**persons in work-linked training**” in Member States. They are defined in Article 2, point 2 of the Decision, which specifies that:

- the status of “persons in work-linked training” liable to benefit can vary: contract of employment, contract of training, apprenticeship contract, pupil or student, job seekers, etc.;
- the training can concern any level, including higher education;
- the training has to be “recognised or certified by the competent authorities in the Member State of provenance according to its own legislation, procedures or practices”;
- the training has to involve “structured periods of training in an undertaking and, where appropriate, in a training establishment or centre”; the period abroad may be, for instance, a traineeship in an undertaking, or a mix of on-the-job training

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<sup>1</sup> Thereafter this abridged name will be used to refer to the Council Decision (1999/51/EC) of 21 December 1998 on the promotion of European pathways in work-linked training, including apprenticeship; published in the OJ L 17 of 22 January 1999, p. 45, the Decision entered into force on 1 January 2000.

and classroom training; the whole of the training initiative – including the period abroad and the period in the country of provenance – has to be recognised as “work-linked training”.

#### **4. COMMON QUALITY CRITERIA**

The Decision states (Article 3, point 1) that “each European pathway shall form part of the training followed in the Member State of provenance, according to its own legislation, procedures or practices”.

It is therefore necessary that the training initiative as a whole, including the period abroad, is recognised as “work-linked” training in the Member State of provenance, according to legislation, procedures or practices which vary in the different Member States, since they are closely connected with the organisation of the training system.

The Decision states (Article 3, point 2) that “the body responsible for organising the training in the Member State of provenance and the host partner shall agree within the context of the partnership on the content, objectives, duration and the practicalities of the European pathway”.

All the elements of the partnership must be clearly defined for the three concerned parts – the sending partner, the host partner and the trainee. In particular, the duration of the European pathway should be consistent with its contents and objectives.

The Decision also specifies (Article 3, point 2) that “the European pathways shall be monitored and supervised by a mentor”. The mentor and his functions are defined in Article 2, point 3.

The mentor “has the task of assisting, informing, guiding and monitoring trainees during their ‘European pathway’”; the mentor must then clearly be based in the host Member State, “with a private or public employer or a training establishment or centre”. It is possible that the mentor does not come from the host organisation itself; for example, the mentor's task could be ensured by staff of an employers’ association, particularly if the host organisation is a small enterprise. What matters is that the mentor can actually monitor the pathway – according to the agreed contents and objectives – and guide and support the trainee who is carrying it out.

#### **5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

##### **5.1. Action at national level**

###### *5.1.1. Identification of the concerned types of training*

Applying the definition of work-linked training (cf. § 3) it is possible to identify several programs, arrangements or actions, that can only be identified at national level. Each Member State could then draw up, or refer to, a suitable information document or set of documents (either lists or monographies, or a set of records, etc.), – and communicate it to the other

Member States and the Commission. The aim of this document is to help all interested actors in other countries to understand what is usually considered “work-linked training” in the concerned country. It should be clear that such a document would be purely indicative, only to be used within the implementation of the “Europass Training” Decision.

#### *5.1.2. Organisation for the implementation at the national level*

In each Member State one or several bodies act as national contact point(s) for Europass Training. Appointing such a body may mean either setting up a new organisation or charging with this task an existing organisation or a part of it.

In particular, the national contact points:

- ensure the promotion of the initiative at national level;
- provide operators with information and co-ordination;
- are responsible for checking the respect of the quality criteria established at European level for the “European training pathways” (cf. § 4);
- manage the supply of the “Europass Training” to the establishments organising the European pathways, in the necessary quantity, in the language in which training is followed in the Member State of provenance;
- check that the “Europass Training” are actually given to persons having right;
- ensure data collection at national level, to monitor and assess the initiative, particularly by means of one or more questionnaires (cf. § 6.1);
- put common tools at the disposal of actors, for example creating an Internet site and/or an on-line information system.

Each country will decide about assigning or not a number to each “Europass Training”, according to its implementation choice and operational framework. Such a measure is recommended, as it may help to solve some practical problems, for instance replacement in case of loss or avoiding the production or dissemination of illegitimate copies.

#### *5.1.3. Language issues*

The “Europass Training” is delivered in the language in which training is followed in the Member State of provenance (in accordance with decision, Annex, reference to the inside front cover<sup>2</sup>). In most cases this will mean (one of) the national language(s) of the Member State of provenance.

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<sup>2</sup> Actually page 2 of the printed “Europass Training”; there is a two page gap between the references in the Annex to the decision and the printed document.

