



EUROPEAN COMMISSION - PRESS RELEASE

Modernising the Professional Qualifications Directive will make it easier for professionals to find skilled jobs across Europe

Brussels, 19 December 2011 - As the working age population in many Member States shrinks¹, demand for highly skilled people between now and 2020 is projected to rise by over 16 million jobs². If Europe is to meet this demand, gaps in labour shortages need to be filled – for example through mobile and well qualified professionals from other EU Member States. They can be a key source of growth, but only if they can easily go to where jobs are and this requires their qualifications in the EU to be recognised in a fast, simple and reliable way. That is why the Commission has today adopted a proposal for modernising the Professional Qualifications Directive ([Directive 2005/36/EC](#)).

Today's proposal aims at simplifying rules for the mobility of professionals within the EU by offering a European Professional Card to all interested professions which would allow easier and faster recognition of qualifications. It also clarifies the framework for consumers, by inviting Member States to review the scope of their regulated professions and by addressing public concerns about language skills and the lack of effective alerts about professional malpractice, notably in the health sector.

Internal Market and Services Commissioner Michel Barnier said: "*Europe is facing many challenges today. One of them will be the increase in demand for highly skilled jobs across the EU. Today's proposal on professional qualifications responds to the need to have a smooth system of recognition of qualifications in order to support the mobility of professionals across Europe. It will make it easier for well qualified professionals to go where job vacancies exist. And this will certainly prove beneficial for the growth of the European economy. I am convinced that the idea of a European professional card – an electronic certificate – is the right way forward, as it will simplify and speed up the recognition procedures for mobile professionals.*"

¹ According to Eurostat's Europop 2010 survey: there will be three working people for every pensioner by 2020. http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php?title=File:Old_age_dependency_ratio_on_1_January_of_selected_years.PNG&filetimestamp=20110609135954

² Skill supply and demand in Europe: medium-term forecast up to 2020 (2010), available at: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/Files/3052_en.pdf

Key elements of the proposal:

1. The introduction of a European professional card will offer to interested professionals the possibility to benefit from easier and quicker recognition of their qualifications. It should also facilitate temporary mobility. The card will be made available according to the needs expressed by the professions (for example, nurses and mountain guides expressed a strong interest in using such a card). The card is associated to an optimised recognition procedure carried out within the existing Internal Market Information System ([IMI](#)) and will take the form of an electronic certificate, allowing the professional to provide services or become established in another Member State.

2. Better access to information on the recognition of professional qualifications: all citizens seeking the recognition of their professional qualifications should be able to go to a one-stop shop rather than being passed around between different government bodies. This one-stop shop should be the Points of Single Contact ([PSCs](#)), created under the Services Directive, which will allow citizens to obtain information in one place about the documents required to have their qualifications recognised and where they can also complete all online recognition procedures.

3. Updating minimum training requirements for doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurses, midwives, veterinary surgeons and architects: the minimum training requirements for these professions were harmonised 20 or 30 years ago. They have been updated to reflect the evolution of these professions and of education in these fields. For example, the entry level for nursing and midwifery training has been upgraded from 10 years to 12 years of general education.

4. The introduction of an alert mechanism for health professionals benefiting from automatic recognition: competent authorities of a Member State will be obliged to alert competent authorities of all other Member States about a health professional who has been prohibited from exercising his professional activity by a public authority or a court. This is particularly important because there have been examples of doctors banned from practising in their home Member State, moving abroad to work, and other Member States were not aware of it.

5. The introduction of common training frameworks and common training tests, replacing common platforms, should offer the possibility to extend the mechanism of automatic recognition to new professions. Interested professions could benefit from automatic recognition on the basis of a common set of knowledge, skills and competences or on a common test assessing the ability of professionals to pursue a profession.

6. Mutual evaluation exercise on regulated professions: a new mechanism is introduced in the Directive to ensure greater transparency and justification of the professions they regulate through a specific qualification requirement. Member States will have to provide a list of their regulated professions and justify the need for regulation. This should be followed up by a mutual evaluation exercise facilitated by the European Commission.

Background:

The Professional Qualifications Directive is essential to enabling professionals to start a new business or to find a job in another Member State requiring a specific qualification for a specific professional activity. The modernisation is one of the twelve levers for growth set out in the Single Market Act ([IP/11/469](#)).

The proposal builds on a Green Paper the Commission issued in June ([IP/11/767](#)). A summary of the responses to the Green Paper has been published today as well. See also [MEMO/11/923](#)

More information:

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/policy_developments/index_en.htm

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