

Commissioner Jan Figel
Education, Training, Culture & Multilingualism
European Commission
Brussels

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n/PW/JAsb
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Dear Commissioner Figel

A Response to the consultation on a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning

The Nursing and Midwifery Council is pleased to be respond to the consultation on a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) is the regulatory body for nurses and midwives in the United Kingdom (UK). It is established under statute. The main function of the NMC is to protect the public by keeping a register and by setting the standards for the education, training and conduct of those on the register. All nurses and midwives who wish to work in the UK are required to register with the NMC. Currently, the number of nurses and midwives registered with the NMC is around 670,000.

We acknowledge that the Commission Staff Working Document makes clear that 'recognition of qualifications' should not be read as referring to the implementation of the directive on the recognition of professional qualifications, with which we are very familiar. However, there is a need for nurses and midwives to engage in lifelong learning in order to ensure that their knowledge and practice remains up-to-date. Therefore, we believe for this reason that it is important that we should respond to the consultation.

The NMC welcomes the development of the proposed framework since it provides a valuable means for enabling the recognition and transfer of qualifications across Europe. We endorse the view that robust quality assurance processes in all Member states will be important in ensuring that qualifications from across Europe are credible and that there can be confidence in the validation of non-formal and informal learning. We believe that the proposed framework will also be important for nurses and midwives to access.

Nurses and midwives who have undertaken further professional development, whether as part of a qualification or through self directed learning in their home country are keen to complete and/or further their studies when they come to the UK.

Having a methodology that enables them to map their learning against a national qualifications framework that itself is mapped against a European qualifications framework will, we believe, assist universities and health service employers to understand the achievements of nurses and midwives from other Member States. This will enable the development of appropriate career plans and access to relevant professional development.

The NMC would be most interested in the outcome of the consultation and hope that the outcome will be disseminated widely.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Asbridge', written in a cursive style.

Jonathan Asbridge
President of the Nursing and Midwifery Council