

Summary of the functioning of the European Professional Card (EPC)

Legal framework

The key elements of the functioning of the EPC have been set out in Articles 4a-4e of [Directive 2005/36/EC](#), as amended by [Directive 2013/55/EU](#). Directive 2013/55/EU entered into force on 17 January 2014 and should be implemented by the Member States by 18 January 2016.

Article 4a(7) of the directive lists the following strict conditions for the introduction of the EPC for specific professions:

“(a) there is significant mobility or potential for significant mobility in the profession concerned;
(b) there is sufficient interest expressed by the relevant stakeholders;
(c) the profession or the education and training geared to the pursuit of the profession is regulated in a significant number of Member States.”

Recital 4 of Directive 2013/55/EC further specifies that the introduction of the EPC should be preceded by an assessment of its suitability for the profession concerned and its impact on Member States.

The introduction of the EPC for a particular profession is subject to adoption of relevant implementing acts.

The form of EPC

The EPC will be available both for professionals who want to establish themselves permanently as well as to those who want to practice their professional activity on a temporary and occasional basis.

It will take the form of an electronic document that will be issued either

- (i) following a recognition procedure involving the competent authorities of the home and the host Member States¹ concerned via the [Internal Market Information System \(IMI\)](#), or
- (ii) following an EPC procedure for making a prior declaration for the provision of temporary services involving the competent authority of the home Member State and the use of IMI.

The EPC will be a new voluntary procedure for the recognition of professional qualifications under Directive 2005/36/EC and for the purposes of making a prior declaration for provision of temporary services. Therefore professionals will be able to choose between the new enhanced procedure enabled by the EPC and currently existing procedures in the EU Member States.

EPC in case of permanent establishment or temporary provision of services by professions with health and safety implications which do not benefit from automatic recognition

In cases where professionals want to establish themselves permanently in another Member State and in cases where applicants in professions with health and safety implications (except those covered by automatic recognition) want to provide services on a temporary basis, the host Member

¹ The home Member State means the country of origin in the EEA, and the host Member State means the country of destination in the EEA.

State will take the final decision on issuing the EPC. If it fails to do so within the deadlines set in the Directive, the EPC will be issued automatically and the professional qualifications will be tacitly recognized (or the prior declaration for temporary provision of services will be issued, as the case may be).

However, an EPC that is issued on the basis of tacit recognition or following the decision of the competent authorities on the recognition of professional qualifications will not always give immediate access to the employment market in the host Member State. The professional may still be required to comply with other existing registration obligations and, in certain cases, control of his knowledge of languages.

EPC in case of temporary provision of services concerning profession without health and safety implications and professions that benefit from automatic recognition²

In cases of temporary and occasional provision of services for professions which do not have health and safety implications, the EPC will be issued by the home Member State and will replace the prior declaration, which might be required by the host Member State under Article 7 of Directive 2005/36/EC. In this case, the card will cover the provision of services for 18 months (compared to one year under the current rules) and will be valid on the entire territory of the Member States for which it has been requested. The professional will be able to request an EPC for one or more Member States.

Benefits of EPC

EPC is designed to facilitate the procedures for the recognition of professional qualifications. This objective will be achieved by a greater involvement of the home Member States' competent authorities, the use of electronic procedures and a possibility of tacit recognition.

In particular, the EPC is likely to accelerate the recognition procedures and reduce administrative burden for the professionals:

- Document requirements, length and cost of the recognition procedure will be transparent
- The recognition request can be made online, thus reducing travel/postal expenses
- The home Member State verifies the application documents and confirms their authenticity and validity for the host Member State, with less need for translations and certified copies
- The home Member State issues the required certificates during the application procedure
- No need for a professional to search for the competent authority in the host Member State (recognition file will be transferred to the host Member State directly by the home Member State)
- The home Member State communicates with the host Member State through IMI
- In case of temporary mobility (except for the professions with patient safety and health implications), the EPC is issued by the home Member State and valid in all Member States concerned
- More use of electronic documents in the host Member State
- Less delays through tacit recognition of qualifications
- Information saved in IMI can be re-used for subsequent applications

