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Conditions and rules for internship in Bulgaria

Definition of Traineeship/Internship: A legal definition of traineeship appears in the Labour Code – art. 233, b). Traineeship is the performance of work under the guidance of an employer or of a person designated thereby, called a mentor, for the purpose of mastering practical skills in an acquired profession or subject. This is a type of employment relationship between an employer and a person aged up to 29 years who has graduated from a secondary school or a higher education institution and has no work experience or professional practice in the profession acquired or the subject studied. The contract shall be concluded for work in a position corresponding to the qualification acquired by the person concerned. The contract shall lay down the method and mode of practical skills acquisition in the course of performance of work duties and indicate the mentor's name and position, the contract term, which may not be less than 6 or more than 12 months, and any other terms and conditions relevant to the traineeship.

Beyond the Labour Code definition, the term "traineeship" is used to refer to short-term, in many cases summer-time practical experience traineeships offered by private companies. In this case applicants are school or university students and are not paid any remuneration during such practical experience traineeships.

"Practical training" is a term described in the Vocational Education and Training Act. Vocational training centres that provide training for adults over the age of 16 are required to include practical training in their programs. The practical part of the training cannot be less than 60% of the total duration of the training.

The practical trainings are held in places (it can be a farm or artisan dairy for example) that have a contract with the vocational training centre. The practical training is conducted by qualified trainers from VTC, the trainees do not need to have an employment contract with the dairy. The VTC, which conducts the training, is responsible for everything. Individual or group insurance is usually taken out to cover the risks of an accident or mishap.

Another possibility for **informal internship, practical training or apprenticeship** is direct negotiation between the owner or manager of the dairy (farm) and the candidate for on-the-job training. In this case the rules of the labour legislation apply and the adult who is studying must have a fixed-term employment contract signed and registered by the employer in the Employment Agency. Minimum insurance thresholds for the profession apply (for example a skilled worker in milk processing is EUR 311 / month). An alternative to

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the employment contract is the so-called "Civil contract". This contract also owes social payments (a total of 27.8% of the contract amount) and a flat income tax of 10% on the amount after deducting social security contributions. Under this contract there is an opportunity to reduce the amount on which social security contributions and taxes are due by 25%. These are the so-called "statutory costs". Another advantage is that the contract can be concluded for a specific period of time (for example 3 days). The employer declares and pays the due insurances at the end of the month, and the employee - at the beginning of the next year.

In all other cases, working on a farm or dairy of an adult without an employment or civil contract or a vocational training contract is treated as a violation of labour law. When such a violation is established by the Labour Inspectorate, sanctions are imposed.