

## **Recognition of professional qualifications – EUA Update no.11, March 2013**

The European Parliament's Internal Market Committee (IMCO) report on the revision of Directive 2005/36/EC was finally adopted in January. Its conclusions will disappoint those who welcomed the Commission's attempts to bring the Directive into closer alignment with the Bologna Process. Point 4.2.3 below gives more details.

The report was adopted by a large majority: 33 votes in favour, 4 against and 2 abstentions. It will now go to plenary session in May or June. 22 May and 11 June have been cited as possible dates.

On February 20, IMCO voted to embark on informal negotiations with the Council of Ministers and the Commission. The first trilogue meeting is scheduled for March 28. Council hoped to finalise its own position by the beginning of March.

The legislation, which was due to have been completed by the end of 2012, remains a high priority in the efforts to strengthen the Single Market in services.

The IMCO conclusions have been added into the tabulation of HE-related elements which was appended to the previous Update (September 2012); please go to the Annex to see the amended display. The EUA's Briefing Note of January 2012, which sets out the Commission's proposals and is a useful aid to reading the Annex, is available at

<http://www.eua.be/eua-work-and-policy-area/building-the-european-higher-education-area/bologna-and-professional-qualifications.aspx>

### **Contents**

page 2	The Bologna Process
page 3	European Commission
page 6	Council of Ministers
page 9	European Parliament
page 11	Professional, academic, regulatory and student bodies
page 13	European University Association
page 14	Annex

## 1 The Bologna Process

1.1 The Bologna secretariat, newly installed in Yerevan (Armenia), published a detailed **Newsletter** in December. It reported on the first steps taken to implement the 2012-2015 work plan and set out the schedule of board meetings, working group meetings and Bologna seminars for the next twelve months. See [http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/SubmittedFiles/12\\_2012/130009.pdf](http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/SubmittedFiles/12_2012/130009.pdf)

1.2 The development of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is now managed by the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG), supported by **four principal working groups**:

- *Structural Reforms*, which handles issues such as qualification frameworks, quality assurance, recognition and transparency
- *Reporting on Implementation*, which will extend previous stocktaking methodology to include the portability of grants and loans, lifelong learning, employability and mobility, as well as a further indicator on the evaluation of higher education institutions by non-national agencies
- *Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning*, with a focus on peer learning in respect of access to higher education
- *Internationalisation and Mobility*, with a focus on mobility between EU and non-EU members of the EHEA

In addition, there are a number of networks and ad hoc working groups, either up and running or shortly to come into operation: on the third cycle (doctoral), on the recognition of prior learning (RPL), on student support, and on the revision of the ECTS Users' Guide. See also the reference to the automatic recognition of academic qualifications in para.2.3.3 below.

1.3 Also hard at work is the group charged by Bologna Ministers to investigate the **revision of the Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance** in the EHEA (the ESG), as reported in the last Update. A website has been set up at <http://revisionesg.wordpress.com/>

1.4 In December, the Belgian *Agence pour l'Evaluation de la Qualité de l'Enseignement Supérieur* (AEQES) and the Lithuanian Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) were admitted to the **European Quality Assurance Register** (EQAR). At the same time, the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency (AQU) and the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) had their registration renewed until 2017. <http://www.eqar.eu>

1.5 A second regional meeting of delegations from ministries of education in **Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine** was held in Strasbourg in November. Convened to discuss the implementation of the EHEA, it affirmed the following principles:

We promote consultation and cooperation of stakeholders in the development of qualifications frameworks on the national level and in all educational institutions;

We recognise the role of students and educational staff in decision making processes and governance of higher education;

We reaffirm the importance of a student-centred learning approach in the implementation of qualifications frameworks.

A brief report is available on the European Students Union (ESU) website at <http://www.esu-online.org/news/article/6001/Education-Ministers-reaffirm-the-importance-of-student-centred-learning/> and a full set of documents will be published in due course by the Council of Europe at <http://www.coe.int/higher-education>.

