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European Criteria for Quality Internships

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European foreword

This CEN Workshop Agreement has been developed in accordance with the CEN-CENELEC Guide 29 “CEN/CENELEC Workshop Agreements – The way to rapid consensus” and with the relevant provisions of CEN/CENELEC Internal Regulations - Part 2. It was approved by a Workshop of representatives of interested parties on 2020-04-03, the constitution of which was supported by CEN following the public call for participation made on 2018-11-30. However, this CEN Workshop Agreement does not necessarily include all relevant stakeholders.

The final text of this CEN Workshop Agreement was provided to CEN for publication on 2020-04-07.

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Although the Workshop parties have made every effort to ensure the reliability and accuracy of technical and non-technical descriptions, the Workshop is not able to guarantee, explicitly or implicitly, the correctness of this document. Anyone who applies this CEN Workshop Agreement shall be aware that neither the Workshop, nor CEN, can be held liable for damages or losses of any kind whatsoever. The use of this CEN Workshop Agreement does not relieve users of their responsibility for their own actions, and they apply this document at their own risk.

Introduction

SPRINT: "*Standardize best **PR**actices about **INT**ernships*" is a three-year project which started on September 1st 2017.

It is a strategic partnership project co-funded by the Erasmus+ program that aims to improve people's integration into the labor market by creating a common criteria for quality for internships in Europe.

The project objectives are the following:

- 1) Create a CEN Workshop Agreement¹ (CWA) on "European Criteria for Quality Internships" with standards and indicators for quality internships that will be recognized and accepted by employers;
- 2) Establish a strong partnership among organizations that work in this field and join expertise to improve the quality of internships;
- 3) Raise stakeholders' (interns, universities, employers) collective awareness about quality internships;
- 4) Analyze, report, disseminate and further build upon data collected to steer policy debate and incentivize employers to improve their practices;
- 5) Prepare training of the different stakeholders, thus ensuring the correct application of the CWA and ensuring the sustainability of the outcomes of the project.

The end goal of this project is to offer quality standards for internships suitable for the whole of Europe. This standard further develop the Quality Framework for Traineeships, agreed at European level in 2014 and reflect the latest 'state of the art' of the sector.

Seven partner organizations are involved in the project:

- **Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier III, France** (coordinator institution)
- **InternsGoPro ASBL**, Belgium
- **Association Française de Normalisation (AFNOR)**, France
- **Sindikat studentov, dijakov in mladih brezposelnih (Trade Union Youth Plus)**, Slovenia
- **UNISER SOC. COOP. ONLUS**, Italy
- **ASSOCIATION EUROPEENNE D'INSTITUTIONS DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPERIEUR (EURASHE)**, Belgium
- **The ADECCO Group (AG)**, Switzerland

¹ A CWA is an agreement developed and approved in a CEN Workshop; the latter is open to the direct participation of anyone with an interest in the development of the agreement. There is no geographical limit on participation; hence, participants may be from outside Europe. **A CWA does not have the status of a European Standard.** It involves no obligation at national level.

Propaedeutically to the CWA, the SPRINT project developed a general report about National legislation on internships within the European Union and QFT Recommendation, a survey about the needs and barriers for internships and a good practices tool.

Based on these documents it has been developed a common vocabulary and the significant good practices identified have been included in the CWA draft.

Finally, through the CWA procedure the SPRINT consortium developed a set of extensive criteria for quality internships”.

1 Scope

The CWA on "European Criteria for Quality Internships" defines terms and concepts related to internships, a quality framework for internships, quality criteria, and best practices.

The document is intended for companies, the public sector and other host organizations, individuals interested in or taking part in internships (either for students or non-students), higher education institutions, public authorities (including quality insurance agencies) and organizations working on quality for internships, etc.

This agreement intends to set quality criteria and guidelines for effective and quality internships (both during and outside of education, and at national and transnational level), to guide the concerned parties and to simplify the internship process for every type of structure. It presents recommendations, not requirements. Therefore, its character is voluntary.

This paper covers internships within the EQF² (European Qualification Framework) level 5 and above and ISCED³ level 5 and above⁴.

This work is the result of the SPRINT project based among others texts (see references), on the provisions of the Directive (EU) 2019/1152 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on transparent and predictable working conditions in the European Union, OJ L 186, 11.7.2019, p. 105–121.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms, definitions and acronyms

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>
- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <http://www.iso.org/obp>

3.1 General

3.1.1

internship

internship means to offer a concrete work-based learning experience to individuals (students or non-students) who are either newly entering or re-entering the labor market, by putting applied learning

² The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a common European reference framework facilitating a better understanding and comparison of the qualifications levels of different countries, education and training systems. (SOURCE: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Qualifications_Framework)

³ ISCED is the reference international classification for organizing education programs and related qualifications by levels and fields. (SOURCE: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Standard_Classification_of_Education)

⁴ The decision to set these limits was taken according to a research made in the different legislations and practices.

outside university with the intention of intensively integrating academic knowledge with practical experience at the center, giving them the opportunity of finding their professional field(s) of interest(s) and enhancing their employability

It is conducted either for academic purposes and/or for professional development during a limited time period. It is organized in advance to provide structured and applied learning through practical experience and leads to the recognition of learning outcomes, under the supervision of a professional(s) with a significant background in the field of the experience.

Aimed at increasing learner's competences and obtaining skills relevant for the labor market, it consists of activities that are connected with the area of study or professional development.

Internships may cover: student or graduate placements in companies; practical work-experience oriented projects; traineeship; and other relevant activities.

