



News – 13/07/2011

“The European Professional Card, a Key Tool for Fostering Innovation in Europe”

The 28th of June was held in the premises of the European Parliament in Brussels Dinner-Debate on “The European Professional Card, a Key Tool for Fostering Innovation in Europe”. EurEta was amongst the participants of this meeting and summarize for you the content of the discussions.

Different guest speakers were invited to take the floor: Mrs Evelyne Gebhardt and Mrs Bernadette Vergnaud, Members of the European Parliament, Mr. Jürgen Tidje, head of unit of the European Commission DG MARKT, responsible for the drafting of the green paper on the recognition of professional qualification, Mr. Lars Bytoft, FEANI President, and Dr. Willi Fuchs, Engineer.

The aim of the potential professional card was first issue to be covered improving the Single Market by increasing mobility of professionals, so that all the work force resources can be used in the best way. There is indeed a lack of engineers

in some Member States, like Germany, when at the same time there are unemployed engineers in other countries. A Professional Card should accelerate and simplify the procedure of the recognition of the professional qualifications for employers that are recruiting engineers by facilitating cooperation between Member States, reducing the paper flow and the barriers to mobility for engineers. In the words of Mr. Tidje, such a card would be a vehicle to provide reliable information, but not a tool for standardization.



Mr. Jürgen Tidje, from the European Commission

According to some of the participants, the requirements proposed by the Green Paper published the 22nd of June 2011 are going towards the right direction. This Green paper gives in fact the current position of the European Commission in the revision process of the Professional Qualification Directive while requesting the view of stakeholders on it. A card should according to the Commission be:

- Efficient, simple, flexible procedure-wise;
- On a voluntary basis, as it would not be compulsory to have it;
- Issued and documented in the country of origin;
- Offer transparency and guarantee that the engineer is competent to exercise the profession, (it could mention detailed overview of the studies, the professional experience and the continuous training development).

Some of the Participants have also addressed the criticisms that are in general raised against the card. First of all, regarding the pretended cost, card should not be expensive as it could use the Internal Market Information System (IMI) that already exists, and it should save a lot of administrative and translating expenses. Regarding the data protection and confidentiality issue, card would only be an exterior sign, and the data would be contained in a confidential register, accessible only with the consent of the cardholder.

To conclude, such a card would be an adequate answer to the growing need of mobility and could participate in the building of a European identity.

Views from the Stakeholders of the steering group on the European Professional Cards for Engineer

In the context of our discussions on the potential professional card, we feel it is useful to share with you the point of view of the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology.

The German Federal Ministry agrees in fact that card should be only a way to accelerate the procedure for recognition. Such a card should be issued by a competent authority to provide certainty with regards to the academic titles and avoid fraud in terms of educational and professional experience. The Ministry suggests to use the EQF (European Qualifications Framework (see article here after)) in order to represent the educational background on an indicative basis, so that the card provides information about the education and experience in a standardized form. In order to avoid useless bureaucratic burdens to the Member States, a new EU-level data base should not be created, but the current notification process should be simplified.

Overview of the European Qualifications Framework - EQF

The European Qualifications Framework is often used in the scope of the revision of the Professional Qualification Directive. We are going to further develop what is behind this concept for your information.

The development of the EQF started in 2004, as the Member States requested to increase the transparency of qualifications, and led to the adoption of the EQF Recommendation of the Parliament and the Council the 26th of April 2008. It

has two principal aims: to promote citizen's mobility between countries and to facilitate their life long training.

The core of the EQF consists in eight reference levels (developed in the annex II of the recommendation) describing what a learner knows, understands and is able to do (the three "learning outcomes": knowledge, skills and competences). The national levels of qualification will be placed according to this central reference levels, ranging from basic (Level 1, for example school leaving certificate) to advanced (Level 8, for example Doctorates), which would enable an easier comparison between the national qualifications.

This Qualifications Framework has many benefits. It makes indeed easier for the worker to describe its level of competence in another Member States. It also should encourage and increase access to lifelong training: by establishing a common reference point, EQF will indicate how learning outcomes may be combined from different setting for example formal study or work. It should so facilitate the validation of non-formal and informal learning, such as the experience or other fields of activity.

This approach shifts the focus from the traditional system, which emphasises "learning inputs" such as the length of the studies, or the type of institution.

Most Member States are now developing their own National Qualifications Framework based on these "learning outcomes", several countries such as Ireland, UK, France, Malta, Belgium (Flanders) already have one in force.

For more information, please consult the following e-link:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc44_en.htm

Next events

1) *EurEta Board and Registration Committee meeting:*

- **When?** Friday the 22th of July 2011, 13:00 – 18:00.
- **Where?** EurEta Italy office, Rome, Italy.
- **More information:** info@eureta.org

2) *General Assembly meeting of EurEta:*

- **When?** Saturday the 23th of July 2011, at 9:00 am.
- **Where?** EurEta Italy office, Rome, Italy.
- **Other:** A Forum dedicated to the free movement of professionals and Professional Cards will be organized the same day, from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm.
- **More information:** info@eureta.org

3) *World Engineers Convention 2011 :*

- **When?** From the 4th to the 9th of September 2011.
- **Where?** Geneva, Switzerland.
- **Topic:** Engineers Power the World - Facing the Global Energy Challenge.
- **More information:** www.wec2011.org

4) *3^d European Innovation Summit*

- **When and Where?** The 10th and 11th of October in Warsaw (Novotel Center) and from the 10th to the 13th of October in Brussels (European Parliament)

- **Topic:** “Towards a European Innovation Eco-System”.
- **More information:**
http://www.knowledge4innovation.eu/EIS/SitePages/eis2011_home.aspx