



News – 23/02/2011

**Consultation Paper by DG MARKT on the
Professional Qualifications Directive:
Reactions from the Engineering Sector**

As you know (see last EurEta Newsletter of the 13th of January 2011), the European Commission has published its Consultation Paper relating to the revision of the 2005/36 Directive. The deadline given to all stakeholders for sending their positions is March the 15th. EurEta is currently working on its answer to the questions raised by the European Commission's Consultation. The Executive Board is meeting in a few days in Brussels in order to finalize its policies. In this newsletter, we would like to give you some input coming from other professional associations relating to the engineering sector.

You may remember that the 2005/36 EC Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications of the 7th September 2005 offers three main tools to enhance mobility: Automatic recognition, Common platforms and the Professional Card.

Unfortunately, because of the highly heterogeneous country-specific requirements placed on professional qualifications, two out of the three aforementioned tools (“Automatic recognition” and “Common platforms”) have not produced any practical outcome (*our comment: several Engineering associations have tried to set up a Common Platform but without success*).

Now, some Engineering Bodies believe that the “Professional Card” system seems to be the most efficient if not the only promising way to facilitate the recognition of an engineer’s professional qualifications. This is what they feel are the main features of a Professional Card dedicated to engineers:

1) Administration

The Professional Card should be issued by the competent professional associations in each Member State, simply because they are able to ensure that applicants’ qualifications are adequately tested. Professional associations at European level (e.g. EurEta) would be responsible for monitoring this decentralized system. This would also imply that qualifications obtained in the card holder’s Member State of origin must be documented. Additional country-specific information in line with national requirements could possibly be combined with “standardized entries”.

Moreover, this Professional Card should be issued on a voluntary basis. It must represent a service for those who want to be mobile within the European Union rather than a constraint. Therefore, the Card would offer a needs-based solution and unnecessary bureaucracy could be avoided.

2) Completeness

The information contained on the Card should be exhaustive, in order to provide a complete overview of the academic education, professional experience and further training of the Card owner.

3) Standardization

The information mentioned above should be consistent with the European standards defined under the European Qualification Framework. The EUR-ACE criteria and the accreditation criteria for engineering studies adopted across Europe also apply to academic education.

4) Recognition

In order to guarantee the validity of the Card owner's professional qualifications, these should be tested and recognized in the Member State of origin by an independent register commission made up of experts from universities, relevant engineer's organizations and industry. This could ensure a wider recognition of this Professional Card.

As you know, the European Commission has set up a Steering Group specifically dedicated to professional cards. Our Policy Advisor, Dr Theodoros Koutroubas, is a member of this group.

The "28th regime" the European Commission proposes to replace the platform system with can be also an opportunity for EurEta. Our Policy Advisor had a meeting on this issue with DG MARKT's Head of Unit for Professional Qualifications, Mr. Jürgen Tiedje. Mr Tiedje underlines that the "28th regime proposal" is an innovative and creative effort of the

Commission to break the current stallmate of the platform system. He has encouraged bodies such as EurEta to ask the Commission in their reactions to the Consultation document for more clarifications on this new proposed system.

It is interesting that other Engineering organizations seem to put all their forces behind the cards, somehow underestimating the potential of a “European Curricula”. An opportunity for EurEta?

Next Events

1) *Executive Board meeting of EurEta:*

- **When?** Friday the 25th of February 2011, 13h00.
- **Where?** Bedford hotel & congress centre, Brussels.
- **More information:** info@eureta.org

2) *“Is the Lisbon Treaty delivering for citizens”?*

- **When?** Friday the 18th of March 2011, 10h00.
- **Where?** Room JAN 4Q1 (entrance: József Antall building), European Parliament, Brussels.
- **More information:**
<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/shortcuts/document.faces/en/10114/pdf.bookmark>