[SOURCE: SPRINT's partners, based on the European general report]

Note 1 to entry: Different terminologies are used to refer to an internship in different countries. For example, the terms "traineeship" and "apprenticeship" may be understood like internship as long as what is meant by these terms corresponds exactly to the definition of internship as described in this document⁵.

3.1.2

higher education

post-secondary education at EQF level 5 and above

Note to the entry: Description of the eight EQF levels: <https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/content/descriptors-page>

3.1.3

tutor

person linked to/or appointed by the host organization to guide or tutor interns within the organization with professional experience and enough knowledge to make process of tutoring effective"

Note 1 to entry: This person can be an employee, personnel, staff or another person with a fully integrated role in the organization. Different terminology might be used in different environments such as supervisor, mentor... Any term can be used as long as what is meant by these terms corresponds exactly to the definition of tutor as described in this document.

3.1.4

academic tutor

person nominated by the higher education institution who supports interns before, during and after the internship

3.1.5

host organization

a legal entity, which can be private, semi-public or public, for-profit or not for profit, acting as the place of work for the interns, and responsible for providing practical work-based learning experience, under the supervision of a professional with a significant background in the field of the experience

⁵ The European Commission has defined "traineeship" ([https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0502\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0502(01)&from=EN)) and "apprenticeship" (<http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6779-2018-INIT/en/pdf>).

3.1.6

competences

ability to apply learning outcomes adequately in a defined context (education, work, personal or professional development)

or

ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development

[SOURCE: CEDEFOP Glossary: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning/european-inventory/european-inventory-glossary>]

3.1.7

skill

ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to compete tasks and solve problems

[SOURCE: CEDEFOP Glossary: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning/european-inventory/european-inventory-glossary>]

3.1.8

learning outcomes/objectives

set of knowledge, skills and/or competences an individual has acquired and/or is able to demonstrate after completion of a learning process, either formal, non-formal or informal

[SOURCE: CEDEFOP Glossary: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning/european-inventory/european-inventory-glossary>]

3.1.9

remuneration

money paid regularly for the interns' work. On top of monetary remuneration, additional compensation done in-kind could be offered to interns (eg.to provide accommodation, food coupons, transport tickets, etc.)

Note 1 to entry: Different terminologies might be used, such as reimbursement, grant, compensation or salary, where interns have the status of employees, as long as what is meant by these terms corresponds exactly to the definition of remuneration as described in this document.

Note 2 to entry: Scholarships cannot be considered as remuneration.

3.2 Acronyms

AFNOR	<i>Association Française de Normalisation</i> (French National Standardization Body)
CEDEFOP	European Center for the Development of Vocational Training
CEN	European Committee for Standardization
CWA	CEN Workshop Agreement
EQF	European Quality Framework
EU	European Union

EURASHE	European Association of Institutions in Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
LC	Labor Code
QFT	Quality Framework for Traineeships
SPRINT	Standardize best PRactices about INTernships
TEC	Traineeship Employment Contract
WS	Workshop

4 Quality criteria for internships

Internships increasingly play a role in the labor market. Internship should be temporary, have a maximum duration and should never be used to replace a job. The most important quality criterion for any internship is that it offers value to interns as well as employers; such as for interns, a work-based learning experience and/or the opportunity to discover potential sectors of interest for future career, and, for employers, discovering potential new talents, bringing a fresh perspective to the office or even completing a short-term project that requires a specific skill set (language, technology, etc.) an intern can provide.

This also means that any person, whatever their socio economic background, whether they are inside or outside education, should be able to access to internships. The following criteria aim to ensure the learning aspect and the accessibility of internships.

Most recommendations come from national legislations which reflects an average reality of European countries. If the national legislation and/or applicable collective agreements are more beneficial to the intern, they shall take precedence.

4.1 Recruitment

The advertising of the internship opportunity, the application phase and vacancies should be open, transparent and outline working conditions to allow every applicant with relevant competences or following a relevant academic program to apply. Host organizations shall provide information on the terms and conditions of the internship, in particular on remuneration, work environment, working conditions, social protection, and insurance. The selection of interns should take place via a fair and transparent procedure, shall be merit-based and avoid all types of discrimination.

The internship should be built on the free choice of both parties and be agreed by all parties.

4.2 Written (tripartite) agreement

Before interns start their internship, the rights and obligations of all stakeholders included shall be clearly set out in a written agreement⁶ or contract. Signatories of this agreement shall at least include the

⁶ The conditions of this agreement can refer to the provision of the Directive (EU) 2019/1152 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on transparent and predictable working conditions in the European Union, OJ L 186, 11.7.2019, p. 105–121

employer, the intern and, when applicable⁷, the education institutes or other parties involved. The agreement shall at least include the duration of the internship, expected working hours or presence hours in the host organization, a description of the role and tasks that the intern will have, learning objectives and competencies to be developed, the role of the host organization, remuneration, reimbursement or intern's compensations, the tutor(s) who will guide the intern throughout the experience, and information about applicable Collective Labor Agreements and about any trade union that the intern can join, where applicable.

4.3 Remuneration

Interns shall receive remuneration for their work whatever the duration of the internship. In order to make internships accessible and inclusive, appropriate and fair remuneration shall be defined. If this remuneration is lower than that of other employees of the host organization, it should still reflect the work done by the interns while acknowledging the educational and developmental aspect of an internship.

For full time internships, the remuneration shall not be lower than 70% of the remuneration established by collective agreement, or 70% of the median income⁸ or shall not be lower than the national or sectoral minimum wage or the EU poverty line⁹, whichever is more favorable.

