



News – 25/11/2010

Public Hearing – European Parliament: “The Internal Market for professionals: How to make it work? Improving the Recognition of Professional Qualifications”

As you know, in the framework of the **evaluation phase of the 2005/36 EC Directive on Professional Qualifications**, the European Commission has decided to work at two levels: it has organized meetings with the National Competent Authorities of the Regulated Professions; And at the same time it has set up two Conferences aiming at offering the opportunity to representatives of the professional associations to express themselves. The first one of these conferences was held the 17th March of 2010 (see EurEta Newsletter of the 28th of September 2010) and the second the 29th of October 2010.

The 26th of October 2010, the European Parliament (EP) organized its own event regarding the evaluation of this important Directive: a Public Hearing of the “Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee” (“IMCO”), held in the premises of the EP. The objective of the Hearing was to promote better

communication on the revision process of the 2005/36 EC Directive and to feed back to it.

During this Public Hearing in question, the floor was given to very competent speakers on the issue: Amongst them, Mrs Bernadette Vergnaud, MEP, Vice Chair of the Internal market Committee (“IMCO”), and Mr Michel Barnier, European Commissioner for Internal Market and Services. Several other MEPs and MNPs from a large range of Member States were also asked to speak.

You will find a detailed report of this meeting as an attachment to our newsletter. We feel it is important however to stress in particular two major topics for EurEta discussed the 26th of November 2010: the **Common Platforms** and the **European Professional Card**. By doing so, we will be able to better prepare our own positioning in view of the formal launching of the Directive's revision process.

More information about the whole process of the recognition of professional qualifications can be found by clicking on the following e-link: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/evaluation_en.htm

1. Common Platforms

The EP Hearing did not discuss Professional Platforms directly but it did raise two major points relating to **Compensation measures**. First, the briefing paper of the Internal Market Committee stated that Compensation Measures are resource demanding and thus Competent Authorities are unsure of how to develop better measures given the current situation. Second, the importance of a better check of linguistic competences was underlined. Several MEPs expressed the view that this should be made

mandatory when the process of Recognition of Professional Competences is performed.

As we mentioned, three days after this public hearing, the 29th of October 2010, EurEta, as well as many other Professional Associations, took part in the European Commission-organized Conference on the evaluation of the Professional Qualifications Directive held in Brussels (You will find a detailed report of this meeting in the newsletter of CEPLIS). However, we feel it is quite important to share with you that Mr Jürgen Tiedje, Head of Unit D4 (Recognition of Qualifications) of the DG Markt, expressed the opinion that as a tool for Recognition, Professional Platforms have not worked until now and thus the article is temporarily frozen. According to him, Professional Cards could be a reliable alternative to Platforms.

2. European Professional Cards and the Engineering Profession

In the main conclusions of the IMCO briefing paper presented at the beginning of the Public Hearing, it is stated that professional cards could speed up the recognition process but the challenges to their development and implementation are important.

Regarding the engineering profession, some organizations already have a practical experience in that subject because VDI (Verein Deutscher Ingenieure) and FEANI (European Federation of National Engineering Associations), which have tried to set up a professional ID card. In the case of FEANI, its Executive Board feels that their card is complete and detailed (training and professional experience are included), standardized (Information based on the European Qualification Framework), reliable (check and recognition of qualifications in origin country by an independent

registration committee), decentralized and puts forward a voluntary approach. FEANI aims to implement this professional card in 10 countries before the end of this year.

3. Next steps

At the end of the Hearing, the European Commissioner for Internal Market and Services, Mr Michel Barnier, announced the three next steps. First, a public consultation will be launched before the end of 2010. Then, in autumn 2011, an evaluation report will be established, followed by a Green Paper. Finally, the first legislative proposals to amend the 2005/36 EC Directive could be presented in 2012.