1.6 On 12 December, the Council of Europe adopted **Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)13 on ensuring quality education**, supported by an Explanatory Memorandum. The texts are statements of general principles concerning educational provision at all levels and its place in human rights legislation. They are available at <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=2014671&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383> and at [https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM\(2012\)121&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=adfinal&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM(2012)121&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=adfinal&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383)

## 2 The European Commission

2.1 In October 2012, the European Commission published its **Work Programme for 2013**. It summarises the objectives for the EU in seven key areas: economic and monetary union; boosting competitiveness through the Single Market and industrial policy; 'connect to compete': building tomorrow's networks today; growth for jobs: inclusion and excellence; using Europe's resources to compete better; building a safe and secure Europe; Europe as a global actor. The details can be found at [http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/key-documents/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/key-documents/index_en.htm)

2.1.1 The **revision of the Directive** is already high on the political and legislative agendas, so the Work Plan mentions it only in passing:

Obstacles to mobility remain one of the main lost opportunities of the Single Market. Adoption and implementation of the revision of the Professional Qualifications Directive will be an important step to open up professions. Work should continue to examine and reduce unnecessary restrictions for regulated professions limiting the ability of professionals to work in another Member State. [p.7]

Supporting the proposals is the following snapshot analysis:

Public employment services and employers face a major challenge with the scale of unemployment in Europe, in particular among young persons. To boost the employability levels is key to re-launch growth, taking also into consideration vulnerable groups. The potential for job creation in sectors such as the green economy, ICT, health is not fully exploited. **Education and training systems** are not keeping up with changing labour market needs – resulting in shortages in key areas like science, mathematics and e-skills. **Higher education** is not sufficiently connected to research

and innovation activities and is slow to build capacity in areas like ICT – which both reflects and contributes to a lack of internationalisation. **Life-long learning** is still developing, and public policy and business practices do not reflect the need for older workers to extend their working careers. Undeclared work creates an extra challenge. Social protection and social investment should be more effective. Vulnerable groups find it particularly difficult to get into or to return to the labour market. And the potential for labour mobility to fill gaps is held back by problems in the **recognition of qualifications**, documentation and skills across Member States. [emphasis added]

See [http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/pdf/cwp2013\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/pdf/cwp2013_en.pdf)

## 2.2 DG MARKT

2.2.1 The Commission's **annual report on Single Market** voices its frustration at the persistence of barriers to professional recognition:

**Services sectors include many professions that are regulated at national level.** These regulations take the form of **entry barriers** (e.g. requirements reserving the exercise of certain activities to the holders of specific qualifications) and/or conduct barriers (i.e. **restrictions to the exercise of professional activities** such as requirements on companies' legal forms and capital ownership). In some Member States (BG, CY, DE, PL, SK, SI, SE), there are also remaining requirements **fixing tariffs for certain professions** (e.g. engineers/architects, accountants, tax and patent advisors or veterinarians).

Whilst the regulation of professions may be justified by public interests, it is highly heterogeneous across the EU: the number of regulated professions in each Member State varies between 47 and 368. **Moreover, there are significant differences in the scope of reserved activities and in the level of qualifications required.** In this context, **country-specific recommendations (CSRs) have already been addressed to eight Member States in 2012** (AT, CY, FR, DE, IT, PL, SI, ES) on the need to reduce regulatory barriers in professional services. **Some Member States (notably PL, PT, IT, ES, CZ) have initiated reforms in this area**, with the objective to foster competition, simplify the business environment or reduce unemployment, in particular among young people. [original emphasis] [p.10]

[http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/sgmktreport2013\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/sgmktreport2013_en.pdf)

2.2.2 The October meeting of the **Coordinators** heard presentations concerning the ongoing reforms referred to above (in Czech Republic, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Romania). A brief report is on the DG's website at

[http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/qualifications/docs/coordinators/20121004\\_summary\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/docs/coordinators/20121004_summary_en.pdf)

2.2.3 In January, DG MARKT published the **consolidated text of Annex V.7.1** (architects). This contains the full updated list of architecture programmes already published in August.

[http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/qualifications/docs/future/annexe-v-7-1-architects\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/docs/future/annexe-v-7-1-architects_en.pdf)

2.2.4 Vol.18.2 of *Eurohealth* carries an article by **Jürgen Tiedje** and **András Zsigmond** [both of DG MARKT], writing in a personal capacity, on the proposed amendments to the Directive. It offers a synoptic view of the principal features of the Commission's proposals, angled towards a UK readership (*Eurohealth* is published by the London School of Economics). The authors distinguish between the two Bologna regimes (Scotland and the remainder of the UK) when discussing ECTS.

