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STEERING GROUP ON THE EUROPEAN PROFESSIONAL CARD

FIRST MEETING – 10 JANUARY 2011

Meeting Report

The first meeting of the Steering Group on the European Professional Card took place in Brussels on 10 January 2011 with representatives from European professional organisations and trade unions, national competent authorities and national coordinators for the recognition of professional qualifications. The meeting was chaired by J. Tiedje, Head of Unit Professional Qualifications, DG Internal Market and Services.

Introduction

The Commission welcomed the participants and indicated the objectives of this Steering Group: exploring the feasibility and the challenges linked to the development of a European professional card. It underlined the important role of the Steering Group in the context of the revision of the Professional Qualifications Directive and the preparation of a Green Paper for autumn 2011.

The participants introduced themselves and presented their first views about a professional card as well as their expectations on the work of the group. They reported a shared interest for the idea of a professional card, while recognising that at this stage there is no unanimous opinion about the benefits of such a card.

Discussion points for the Steering Group

Following comments from all participants, the Steering Group agreed to explore the ten following questions concerning the development of a European professional card:

- (1) What would be the value added of a European professional card? What current problems the introduction of such card could resolve?
- (2) Should the European professional card present a common format for all professions? How could some specific elements be integrated for certain professions?
- (3) In which situations, according to the Professional Qualifications Directive, could the professional card be used (temporary mobility / establishment; sectoral professions / general system)? What could be the legal effects of the card in these

various situations? Should the card be made obligatory for professionals in these different cases?

- (4) How could the professional card work in cases of mobility between non-regulating and regulating Member States?
- (5) How would the card be linked with European and national existing laws? Should the card be developed under the current Directive or in the context of the modernisation of the Directive?
- (6) To what extent could or should the card be linked with the European Qualifications Framework and with a competency-based approach?
- (7) Who would issue the card? Is the competent authority of the home Member State best placed? What would be the costs for such a card?
- (8) Which information is necessary for issuing a card? Which information should be presented on the card? What could be the period of validity of the card and how could necessary information be regularly updated, for instance via IMI?? Is there a need for a database?
- (9) Could a professional card be developed only in long term or in short term?
- (10) What could be the format of the card? How should the card look like? In which language(s) should the card be delivered?

Work program of the Steering Group

The Commission proposed a work program for the next meetings of the Steering Group:

- The meeting of 25 February could be used as a learning session in order to exchange on the existing and ongoing projects. Representatives from HPRO Card project (health professions), FEANI (engineers) and CCBE (lawyers) agreed to make a short presentation of their own project of professional card. The UK Health Professions Council proposed to present the "certificate of current professional status", developed for health professionals.

In addition, the Commission proposed to include in the agenda:

- a presentation of the functioning of IMI;
- a presentation of other existing instruments under European law (European driving licence and European health insurance card);
- a synthesis of the views of the national Coordinators on the professional card;
- a feedback on the public hearing on the public consultation scheduled on 21 February 2011.

It was also agreed to present the functioning of the Single Points of Contact set up under the Services Directive.

- The meeting of 5 April 2011 will be the opportunity to present the outcome of the public consultation and to review the ten discussion points reported above. In the meanwhile participants from professional organisations will consult their members on these questions. In this meeting, the Commission may present a draft working paper focusing on the common format of the card (valid for all professions).

- Further meetings (30 May 2011 and 8 July 2011) will allow looking into details on the concept and functioning of the card. The Group should present a synthesis of its first reflections by July 2011.

Discussion

The participants exchanged first views about the need for a database containing essential information on the professional and the issue of translation. The Commission reported its current reflections about the development of machine translations in the area of patents, which could be used in the context of the professional card.

Welcome by Commissioner Barnier

Commissioner Barnier welcomed participants thereby reminding the possible advantages of a European professional card and the wishes expressed by the European Parliament. He felt that the mixture of professionals and of authorities offers a unique opportunity and thanked all the participants for their involvement. He also stressed the importance of an open discussion on this issue in order to identify common principles acceptable for all professions.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Meeting Steering Group European Professional Card

10 January 2011

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