For part-time internships, the obligation to remuneration shall be defined in line with the standard's principle and adapted according to the working hours.

When overtime is allowed according to the national legislation or collective agreements, it shall be additionally remunerated at the same level as regular employees.

4.4 Skills acquisition

At the beginning of an internship, clear learning outcomes shall be set jointly by the employer, the intern, and the educational organization when applicable. In case the internship is undertaken for academic purposes, the learning outcomes shall be defined in line with the formal requirements of the educational organization and referenced to an EQF level. In case the internship is undertaken outside of any academic program or not leading to a formal degree and/or recognition, learning outcomes can also be expressed as formal skills acquisition outcomes.

These learning outcomes should include the acquisition of specific knowledge, skills, or experience by the interns. Learning outcomes can be an integral part of the legal agreement or another document agreed between the intern and the tutor(s), but should always be put into writing. If needed, the tutor(s) and the intern can jointly agree to amend or revise the learning outcome at any point.

Skills acquisition shall be monitored regularly and evaluated at the end and interns should be supported by a consistent tutor in case the acquisition of skills is identified.

⁷ Or in the countries where it is said by the rules.

⁸ Median income is the amount that divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half having income above that amount, and half having income below that amount. More info where to look for median income in different countries; https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_di04&lang=en

⁹ The EU poverty line is the minimum level of income needed to secure the necessities of life and differs greatly for each European country. Determining the poverty line is usually done by finding the total cost of all the essential resources that an average human adult consumes in one year. More info where to look for EU poverty line in different countries <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tessi014/default/table?lang=en>

At the termination of the internship, the host organization and the intern, with the educational organization, when applicable, should organize a dedicated time to discuss and exchange on the internship, identify skillsets gained and/or learning outcomes achieved, in line, notably with the learning outcomes specified in the legal agreement or other document established at the start of the internship. Furthermore, the interns shall receive a written statement validating and recognizing their learning outcomes, or a recommendation letter describing gained and developed skills during the internship.

4.5 Tutoring

The host organization shall always ensure a tutor with the relevant competences and experience needed to include the interns in the regular working process. The tutor may hold primary responsibility for daily management of the interns, including for assigning tasks and responsibilities and for enabling them to achieve their learning outcome.

The tutor shall be based at the same part of the work area in order to include the interns in the work process and help them to achieve their learning objectives. They should have the necessary language skills to communicate with the interns. The employer shall ensure that the tutors have enough time in their daily schedule to provide a good quality tutoring. The aim is to ensure regular interactions with the tutors to foster an efficient knowledge transfer. In the regard, the employer should ensure a reasonable ratio of interns per tutor.

When the internship is related to a study plan, the HEI shall appoint an academic tutor. The academic tutor shall support the interns before starting their internship in searching for a host organization, supporting them in defining learning objectives, expected outcomes and professional objectives. The academic tutor shall be in regular communication with the interns and the tutor from the host organization during the internship. The academic and the host organization tutor shall cooperate for the resolution of any problem that might arise within the internship. In such cases, they shall provide the necessary support to the interns in order to allow them to overcome any challenge they might encounter.

Depending on the High Education national system and/or the internal organization of the HEI, the academic tutor and some specific departments (such as careers offices or faculties) might be in charge of different tasks.

For example, they might be responsible for the recruitment and selection procedures, organization of learning activities and their recognition of credits associated with learning outcomes. The academic tutor may also conduct site visits to observe the interns at the host organization and ensure that they are performing tasks related to their obligations. Host organizations should make reasonable arrangements to support visits by academic tutors where requested and appropriate.

4.6 Career development and employment

The host organization supports the interns in career orientation and development during and upon the completion of the internships. This could include conversations on the interns' ambitions, a reference letter, assessment tools, or more formal performance review tools.

Many host organizations offer continuing employment to some or all of their interns and this is highly encouraged. The host organization shall organize one or more meetings between the interns and the management of the organization to discuss their future career prospects and potential support whether within the host organization or outside of it.

4.7 Work environment and working conditions

Host organizations providing internships shall ensure decent working conditions for interns, including a designated and accessible working space with all tools and materials necessary to enable the interns to achieve their learning objectives. If the activities performed by the interns require it, the host organization shall provide Personal Protective Equipment. The work place shall meet the prescribed standards on health and safety at work, as defined in national legislation, collective and/or sectoral agreements, or other binding documents.

The internship shall be limited to a minimum duration of 2 months and to a maximum duration of 6 months. Exceptions for shorter or longer internships can apply:

- 1) If the education institution designed a specific curriculum requiring internships inferior to 2 months or exceeding 6 months. This is the case for Erasmus+ internships which can last up to 12 months; or
- 2) If the internship is followed by an employment contract.