As concerning the description of European pathway “in the language of the host partner”\*\* – pages 4, 7 and 10 of the “Europass Training” for the three possible pathways, this may simply mean the language normally used by the host partner, which in most cases will be (one of) the national language(s) of the host Member State. However, the two partner bodies and the trainee may agree that this page is completed in another language, if this language is used as a vehicle language within the partnership.

#### *5.1.4. Social partners at national and local level*

Article 6.1 of the Decision stipulates that the implementation at national level is carried out “in close co-operation with the social partners”.

The active involvement of the social partners will therefore be sought, for instance within information and promotion actions. In particular, the social partners can play a significant role as concerning awareness-raising among the actors of work-linked training and apprenticeship; they could thus help with having the European pathways and the “Europass Training” known and recognised within industry at national and local level.

A major contribution could be achieved by making companies, in particular SMEs and crafts, aware of the opportunities related with hosting trainees.

#### *5.1.5. Co-ordination with the European level*

Each Member State appoints a person who represents, within the framework of co-ordination at European level, all the bodies responsible for the implementation at the national level.

This representative will be the contact for the Commission, the representatives of the other Member States, the social partners or any other actor at European level.

This representative will in particular be invited to attend the meetings organised by the Commission.

## **5.2. Action at European level**

### *5.2.1. Production and distribution of documents*

The Commission ensures the production of the “Europass Training” and of the common information papers, as well as their shipping to the recipients (national contact points or a specialized agency) indicated by the national authorities, in the quantities required by their representative (see § 5.1.4.) or by another person or organisation, expressly designated by the representative.

The requests for each calendar year should reach the Commission within September of the previous calendar year. The Commission ensures the shipping within the year when the request was made.

### *5.2.2. Information and promotion at European level*

Information, awareness and promotion actions can also be taken at European level by the Commission, targeting for example:

- the European institutions;
- the social partners and other actors of the civil society at European level;
- the training operators at an any level, in particular by means of European conferences;
- the general public, in particular by means of the page on Web and by means of the communication actions in the media.

Information, awareness and promotion actions at European level can be carried out other actors too, namely the social partners (cf. § 4.3.3.B).

### *5.2.3. Co-ordination at European level*

The Decision states (Article 6.3): “In close Co-operation with the Member States, the Commission shall set up a co-ordination and mutual information system”.

#### A. Meetings

The Commission organises at least twice a year meetings with the representatives of the bodies charged with the implementation, in order:

- to define the common criteria of quality and monitor their application;
- to facilitate the exchange of information and good practices between the concerned actors;
- to take stock of the implementation of the Decision and discuss the operational aspects, including the budgetary matters;
- to collect any comments, observations or suggestions likely to improve the implementation;
- to prepare the evaluation and discuss its implementation and results;
- to discuss the short, medium or long term prospects (for example, broadening the geographical scope or including other training typologies; use of vehicle languages as second languages, etc.).

The social partners at European level, and other actors, if necessary, will be invited to attend the meetings as observers.

#### B. Exchange of information

Between meetings, the Commission ensures the information flow, in particular by circulating among the concerned actors – in principle by

electronic mail – regular notes the report on the implementation of the Decision.

In this connection, the national representatives take care to communicate to the Commission any information that may be useful or interesting for the network of concerned actors.

#### 5.2.4. *Financing*

##### A. Budget

The financial reference amount for the period 2000-2004 is fixed in Article 7 of the Decision; it involves a specific budget heading.

The annual budget is adopted by the budgetary authority and includes two parts. One part covers management and administration expenditures (including the organisation of conferences, the evaluation at European level, as well as studies, if any). The second part shall contribute to financing the implementation in the Member States, as specified in the yearly application documents,

which may include, among others, information and communication actions (including awareness actions among the SMEs), data collection as well as evaluation at national level.

The second amount is broken down each year among the participating countries. If necessary, other actors, for instance the social partners at European level, may be granted support from the first part of the budget

##### B. Grant procedures

*Background.* The principle of cofinancing, commonly applied for Community grants, will be followed.

Under no circumstances it is possible to award a grant covering the operation of the concerned bodies.

As regards payments, the rules commonly applied for Community grants will be followed.

*Grant requests.* Using the relevant documents prepared by the Commission, each Member State submits a grant request, which details its annual programme of implementation activities (information and communication actions, data collection, as well as monitoring and evaluation actions at national level) for which a Community support is asked. Only one contract per Member State will therefore be signed: by the Commission on the one hand, and the contractor designated by the national authorities on the other hand.