



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
Directorate General Internal Market and Services  
KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY  
**Professional qualifications**

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## STEERING GROUP ON THE EUROPEAN PROFESSIONAL CARD

### SECOND MEETING – 25 FEBRUARY 2011

#### Meeting Report

The second meeting of the Steering Group on the European Professional Card took place in Brussels on 25 February 2011. The meeting was chaired by J. Tiedje, Head of Unit Professional Qualifications, DG Internal Market and Services. The Chairman indicated that Mrs Zuzana Raskova, the Coordinator from the Czech Republic, will join the Group as from the next meeting.

#### Introduction

The Commission gave feedback on the public hearing organized on 21 February in the context of the public consultation on the Professional Qualifications Directive. It presented the main topics to be discussed during the day and invited the participants to focus on the ten discussion points agreed at the first meeting.

#### Presentation of European professional cards projects

Dirk Bochar (FEANI) presented the "**EngineerING card**" which has been developed by FEANI and will be implemented in the course of 2011 in some Member States. It is a plastic card which contains information on the education, professional experience and continuous professional development of an engineer. It is linked to a national database, managed by the national committees of FEANI. The card is valid for ten years and can be updated at any time.

Patrick Fortuit (Ordre des Pharmaciens, France) presented the **HPRO card project**, which would concern the health professions benefiting from automatic recognition under the Professional Qualifications Directive (doctors, dentists, midwives, nurses and pharmacists). This card should be issued by competent authorities. The project is based on the interoperability of national databases (using a microchip).

Peter Mc Namee (CCBE) presented the **CCBE identity card for lawyers**, created in 1978 and issued by national competent authorities. The card is based on certain common characteristics but some elements are defined at national level (validity period, possibility to use a chip or a magnetic strip). Peter Mc Namee noted that this card has been developed in the

context of the Lawyers' Services Directive (77/249/EEC), which is based on the recognition of titles and not qualifications.

Marc Seale (Health professions council, UK) presented the **Certificate of current professional status**, developed in the context of cooperation between numerous European healthcare regulators and professions. The purpose of this certificate is to facilitate the exchange of information between competent authorities on the identification of healthcare professionals and on their fitness to practice (definition of a template for exchange of data). The certificate expires after three months of the issue date.

After these presentations, participants had the possibility to comment and ask questions on the different card projects. The validity period and its possible link with the cost of the card, the issue of language (e.g for accessing a database of a foreign competent authority), and the added value of the card in the recognition procedures were discussed. The European Council of Engineers Chambers provided background information on other card systems.

The participants also exchanged views on the purpose of the card (recognition of qualifications or registration of professionals) and its scope (card for all professionals or only for mobile professionals). The use and added value of the professional card in different situations covered by the Directive (temporary mobility, automatic recognition, general system) was discussed. Some participants suggested that the purpose and contents of the card could be different according to these situations but also depending on the professions. Others expressed general reserves on the added value of the card.

### **Discussions in the Member States and in the European Parliament**

The Commission outlined the main elements of the **European Parliament resolution** on a European professional card for service providers (February 2009). It also reported the **views expressed by national coordinators** on the idea of a European professional card. National coordinators demonstrated a cautious interest in the card and considered that it could have a real added value if it simplified the current information and documentation requirements. They expressed a preference for a non-mandatory card issued by the competent authority of the home Member State.

### **Other European card systems**

The Commission (DG EMPL) presented the functioning of the **European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)**, issued since 2006 in all Member States and aimed at facilitating access to medical care during temporary stay in another Member State. The Commission highlighted some features of the card (value added, scope, issuance, validity, format) that could be interesting in the context of the European professional card. The EHIC is currently a plastic card and there is no specific mechanism to check its validity. However, the number of inappropriate or fraudulent uses of the card is very limited. DG EMPL is currently reflecting on the possibility of moving towards an electronic card.

The Commission also presented the **European Model Driving Licence** and the **Driver Qualification Card**, with a particular focus on the elements of interest for the European professional card. These card models have been developed with the objectives of facilitating free movement of citizens/professionals and ensuring road safety.

- The European Model Driving Licence, as foreseen in Directive 2006/126/EC, is a plastic card (with a possibility to include a microchip) based on a single EU format and issued by the relevant authority in the country of residence. A telematic network for the exchange of information on driving licences will be set up in 2013. The European Model Driving Licence will be implemented as of 2013, while the complete phasing out of national model licences is to take place by 2033. The European Model Driving Licence also introduces a maximum period of validity of 10-15 years (5 years for some categories).
- The Driver Qualification Card has been foreseen in the Directive on professional drivers training, which defines the content and format of the card. The card is issued to drivers complying with the minimum training requirements defined in the Directive and is valid for 5 years. It is a plastic card and there is no link to an EU-wide electronic database.

### **Presentation of the functioning of the Internal Market Information system (IMI)**

The Commission presented the IMI system, in particular in the context of professional qualifications. More than 1000 authorities are registered with IMI for the professional qualifications module. IMI currently covers 35 professions and will be extended to all regulated professions in 2011/2012. The system allows competent authorities to exchange information in case of questions or doubts in the processing of applications for the recognition of qualifications. The Commission gave information on the number and types of requests received through IMI and on the average time of request handling. The expansion strategy of IMI was briefly presented.

As a secure system for the exchange of information between competent authorities, the use of IMI in the context of the European professional card could be further explored.

In addition to an improved cooperation between competent authorities, the European professional card project should also identify concrete benefits for the professionals.

### **Next steps**

Participants agreed that discussion on the way forward was necessary. To this end, a non-paper will be prepared to focus on the ten points discussed at the first meeting. If already possible, the Commission will also provide initial feedback on the outcome of the public consultation.

In addition, two papers will be tabled:

- a) a way forward to allow employers/patients/users easy access to information about professionals via a numbering system (suggestion of the Standing Committee of European Doctors)
- b) the functioning of a professional card under the general system applicable to engineers (request from the Chair to FEANI)

Participants also suggested gathering more background information on the European Skills Passport, ongoing work on data protection issues, e-health initiatives, interoperability of registers in this area and possible links between the idea of a "European curriculum" and a professional card.

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

### Meeting Steering Group European Professional Card

25 February 2011

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FAIRHURST, Timothy	European Tour Operators Association (ETOA)
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MC NAMEE, Peter	Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE)
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PIERRET, France	European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Associations (ECTAA)
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