Interns shall benefit at least from the resting time established by the national legislation or the sectoral collective agreement. Limits to weekly working hours, rest break, minimum daily rest period, and minimum weekly rest period shall meet the provisions of the principle 10 of the European Pillar of Social Rights (Healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment and data protection), articles 2 (on the right to just conditions of work) and 31 (on fair and just working conditions) from the European Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the EU's Working Time Directive (2003/88/EC). This Directive requires European Union (EU) Member States to guarantee the following rights for all workers:

- A limit to weekly working hours
 - the average working time for each seven day period must not exceed 48 hours, including overtime
 - depending on national legislation and/or collective agreements, the 46 hour average is calculated over a reference period of up to 4, 6 or 12 months
- A rest break during working hours if the worker is on duty for longer than 6 hours
- A minimum daily rest period
 - in every 24 hours a worker is entitled to a minimum of 11 consecutive hours of rest
- A minimum weekly rest period
 - for each 7-day period a worker is entitled to a minimum of 24 uninterrupted hours in addition to the 11 hours' daily rest
- Paid leave of at least 2 weeks per 6 months
- Extra protection in case of night work
 - average working hours must not exceed 8 hours per 24-hour period
 - night workers must not perform heavy or dangerous work for longer than 8 hours in any 24-hour period
 - night workers have the right to free health assessments and, under certain circumstances, to transfer to day work

In case of parental leave, accident or long lasting illness, interns shall have the right to return to their internship at the host organization, either in the original internship position or a suitable alternative. The host organization and the interns can also jointly decide to end the internship in such cases.

Interns shall have access to a complaint channel to report abuses. This complaint channel can be at the host organization, at the academic institution, at a trade union present in the company, at a third party such as an intern organization or similar, or elsewhere.

Trade unions at company level, where they exist, shall also be involved in the monitoring of the working conditions of the interns.

The internship agreement can be prematurely terminated by any party in the occurrence of one or more of the following events:

- Breach of the agreement or of any relevant regulations
- Misconduct or malevolence
- Repeated unjustified absence of the intern
- Endangerment of the physical or psychological health of the intern

In such cases, the revoking party shall inform the other party(ies) through a letter stating the reason for the explanation.

4.8 Social protection and insurance

Interns shall be included in the social security system, especially those of health, unemployment, and pension systems, especially if the internship is taking place outside/after formal education. The host organization or the education institution, when applicable, shall ensure that the intern is covered for social security services, civil liability, medical treatment, sick leave, accidents including the accidents at the workplace resulting in disabilities. .

5 Best practices and recommendations

A set of best practices and recommendations have been identified and proposed in the following section in support of and to serve as examples for the quality criteria.

Best practices were identified by means of two actions:

- 1) There was a survey made among host organizations (internship providers), international organizations, trade unions, and other relevant actors on how they implement or define internships. Based on this, best practices and recommendations were collected. (Available here: [Internship best practices](#))
- 2) There was a research done about the legislation on internships in 29 European countries (28 European Union (EU) member states and Switzerland). Based on the mapping, best practices were identified. (Available here: [General report on internship legislation](#))

5.1 Recruitment

5.1.1 National

In France, the HEI¹⁰ has to help the student find an internship (Article L124-2 French education code), has to collect names of host organizations that should offer internships, and has to forward internships advertisement. (National French internships' guide-June 2018).

¹⁰ Higher education institutions

5.1.2 Others

Under Erasmus+ Programme: Participants must be established in a program country. In general terms, the Program is open to any organization active in the fields of education, training, youth or sport. It is also open to the participation of other players in the labor market. Erasmus+ projects are submitted and managed by organizations representing the participants. If a project is selected, learners apply to their HEI which carries out the selection of participants in the mobility action.

Once selected, learners must carry out their mobility activity in a Program or Partner Country different from the country of the sending organization and the country where the learners have their accommodation during their studies. The HEI must take the necessary measures to prevent any conflict of interest with regard to persons who may be invited to take part in the selection bodies or process of students' selection.

The selection criteria -such as, for example: the academic performance of the candidate, the previous mobility experiences, the motivation, the previous experience in the receiving country (i.e. return to country of origin) etc. -shall be made public. For students from Partner Countries, the first criterion for selecting students will be academic merit, but with equivalent academic level, preference should be assigned to students from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds (including refugees, asylum seekers and migrants).

Lower priority will be given to those who have already participated in mobility actions in the same study cycle under the LLP-Erasmus Programme, Erasmus Mundus Programme or Erasmus+ Programme. In the case of Erasmus Mundus Master Courses and Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees, previous participation is only taken into account for scholarship holders.

5.2 Written (tripartite) agreement

5.2.1 Recommendations

There should always be a legal and written agreement signed by all relevant parties (either bipartite or tripartite, when relevant).

The written agreement shall include:

- identification of all the parties included (the intern, responsible representative from the higher educational institution at home and the host organization, and the tutor(s))
- clear indications of the location of the internship
- the period of the internship and the number of hours per day or per week
- the tasks to be undertaken
- rights and duties of all parties
- expected learning objectives and goals of the internship
- remuneration/compensation
- social insurance coverage
- scope of potential projects that might be addressed
- credit points (when relevant)
- information on workers' representation and collective agreements (when relevant)

5.2.2 National

Many countries foresee different types of contracts, depending on the type of internships: education or open market.

In France it is a necessity to have a tripartite agreement between a student (if the person is a minor, the parents sign), a host organization and an educational institution. The internship agreement is signed by the educational institution, the host organization, the interns or their legal representative and the academic and the internship tutors, and contains particular mandatory information about remuneration, protection, subjects, curricula, etc.

In Austria internship can have two main forms of contracts, depending on whether it is: training/educational relationship or employment relationship.

In Slovenia a written agreement is mandatory and has to be signed before starting the internship.

Bulgaria has adapted its Labor Code (LC) in 2014 in order to comply with the Quality Framework for Traineeships (QFT). The updated legislation complies to a large extent with the QFT. The new provisions introduced a traineeship employment contract (TEC) that did not exist beforehand. Such contracts must be signed only with youth aged up to 29 years with secondary or higher education without being employed and without any professional experience on graduated profession or specialty. Employment relationships between employers and interns must be set in a contract signed in compliance with the general provisions for labor contracts regulated in the LC. TEC sets also the terms and conditions for remuneration of the interns.

