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## **FOCUS GROUP ON THE EUROPEAN PROFESSIONAL CARD**

**MEETING of 25 - 26 MARCH 2014**

### **Meeting Report**

Following the request of participants in the first meeting of the Focus Group on 31 January 2014, this meeting of the group took place on two consecutive days in order to allow a more focused discussion on professions with common characteristics. On 25 March the group focused on health professions while the other professions were dealt with on 26 March.

The Commission presented on both days the step-by-step workflow under the EPC procedure which served as the basis for the discussions of the group. The Commission highlighted in particular the architecture of the EPC workflow structured around a web portal giving general information on the EPC for professionals and third parties, a front-end application for professionals allowing the creation and follow-up of an EPC request, a back-end application for competent authorities, and a solution for third parties to verify the validity of an EPC.

Participants discussed in particular:

- The definition of the home Member State which can be seen either as the Member State where the diploma was issued, the Member State of establishment or the Member State where professional experience has been acquired. The solution to be found has to be flexible enough to accommodate complex scenarios, including the possibility for the home Member State to contact via IMI another Member States for additional information.
- Several options exist regarding the allocation of requests to the competent authority of the Member State, including the possibility of a routing table or entrusting an authority in IMI with a coordination function. The attribution of the request has to be done as fast as possible considering that the deadlines for the competent authority start at the submission of the recognition request.
- The content of the IMI file which should be conditional on the recognition regime (automatic recognition / general system) and contain in a flexible way the necessary documents for the recognition but not more than what is indeed needed.

- The possibility to request in exceptional cases missing documents after the expiry of the first week deadline for the assessment of the completeness of the file, and to close an application if the missing documents have not been provided by the professional within a certain deadline.

- The payment of fees for the recognition procedure and in particular the moment when these fees have to be paid: in certain Member States an advance payment is required, while other Member States do not impose a fee or accept the payment after the recognition of the qualifications. In addition, Member States might charge a variable fee depending on the actual resources used for the assessment of the application and are accepting different means of payment. Participants agreed however that both home and host Member States should be allowed to charge for their services.

- The format of the EPC and the possibility to check its validity without creating confusion between the EPC as proof of the recognition of the qualifications and the right to practice, particularly for cases where the professional has been suspended or prohibited at a later stage. Validity check could be optional in case of certain professions.

- The need for a possibility to introduce recognition requests in writing.

On 26 March, the Commission presented, on the basis of the Directive and as clarified by the Code of Conduct, the maximum document requirements under the current procedures. The Commission enquired about the documents, translations and certified copies, depending on the profession and the applicable regime, which are really needed for the recognition. In this regard, the Commission raised the question to know whether documents necessary for the exercise of the profession (insurance, certificate of good standing, fitness to practice, etc.) are indeed needed for the recognition of professional qualifications.

Finally, the Commission informed the participants about the questionnaires addressed to competent authorities and to professional organisations in order to collect data for the analysis of the impact of the EPC.