



EFN BRIEFING NOTE on

Legislative proposal on the Modernisation of the Professional Qualifications Directive

Today 19th December 2011, the EC adopted the **new legislative proposal for the modernisation of the Professional Qualifications Directive**, part of the central backbone in the Single Market Act with the main objective of boosting the economic growth. The year 2011 has been a particularly intense period of lobby process aiming at influencing the Commission civil servants and MEPs on what is at stake for the nursing profession. As a result of the **EFN participation** in the two public consultations (in January and June 2010), next to being a leading partner in the Steering Committee of the European Professional Mobility Card and the Single Market Forum, together with the coalition of the sectoral professions' with joint efforts in pushing forward 2 statements published in 2011 and one statement with EPF, EPHA, BEUC and EWL, the new legislative proposal takes up what EFN has asked for: **the safeguarding of mutual recognition and upgrading of the minimum requirements.**

The requirements for the automatic recognition of the nurses have been strengthened and the new legislative proposal explicitly acknowledges that the nursing profession has significantly evolved in the last three decades, making nurses fit for practice in a complex healthcare system. The proposal includes within the Article 31 the new professional requirements to the general care nurse which requires Member State **to upgrade the admission requirements from 10 years of general education to 12 years.**

As part of the minimum requirements for automatic recognition, **it has been clarified that the training of nurses** responsible for general care shall comprise **at least three years of study** consisting of **at least 4 600 hours** and the theory/practice split stays in the Directive.

Language requirements have been strengthened giving the possibility to competent authorities to carry out language controls but only after the qualifications have been recognised, when and where strictly necessary, and should be free for the professional. Regarding Continuous Professional Development, Member States will have to report every five years on their continuing education and training systems for health professionals.

The proposal seems to be very positive for nurses and nursing, however, the **EFN will continue its lobby process** on the follow up of **two key topics** that the EFN needs to remain vigilant about: partial access and the update of the Annex V.

Concerning **partial access**, EFN acknowledges that there is an exception for cases that could override reasons of general interest, such as public health; nevertheless EFN, together with the other sectoral professions, should submit an amendment to exclude partial access for health professionals' recognition. Related to the **update of the Annex V**, the commission will use delegated acts assisted by a committee to update the content of the education and training requirements and competences. The EFN will closely follow the process with the Commission to allow EFN design a concrete proposal.

Other changes are also included in the proposal and are completely in line with what EFN was asking for: the recognition process would be able to be made online; the professional card would be a voluntary **electronic certificate**; a mandatory **proactive alert mechanism** on disciplinary action; and all the system of recognition will **compulsory use the IMI** (Internal Market Information System) as a back-up and communication system for the recognition of professionals' qualifications. A revision of the concept and structure of the **common platform** is also presented, **common training principles**, giving more opportunities and facilities in terms of recognition of the nursing specialities.

- DIR 36 - <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:2005L0036:20110324:EN:PDF>
- Proposal for modernising the Professional Qualifications Directive -
- http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/policy_developments/index_en.htm
- Press release -
- <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?aged=0&format=HTML&guiLanguage=en&language=EN&reference=IP/11/1562>

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