In Latvia in the context of student internships in vocational higher education, a tripartite agreement must be concluded between the student, the professional higher education institution and the host organization. This agreement must specify the pedagogical objectives and the modalities to achieve them which will be set up during the internship.

In Lithuania the law stipulates the obligation of a tripartite agreement between the student, the educational institution and the host organization. The agreement must mention the educational and practical objectives of the training period, and the periods of presence within the host organization.

In Estonia there are different contract rules between internships that take place under the academic program (contracts may vary depending the area of study) or in the labor market. In the context of vocational training, art. 30 of the Law on vocational training of 12 June 2013 imposes an internship contract containing the description and organization of the training period, the rights and obligations of each party concerned, namely the student, the educational institution and the host organization. In the context of University and post-secondary professional education, internships are regulated by Adult Education Act (in Estonian Täiskasvanute koolituse seadus. Concerning unemployed people, internships are regulated by the Labour Market Services and Benefits Act (in Estonian: Tööturuteenuste ja -toetuste seadus). (Extract of Sprint's general report on internships legislation) (See SPRINT's general report page 50)

In Italy there are different contract rules between internships that take place under the academic program (contracts may vary depending the area of study) or in the labor market. In case of academic internships the contract is bipartite and HEI validates it. In case of internships taking place in the labor market, rules vary according to the regions legislations where they are implemented.

In Hungary the law stipulates the obligation of a tripartite agreement between the student, the educational institution and the host organization. The law provides the content of the contracts. If internship is performing under employment or similar relation, the student, under a contract of employment (which extends to internships) enjoys the same rights as those defined in the Labor Code,

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unless more favorable legislation may apply. It is also stated that the host organization must ensure the responsibility of the student. Thus, the insurance covers all injuries and illnesses incurred in the course of work, that are work-related or happen on the way to or from work (accidents at work), and diseases and deterioration of a worker's health due to the hazards peculiar to the job (occupational diseases). Occupational diseases are those listed as such by the government. The insurance does not cover injury or illness exclusively occurring because of the victim's behavior. The compulsory health insurance contributions paid by workers (interns) and employers also entitle beneficiaries to healthcare benefits in the event of an accident. It is the responsibility of the host institution to insure the student against these risks. (see Sprint's general report page 75)

In **Ireland** agreements are tripartite between the student, the HEI and the host organization. They contain:

- information on the parties
- the objective of the internship
- the location of the internship
- the period (beginning and end) of the course
- labor conditions
- the possible remuneration and benefits granted to the students/interns
- the name of the tutor within the host organization

In **Luxembourg**, internships, whether mandatory or voluntary, are the subject of an agreement signed between the parties. A convention for a mandatory internship is signed by the intern in the host organization and the teacher responsible for the placement of the HEI. For a voluntary internship, this will be an internship contract, signed only between the intern and the host organization. It is the responsibility of the employer to verify the social security coverage of the interns against the accident risk. The interns who do not have coverage against the risk of accident are then treated as employees. The employer must therefore enroll the interns in all branches of social security by making a declaration of entry to the Joint Social Security Center.

In **Spain**, for higher education students, it is compulsory to have a written cooperation agreement between Universities and host organizations. In its basic stipulations or in the annexes that develop should integrate at least:

- a) the training project for the traineeship to be carried out by the student;
- b) the permit system to which you are entitled in accordance with current regulations;
- c) conditions for early termination of the internship in case of non-compliance of its terms;
- d) if applicable, the insurance subscription and payment scheme, both for accidents as civil liability, or equivalent financial guarantee;
- e) the existence, where appropriate, of a bag or study aid for the student;
- f) the protection of the inters data;
- g) the regulation of eventual conflicts arising in its development; and,
- h) the terms of the university's recognition of the work done by the tutors of the collaborating entity.

5.2.3 Others

Under **Erasmus+ Programme**: The three parties (the learner, the home educational institution, and the host organization) sign the “Learning Agreement”, a contract aimed to ensure a transparent and efficient preparation of the exchange abroad. This document sets out rights and responsibilities of the various parties, a detailed program of the internship, information on insurance, and how the internship will be recognized upon successful completion.

5.3 Remuneration

5.3.1 Recommendations

Remuneration is increasingly seen as a best practice across the scope. An internship should be as close to a real-life work experience as possible and, of course, being paid is a core part of this. A paid internship is more likely to ensure that employers are able to attract a high caliber and engaged interns. It will also ensure that the internship program is inclusive as it will not deter those who are less able to cover the costs associated with living and working, such as travel, food and office clothing.

Paying interns is not only the right thing to do, but it also helps to widen access to internships more generally, to ensure inclusion, on one side, and, on the other side, to increase the pool of talent that employers can draw from.

In some countries, unpaid internships are banned.

In some countries the minimum payment is equivalent to the national minimum wage compiling with all current employment legislation provisions of each country.

Principles for defining the remuneration:

- Fairly remunerated for the work the interns carry out
- Decent remuneration for work carried out additional to the requirements outlined in the internship contract
- Paying compensation for overtime
- Decent remuneration not below the EU poverty line or
- 70% of median income or
- Minimum income if more favorable for the interns

Offering benefits in addition to pay is possible in a form of:

- contributions towards study and exam costs
- study and/or exam leave
- paid or unpaid holiday entitlement

5.3.2 National

In **Slovenia** unpaid internships are banned. All internships must be paid. The salary is defined by law or collective agreements. By law, the monthly salary of the interns must not be less than 70% of the basic salary of an employee on the same job and this amount cannot be lower than the minimum wage defined in Slovenia.

