



Brussels, 15 April 2011

## STEERING GROUP ON THE EUROPEAN PROFESSIONAL CARD

THIRD MEETING – 5 APRIL 2011

### Meeting Report

The third meeting of the Steering Group on the European Professional Card took place in Brussels on 5 April 2011. The meeting was chaired by J. Tiedje, Head of Unit Professional Qualifications, DG Internal Market and Services.

#### Introduction

The Chairman debriefed participants on the outcome of the public consultation on the modernisation of the Professional Qualifications Directive, in particular on questions relating to the professional card, and set out the current timetable for Commission work. He indicated that a Green Paper on the modernisation of the Directive is likely to be issued by the end of June.

#### Presentation of Commission initiatives

The Commission (DG EAC) presented the **European Skills Passport** which was developed in the context of EU education and training policy. This is a tool designed to help understand and compare different education and training systems across the EU. The European Skills Passport will record skills developed through work experience, traineeships, volunteering and non-formal education, either at home or abroad, and should be completed by the organisations involved in these experiences. It is intended to integrate the current Europass framework (composed of five documents) and will be available by the end of 2012.

The Commission (DG INFSO) also presented developments in the area of **eHealth initiatives**. The eHealth agenda focuses on the development of common interoperability approaches for secure online identity management (patient identifiers and professional identifiers), electronic health records and medical data messaging. The eHealth initiatives are based on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to facilitate transferability of data in cross-border healthcare.

#### Presentation of professional card projects

Dirk Bochar (FEANI) presented a **case study** comparing the applicable document requirements for the recognition of professional qualifications of engineers under the Directive and the features of the FEANI **engineerING card**. The card contains information required under most of the relevant requirements

under Annex VII of the Directive. Formal qualifications of engineers are indicated in line with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

Georgios Raptis (Standing Committee of European Doctors) presented a **case study** on a **proposal of the German Chamber of Doctors** on the functioning of a professional card, focusing in particular on the use of a numbering system. Each card would have a unique registration number based on an EU-wide numbering system which would allow for identification of Member State and issuing organisation. No chip is required. The identification number would allow for inquiries (by private individuals or organisations) regarding validity, as well as requests by the holder to his competent authority to verify and make available through IMI all required information prior to migration.

### **Presentation of a non-paper on the European professional card**

The Chairman presented a non-paper on the European professional card. The paper contains a summary of the debate in the Steering Group and the possibilities considered.

The paper outlines the evidence collected during the prior meetings of the Steering Group. The Commission presented several working assumptions which have emerged on the basis of the discussions that took place: a low-cost project, focus on a short-term solution, link with IMI, competent authorities as issuers, a solution based on an amended Directive. It also emerged as practicable that a single card would cover all regimes under the Directive.

The Commission noted that some of the ten discussion points raised at the first meeting are closely related and need to be discussed before others can be approached. Thus, the possible scope and legal effects could be dealt with together with the question on the value added of the card. Next, a debate is needed on how the card could foster mobility between non-regulating and regulating countries and, in this context, what the relevance of competences could be. Finally, the implementation challenges need to be discussed, including the contents and format of the card, and its reliability.

Following this, the Commission presented the possible implementation scenarios for the card under the different regimes of the Directive. Implementation challenges were addressed, including possible contents of the card, link with IMI, validity period, reliability and format.

Follow-up comments emphasised the importance of the optional character of the professional card and the need to keep implementation costs low. Options different from a plastic card could be considered, such as an electronic certificate with a bar-code.

It was indicated that exchange of information among competent authorities and streamlining presents a separate implementation challenge. Participants noted that further debate would be needed on how to make the card binding on competent authorities. In addition, it was emphasised that it would be for Member States to choose the competent authorities involved in issuing the card, including for the situation where a profession is not regulated; the NARIC model proposed can only be an example.

Further comments indicated that a possible register in IMI would only list card-holders so that competent authorities would be able to identify them. It would not be practicable to aim for replacing national registers of professionals.