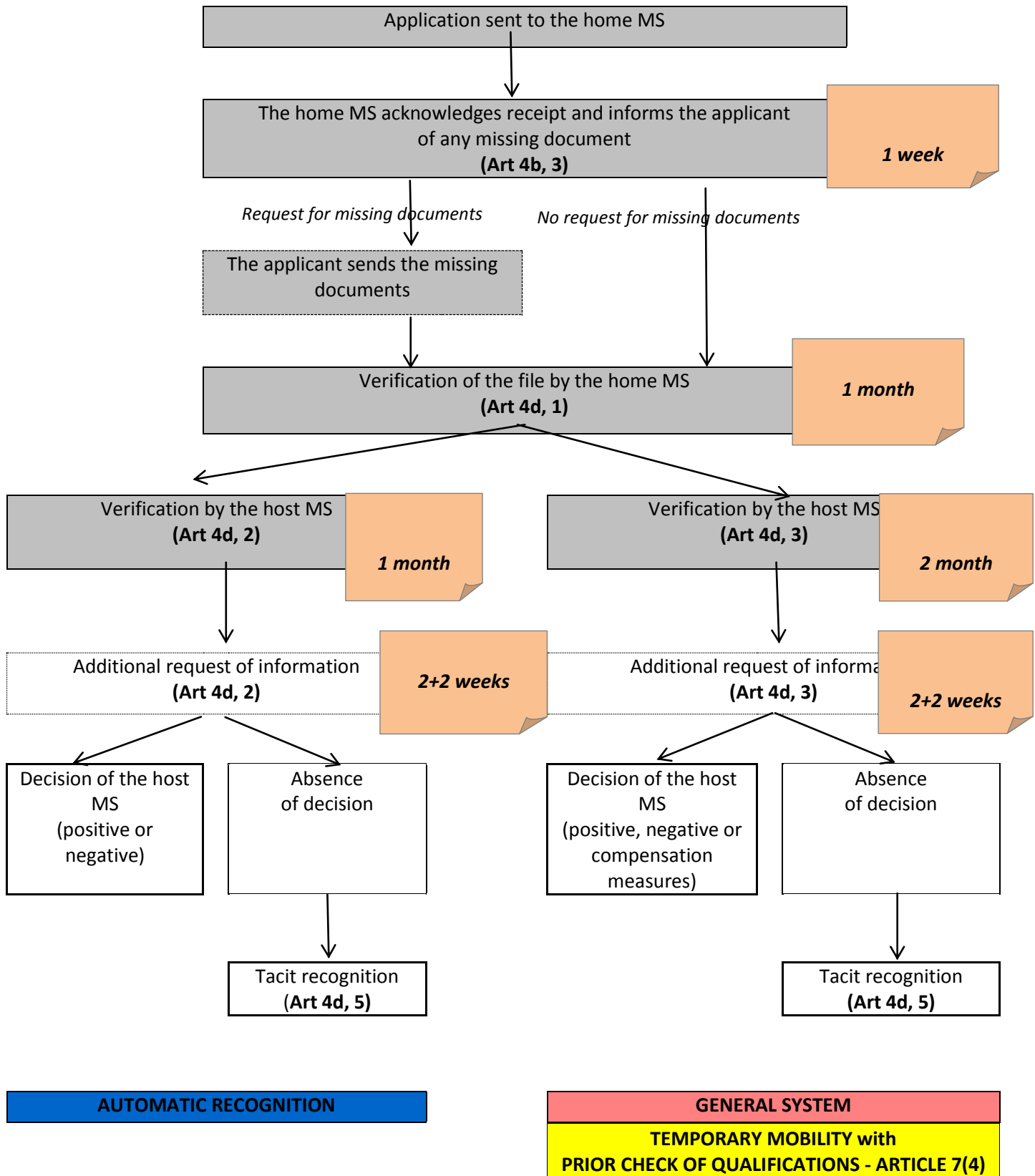
² Doctors, nurses responsible for general care, pharmacists, midwives, dentists, architects and veterinary surgeons.

The EPC should also enhance security via the use of IMI:

- Limited risk of fraud and falsification as the entire recognition procedure is taking place between the competent authorities via IMI
- EPC will be issued and sent automatically, through the public interface, to the holder of professional qualifications
- Professional file in IMI will be accessible only to the relevant competent authorities of the home and host Member States, while the information on the issued EPC will be limited to what is strictly necessary to ascertain the holder's rights to exercise a certain profession
- Possibility (that may be introduced for selected professions) enabling employers/authorities and consumers to check the validity of the EPC online
- Information on the validity of the card being linked to an alert mechanism (fitness to practice)

The EPC should also reduce the administrative burden on the host Member States, because the home Member States will verify application documents and confirm their authenticity and validity.

**European Professional Card workflow – ESTABLISHMENT and
TEMPORARY MOBILITY with PRIOR CHECK OF QUALIFICATIONS ARTICLE 7(4)**



**European Professional Card workflow –TEMPORARY MOBILITY
(NO CHECK OF QUALIFICATIONS under ARTICLE 7(4))**