In **Bulgaria** the amount of the remuneration must not be lower than the minimum wage in the country.

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In **Hungary** interns receive 15% of the weekly basic salary if they work 40 hours/week (legal working hours) at the rate of 8 hours/day, equivalent to 60% of the minimum wage per month.

In **Luxembourg**, voluntary internships (done on the initiative of the interns and outside any training of higher education) are related to an employment contract. The interns thus benefit from workers' rights and duties (minimum wage, etc.). The employer is required to apply the withholding tax on the remuneration awarded.

In **Portugal**, vocational courses are ruled by a bipartite internship contract, while post-graduate courses are ruled by a tripartite contract. The legislative framework focuses on rules to be complied with and that include the maximum length of the internship, the signing of a contract, the arrangements concerning the daily and weekly schedule, absences, safety and health at work and contributions to social security, training supervision designation, internship subsidy payment, meal and insurance, and suspension or termination conditions of the probationary contract.

In **France**, a special term has been created for the interns' compensation: gratification. Gratification is only used for internship and set at 3.75€ per hour in 2019, when the internship is over 308 hours.

5.3.3 Others

In the European Quality Charter on Internships and Apprenticeships (a document by the European Youth Forum from 2011) it is defined that internships taking place outside/after formal education should guarantee a decent remuneration/compensation not below the EU poverty line of 60% of the median income or the national minimum wage, if more favorable, in accordance to the tasks which are performed by the interns and to working hours (overtime should be additionally compensated).

Under **Erasmus+ Programme** the Learner may receive an Erasmus+ grant as a contribution to travel and subsistence costs and extra funding also might be available¹¹. Grants may vary according to differences in living costs between countries, the number of learners applying for a grant, the distance between countries and the availability of other grants.

5.4 Skills development (learning content + defined mission)

5.4.1 Recommendations

Based on the practices gathered from different host organizations and international organizations, the following aspects are recommended:

- Defining in advance specific measurable learning objectives and expected outcomes
- For internships undertaken for academic purposes, learning outcomes should be referenced to an EQF level
- Periodically reaching out to tutors and having regular meetings between the interns and their tutor to monitor progress (monthly assessment, mid-term review)
- Providing ongoing guidance, constructive and regular feedback, support as well as access to a professional network
- Conducting regular performance reviews based on the interns' learning objectives
- Agreeing and revising the learning objectives for the internship with the interns

¹¹ For students from disadvantaged backgrounds or from outermost Programme countries or regions. Source: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities/traineeships-students_en

5.4.2 National

In **Slovenia** the main objective of internships is defined as “to obtain qualifications for independent job performance within the employment relationship.” By law or branch collective agreement, interns are meant a person who starts to carry out work appropriate to the type and level of their professional education for the first time.

In **Portugal** internship consists of practical training in a work environment that is designed to complement and improve skills integration or retraining into the workforce more quickly and easily, or to obtain technical and professional training and ethics that are legally binding for the exercise of a particular profession.

In **France** law defines that interns should acquire professional skills, implement the learning outcomes of their training towards a diploma/certification and promote their professional integration.

5.4.3 Others

Under **Erasmus+ Programme**, in the learning agreement, it is mandatory to define a detailed program of the internship period, the knowledge, skills and competences to be acquired by the end of the internship (learning outcomes), a monitoring plan and an evaluation plan. It is mandatory to fill it before, during and after the mobility.

5.5 Tutoring

5.5.1 Recommendations

Providing support to interns is essential for the quality of an internship and for the quality of the learning outcomes and personal and professional development of the interns. Supervision and guidance to interns can be done in different forms and by different people.

A tutor can enhance the experience of an internship for both employers and interns. Tutors shall have the time necessary to accompany the interns. Tutors should work in the same department as the interns so they have a good understanding of the work they are involved with. Tutors can fulfil several roles.

Several practices can be put in place:

- Appointing a dedicated person with sufficient time in their work schedule to act as a tutor who will advise the interns, help them integrate in the host environment, supervise-their tasks and monitor their progress
- Defining the appropriate number of internships. The host organizations can apply a range of criteria such as identifying an amount of time that each tutor dedicate to interns or defining a number of interns per tutor.
- In any case the interns' placement criteria shall be based on several aspects including the tasks assigned, working team, number of interns working on the same team, etc.
- Defining specific measurable learning objectives and expected outcomes prior to the beginning of the internship
- Assigning a contact person for questions
- Informing the intern about the national/European regulations in place regarding internships
- Helping the interns familiarize with the host organization through approaches that support the intern integration in the working life and to the company's culture
- Providing clear assignments

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- Involving the interns in the meetings
- Providing ongoing guidance, constructive and regular feedback, support as well as access to a professional network
- Conducting regular performance reviews based on the interns' learning objectives and outcomes
- Agreeing and revising the learning objectives of the internship if necessary in collaboration with the interns
- During the internship, discussing possibilities to be hired as an employee within the host organization
- In addition, appointing someone to advise students, help them with their integration in the host organization

At monitoring meetings interns may also:

- report on a project/role status
- ask questions
- learn how their work is contributing to the organization
- participate in evaluating their strengths
- discuss areas needing growth and development
- get insight about what work lies ahead

5.5.2 National

Tutoring is defined as one of the most important parts of an internships in many countries, such as: France, Ireland, Italy, Slovenia, Spain, etc.

