

EPSU position on cross-border recognition of professional qualifications

(Brussels 15 March 2011) EPSU today replied to the public consultation on the Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (2005/36/EC), launched by the European Commission, DG MARKT, on 7 January 2011 to update and revise this key piece of Community Law to promote free movements of workers within the EU.

The directive applies to professionals wishing to establish themselves in an EU country other than that in which they obtained their professional qualifications as an employed or self-employed person and on a permanent basis. Most professionals fall under a general system whereas five out of seven professions under the scheme of automatic recognition deal with human health: nurses, midwives, doctors, dentists and pharmacists. This explains the high relevance of the pertinent European legislation for EPSU affiliates active in the health and social services sector and their members.

In EPSU's view there are three key objectives that are paramount and need to be guaranteed when updating and revising Directive 2005/36/EC. These three general guiding principles are:

- High level of qualification and professional standards to ensure minimum requirements for access to the profession for the health care workforce – concerning in particular professions benefitting from automatic recognition, but also those falling under the general system
- Health and safety of patients
- Quality of service provision in health and social care

EPSU's contribution is built around five key messages.

1. In EPSU's view harmonised standards of minimum requirements for health professionals under the automatic recognition principle have provided a simple,

swift means of recognition for health professionals across Europe and should continue to be supported, and implemented, although some modernisation is required. EPSU is against using/extending the option of “partial access” for the nursing and midwifery profession.

2. EPSU would like to see the Internal Market Information System (IMI system) developing in the direction to facilitate the process of the cross-country recognition of professional qualifications in an online modality and to assume the function of a “one stop shop”. Its use could become mandatory for all competent authorities and professionals, especially for those in the health care sector.

3. EPSU members agree on the necessity and the advantages to update relevant annexes – e.g. Annex V in the case of sectoral professions – with new topics, contents and competencies. Several EPSU affiliates recommend that competence areas to a higher extent reflect qualifications as required and competencies as defined by the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and/or in the Bologna process.

4. EPSU affiliates broadly agree that a framework for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) providing a common transversal concept should be integrated in the Directive as part of Article 22. They see the need that fundamental principles of CPD including a commitment to patient safety and quality of care are referred to in Community legislation, and then followed through by member states and the healthcare professionals. In order to make this orientation useful they recall the need to improve the cross-border recognition of certificates issued under CPD.

5. EPSU members agree on the need for employers to do a language test at the point of employment of a migrant health care professionals. In this context EPSU underlines the responsibility of employers in ensuring someone is competent for the job she/he is recruited to as well as for proper induction for new staff from other countries.

The European social partners in the hospital sector, EPSU and HOSPEEM, will send in a joint contribution to the consultation, to be finally approved by EPSU and HOSPEEM affiliates until 22 March 2011. As to their work under the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for the Hospital Sector they decided to devote particular attention to the topic of the cross-border recognition of professional qualifications in the first half of 2011.

EPSU and HOSPEEM underline their interest of being involved in the further steps of the consultation and evaluation process in the months to come. There will be two key moments to further intervene for EPSU affiliates and the EPSU Secretariat, when two documents will be published by the European Commission: It announced to issue a Staff Working Paper summarising the contributions to the consultation in summer and a Green Paper before the end of 2011. The legislative process to update and to revise the Directive 2005/36/EC is expected to be concluded in the first half of 2012.

Read EPSU's contribution to the consultation

- [EPSU contribution consultation professional qualifications](#)

Read the joint EPSU and HOSPEEM reply to the consultation

- [Joint EPSU-HOSPEEM contribution consultation professional qualifications](#)

Background information about the evaluation, consultation and revision process and links to relevant documents

- [Evaluation, consultation and revision of Directive 2005/36/EC](#)
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