Another comment emphasised that all presented scenarios could be considered feasible but the practical value added of the card would ultimately depend on its contents. With respect to professional competences, the card could help demonstrate that the requirements of the Directive are fulfilled; a situation where the implementation of the card creates pressure for regulation should not be allowed.

## Next steps

The Commission noted that, in view of the differing conditions of access and exercise for the different professions, it would appear useful to set up **pilot projects** with a number of selected professions. The pilot projects would provide a possibility to explore in concrete terms the functioning of a card in a particular professional area. The sub-groups working on these pilot projects would have the objective to develop feasibility studies (**case studies**).

Specifically, a case study would analyse how a professional card could function for a member of a profession who either moves on a temporary basis or wishes to work on a permanent basis in another Member State. Such a study could also consider how the work of respective competent authorities would be facilitated. The objective would be to develop the most relevant scenarios for a pilot profession and to assess how the card could be implemented in practical terms, including contents, link with IMI, validity duration and costs. A case study could look into the possible functioning of the card covering a manageable number of countries, e.g., three to four. A member of Mr Tiedje's team would actively support the work of each sub-group.

The work of the sub-groups should be presented at the meetings of the Steering Group scheduled for 23 May (for instance, a work program for the case study), 8 July and 9 September. These presentations should ensure transparency and allow for consistency discussions within the Steering Group. The results of the case studies should be concluded, and ideally presented, at the Single Market Forum scheduled for 3 and 4 October.

The Chairman invited participants to transmit their proposals for professions for the pilot case studies, suggestions for who the members of the sub-groups should be and whether external experts should also be invited. Some preliminary suggestions for pilot case studies were indicated, including engineers, doctors, nurses, tourist guides, ski instructors.

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

### Meeting Steering Group European Professional Card

5 April 2011

<u>NAME OF PARTICIPANT</u>	<u>ORGANISATION</u>
BOCHAR, Dirk	European Federation of National Engineering Associations (FEANI)
DE RAEVE, Paul	European Federation of Nurses' Association (EFN)
DESTREBECQ, Frédéric	European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS)
FAIRHURST, Tim	ETOA - European Tour Operators Association
FORTUIT, Patrick	Ordre des Pharmaciens (France)
HOEFNAGEL, Désirée	Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (The Netherlands)
JOBİ, Joachim	European Council of Engineers Chambers (ECEC)
JOKINEN, Mervi	European Midwives Association (EMA)
KOUTROUBAS, Theodoros	European Council of Liberal Professions (CEPLIS)
LORENCO, Jair	Department of Tourism (Italy)
MC NAMEE, Peter	Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE)
MILCEVIC, Tatjana	Danish Agency for International Education
ORTEGA GUTIERREZ, Carlos	European Federation of Tourist Guide Associations
ORTEGAT, Xavier	European Council of Real Estate Professions (CEPI)
PEREZ, Hans-Sebastian	Ministère de la Santé (France)
PIERRET, France	European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Associations (ECTAA)
PROSCIA, Francesco	Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE)
RAPTIS, Georgios	Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME)
RASKOVA, Zuzanna	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
ROMAN, Agnes	European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE)
RONZITTI, Emanuela	Ministry of Justice (Italy)

SEALE, Marc	Health Professions Council
STORK, Stefan	Zentralverband des Deutschen Handwerks e.V. (ZDH)
SVARCAITE, Jurate	Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU)
TOTH, Zsolt	Association of European Building Surveyors and Construction Experts (AEEBC)
UZELAC, Slavica	EUROCADRES / ETUC
VAN HOEGAERDEN, Michel	SPF Santé Publique, Sécurité de la Chaîne Alimentaire et Environnement (Belgium)
VANHOUTTE, Thomas	European Federation of Nurses' Association (EFN)
ZAREMBA, Arleta	Ministry of Health, Department of Science and Higher Education (Poland)
ZILLMANN, Gunnar	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie
ZSIGMOND, András	Office of Health Authorisation and Administrative Procedures