In **Slovenia** tutorship is defined by law and collective agreements. The method of monitoring and evaluating the internship must be laid down in an Act, another regulation or branch collective agreements.

In **France**, the academic tutor can't be the tutor of more than 24 interns. And the tutor of the host organisation can't supervise more than 3 interns.

In **Ireland** it is recommended to include the name of the tutor in the host organization in the internship agreement.

In **Bulgaria** private companies offer tutoring to the interns.

5.5.3 Others

Under **Erasmus+ Programme**, the receiving organization must nominate a tutor responsible for signing the Learning Agreement, amending it if needed, supervising the interns during the internship and signing the Traineeship Certificate. Moreover, the learner could benefit from the tutor's network and colleagues where available at the receiving institution/enterprise.

5.6 Career development and employment

5.6.1 Recommendations

Future prospects of the interns' career development and employment should be addressed before the end of the internship.

In general, regular monitoring and formal exchanges by and between the interns, tutor(s) and/or any relevant party shall be performed by:

- assessing and redefining if necessary the specific learning goals and quality objectives identified before and during the planning stages of the experience
- if the internship duration is sufficiently long, setting up a mid-term evaluation with clear evaluation criteria according to the nature of the internship and, in the case of internships performed within a higher education curriculum, according to the specificities of the studies undertaken
- outcomes and processes should be systematically documented¹²
- at the end of the internship, a formal review should be done by the tutor and shared with the interns to evaluate their involvement in the host organization during the internship
- at the end of the internship, both interns and employers should provide feedback through standardized evaluation forms

Indeed, not only the employer should provide feedback to the interns; the other way round is also essential. Interns should therefore assess:

- the internship program
- their tutor
- the employer's ability to successfully host interns
- the usefulness of their internship in relation to their career goals
- whether the training curriculum prepared them adequately for the experience
- the business as a whole (meaning also the functioning of the host organization)

Ideally, these evaluation processes should be done face-to-face and followed up by written summaries to keep track of them.

A few documents are also considered as necessary to properly conclude the internship:

- The interns should submit a report in the specified format and any other required supporting document at the end of the placement, as required by the educational organizations (and according to the academic curriculum), if this is an internship for academic purposes, or otherwise agreed upon at the start of the internship if this is an open-market internship
- A letter of reference given by the employer to the interns
- An European Diploma Supplement which includes information about any internships done when applicable and relevant and/or due to the nature of the internship
- A written statement by the employer that includes a list of the tasks completed, the skills learnt, the experience acquired and an overview of the interns' performance as a whole
- The period worked by the interns within the organization should be taken into account as probation period where applicable/possible if the interns are hired afterwards
- If the internship is required to complete an academic program, it is considered as part of the student learning outcomes and workload, and it requires an allocation of credit:

¹² In some countries, templates are developed to help the host organization in order to facilitate this task for the employers

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- The number of credits allocated to the work placement should be included within the overall number of credits for the particular academic year
- University credits count as an academic or extracurricular semester course
- There should be clear procedures for assessing Learning Outcomes and awarding credits

5.6.2 National

In **Slovenia**, it is defined by law that at the end of the internship, the interns must pass an examination which is a constituent and the concluding part of the internship and must be taken before the end of the internship period. This applies only for academic internships.

In **France**, at the end of the internship, a certificate has to be given to the interns by the host organization (this certificate allows conditionally to accumulate pensionable time); if the interns are hired, they have conditionally no trial period.

5.6.3 Others

Under **Erasmus+ programme** it is mandatory to follow practices and procedures that might enhance the learner's career development and employment. For example:

- An evaluation by the host organization is made based on the learning agreement
- The interns must fill in a Participant Report to provide feedback on their Erasmus+ mobility period to the sending and receiving institution, to the relevant Erasmus+ National Agencies and to the European Commission
- The host organization must give to the learners a Traineeship Certificate summarizing the tasks carried out and an evaluation. The sending institution will also give a Transcript of Records, if this forms part of the Learning Agreement. If the internship was not part of the curriculum, the learners can request to have it recorded in their Europass Mobility Document and if they are enrolled in a HEI located in a country taking part in the Bologna Process, the mobility period will be additionally recorded in their European Diploma Supplement (or equivalent). In case of a recent graduate from an institution located in a Program Country, the learners are encouraged to request the Europass Mobility Document.

5.7 Work environment and working conditions

5.7.1 Recommendations

There should be clear and written agreements about the duration of the internship (hours, months, days).

Internships shall have a maximum duration and shall never lead to a job replacement¹³. They shall correspond to the learning objectives set up by the tutor (and the sending organization in cases of higher education frameworks) before the start of it.

Principles in defining the scope of an internship:

- Internships may be part-time or full-time
- Daily and weekly worked hours of the internship defined according to national rules but never exceeding 8 hours per day and 40 hours per week as well as respecting the duration of breaks (cf 4.7)

¹³ For more information See section 4.7

- Length and tasks of the internship correspond to specific learning objectives that are shared with the students at the beginning of the internship
- Employers shall guarantee respect for the legal rights of interns in terms of working conditions (e.g. hours of work, holidays)

Work environment:

- The host organization providing the internship shall ensure decent working conditions for interns, including a designated working space, with all materials needed, such as a desk, a computer as well as accessibility to the workplace.
- The host organization should ensure that the intern is formally informed of the local regulations concerning minimum and maximum working hours per week, rest times, maximum overtime and compensation and others. At all times the host companies is held to respect these regulations.
- The workplace should meet the prescribed standards on health and safety at work, as defined in national legislation or other binding documents.
- Interns can be allowed to have (paid) vacations, defined in accordance with national legislation for workers in that workplace.

