

WRITTEN QUESTION P-5733/06
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to the Commission

Subject: Situation of trainees in Europe

The status of trainee in an enterprise applies to more and more young people in Europe. In France, their number is estimated to be 800 000 per year. The use of trainees gives rise to a number of abuses. The average length of traineeships, which often no longer fulfil any educational purpose, has lengthened. This provides companies with a cheap alternative to creating jobs.

In France, businesses that pay a trainee less than 30 % of the minimum wage are exempt from charges, creating a very low pay ceiling for trainees.

In Germany, only one traineeship in three is paid.

The proliferation of traineeships in Europe places young people in a vulnerable position and increases social dumping by exerting a downward pressure on salaries and preventing the creation of new jobs. Such traineeships are not subject to social security contributions and therefore do not contribute towards systems of social protection.

Does not this situation represent an infringement of the principle of equality of treatment for workers? Should not the Commission propose minimum rules protecting the rights of trainees? What does the Commission intend to do to protect trainees working in a Member State other than their own? Should not the Commission come forward with a common European definition for the status of trainee?