5.7.2 National

In **Slovenia** the internship may not last longer than one year unless stipulated otherwise by law. It may be extended proportionally, if the interns work part-time, but not for more than six months. It is also defined that the working week must not exceed 40 hours. Interns have a right to have paid vacations, in duration equivalent to the right of regular employees.

In **France** the duration of the internship carried out by the same intern in the same host organization may not exceed six months per teaching year, equivalent to 924 hours. The interns have some of the rights given to the employees (pregnancy leave, meal ticket, some transportation fees, etc.).

In **Bulgaria** a traineeship employment contract (TEC) is a fixed-term contract for a period of no less than six months and no more than 12 months.

5.7.3 Others

Under **Erasmus + Programme**, an internship abroad can last from a minimum of 2 months to a maximum of 12 months. The learners can benefit of an exchange abroad with Erasmus+ multiple times, either as students or as interns, but total time abroad (study abroad periods included) may not exceed 12 months within one cycle of study¹⁴. The receiving institution/enterprise commits itself to treat the learners in the same way as its home employees.

¹⁴ "Cycle" refers to the level of study as defined by the [European Qualifications Framework \(EQF\)](#):

1. First cycle (Bachelor or equivalent) EQF 5/6
2. Second cycle (Master or equivalent) EQF 7
3. Third cycle (Doctoral or equivalent) EQF

5.8 Social protection and insurance

5.8.1 Recommendations

Social protection of interns should be ensured by different ways and by different actors (either host organization/educational provider or automatically by law or system) and can cover different aspects (sickness insurance, civic liability insurance, accident insurance, unemployment, pension).

Different aspects and practices were identified:

- Inclusion of the interns in the social security system, especially those of health, unemployment, pension systems
- Informing the interns of their social and labor rights, their responsibilities towards the organization and any health and safety risks in the workplace. Interns should be informed at the beginning of their internship of their social and labor rights and all other rights relevant to their social protection.
- Ensuring that interns are covered by an insurance policy (preferably paid by the host company) will protect interns from unforeseen accidents at work, including physical and material, and compensate if an unfortunate situation arises.
- Providing accident/liability insurance: provided by the interns' parent/guardian/school.
- Automobile accident insurance: provided by the interns' parent/guardian/school.
- Providing interns with a European Health Insurance Card guarantees their rights to health insurance and allows them, during a temporary stay in Europe, to benefit from medical care if necessary.
- Social security contributions should be borne by both parts, the interns and the host organization. The ratio of contribution should be aligned with the national legislation or the sectorial agreement if applicable.
- Sometimes HEI provides logistical support to students concerning social security cover and insurance.

5.8.2 National

Many countries have developed systems, where also inclusion of interns in social security is compulsory. Among them: Belgium, Bulgaria (with arrangements), Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary (under employment relation), Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta (provided by employers or general public healthcare), Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain (interns under 28 years and National Health Service), and Sweden.

In the **Netherlands**, all interns are protected and covered by work insurance, having the same rights as employers. The same is in **Bulgaria** where within the contract, interns are entitled to all the rights of people working under employment contracts, including occupational safety insurance under general rules.

Also in **Slovenia** it is defined by the Employment Relationship Act that interns have the same rights as other employees/workers, they are covered by general labor rules and occupational injuries insurance. According to the Law on Health Insurance concerning occupational hazards and accidents at work, it is the responsibility of the host organization to cover these fees. They are included in two systems of insurance in the instance of occupational injury and occupational diseases. The system for compulsory health insurance covers risks regarding the inability to work, while the risk of disability or death of the insured person is covered by the compulsory pension and disability insurance system.

In **Romania** students during vocational internship are covered by the mandatory social insurance for occupational diseases and accidents at work.

In **Lithuania** interns have the cost of insurance against accidents in the workplace as well as social and health insurance premiums covered from the national budget. Interns are covered by compulsory health insurance and social insurance against accidents at work and occupational diseases with state funds. According to general public healthcare insurance, necessity of treatment and medical service comes under the health insurance scheme, also as a result of accident at work.

In **Italy**, when it exists a promoter for the internship, it is in charge of the insurance of the interns. Insurance covers accidents at work and civil liability, it does not cover sicknesses.

In **Belgium**, before assigning the interns to a position or activity requiring a type of health surveillance, based in the health, risk and safety analysis, the employer must provide them and the educational institution where they are enrolled with a document containing information concerning:

- the description of the position or activity requiring appropriate health supervision
- all preventive measures to be applied
- the nature of the risk requiring specific health surveillance
- the obligations that interns must respect concerning the risks inherent to the workstation or the activity
- where appropriate, training adapted to the application of preventive measures

This document is available to the surveillance officer and the intern.

In **France**, in the event of pregnancy, paternity or adoption, the trainee benefits from leave and leave of absence of a duration equivalent to those provided for employees (Article L.124-13 from French education code). Besides, the periods of compulsory internship completed by students of higher education give the right to the validation of a quarter of insurance for retirement under certain conditions.

In **Malta**, if the contract of internship is bound within scope of labor law or the Employment and Training Services Act, the interns have to be provided with health insurance on general rules as for employers. If the internship is not regulated by labor law – as e.g. Erasmus mobility – and there's lack of labor or employment contract necessity, interns insurance is covered by general public healthcare on general rules.

In **Spain**, people who participate in internships are obliged to register from General Social Security Scheme.

6 References and useful links

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