[http://www.euro.who.int/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/169531/Eurohealth-Vol-18-No-2.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/169531/Eurohealth-Vol-18-No-2.pdf)

2.2.5 In December the new **IMI Regulation** came into force. The text can be found at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2012:316:0001:0011:EN:PDF>

2.2.6 What will happen once the legislation on the revised Directive has been concluded? DG MARKT has published an **indicative roadmap**, outlining the mutual evaluation exercise to be undertaken by Member States with a view to facilitating access by qualified professionals. See [http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/planned\\_ia/docs/2013\\_markt\\_014\\_communication\\_regulated\\_professions\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/planned_ia/docs/2013_markt_014_communication_regulated_professions_en.pdf)

2.2.7 In the long-running saga of the **quotas set by Austria and Belgium** on incoming medical and dentistry students, the Commission has extended its suspension of infringement proceedings until December 2016. This is to allow the production of better quality data regarding the alleged damage to the national HE systems concerned. [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-12-1388\\_en.htm?locale=en](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-1388_en.htm?locale=en)

## 2.3 DG EAC

2.3.1 CEDEFOP has published a briefing note on **Qualifications Frameworks in Europe: an instrument for transparency and change**. It reviews variations in design and implementation of national qualifications frameworks and their referencing to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) and is a useful snapshot of the state of play as at October 2012. See <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/20509.aspx>

2.3.2 The September Update reported on the setting up of a **High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education**. Its chair, former Irish President Mary McAleese, has jointly authored – with Commissioner Vassiliou – a launch article which can be read at <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20120925142658630>

2.3.3 In collaboration with a number of Member States (Belgium [Flanders], Estonia, Netherlands, Portugal), the Commission has set up a 'Pathfinder group' to work on the **automatic recognition** of academic qualifications. Although this was called for by Bologna Ministers when they met in Bucharest, the task has not been taken on by the Bologna Follow-up Group. BFUG will nevertheless be informed of progress and the results are expected to be presented to the next Ministerial Conference in 2015.

2.3.4 DG EAC has also commissioned from GHK Consulting a survey on the **implementation of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning** [EQF]. The survey will provide input to the Commission's report on the EQF, to be submitted to Council and Parliament in 2013.

2.3.5 In collaboration with DG EMPL, DG EAC has launched the **Skills Panorama** website. This is intended to provide 'quantitative and qualitative information on short- and medium-term skills needs, skills supply and skills mismatches', arranged by sector, profession and country. The occupations with the most unfilled vacancies in the EU today are finance and sales professionals. Other shortages most frequently reported concern biologists, pharmacologists, medical doctors and related professionals, nurses, ICT computing professionals and engineers. See <http://euskillspanorama.ec.europa.eu/>

2.3.6 The Skills Panorama is underpinned by a set of policy and information documents entitled '**Rethinking Education: investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes**'. The dossier is available online at [http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/rethinking\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/rethinking_en.htm)

### 3 The European Council

3.1 In October, the Cypriot presidency hosted a meeting of **Member State Directors-General of higher education**. During the first day, emphasis was on "Quality Assurance and Cross Border Higher Education" and "Excellence in Teaching in Higher Education". On the second day, DGs of Higher Education and DGs for vocational education and training (VET) discussed "Expanding opportunities and raising skills: Opening pathways between Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education". Supporting documentation is available at <http://www.cy2012.eu/index.php/en/political-calendar/areas/education-youth-culture-and-sport/meeting-of-directors-general-for-higher-education>

3.2 In October the **Competitiveness Council** debated the state of play in the Single Market, reviewed the legislative progress made by each of the 12 measures and took note of the Commission's second raft of proposals. To quote the press release, it 'committed to intensify efforts in order to speed up the process for the adoption of the twelve measures included in the "Single Market Act I" package for growth, competitiveness and social progress.'  
[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/intm/132804.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/intm/132804.pdf)

3.3 However, the *European Voice* of 4 October cited an internal Council paper predicting that four of the first wave of 12 measures would miss the December target date: posting of workers; e-signatures; public procurement; and the recognition of professional qualifications. The **European Council meeting of 18-19 October** (heads of state and governments) duly confirmed that 'progress has been made on the Single Market Act I, but more efforts are required to complete work on the outstanding proposals including on accounting, professional qualifications, public procurement and venture capital funds.'  
[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/133004.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/133004.pdf)

3.4 The **Education Council**, which met on 26-27 November, considered one of the aspects of the **ERASMUS For ALL** proposal hitherto unagreed: the Master's student loan guarantee scheme. It anticipated that agreement with Parliament would be reached in the early part of 2013, although further deliberation would be necessary to establish that it could be funded in the 2014-2020 multilateral financial framework. It did not address the matter of the total budget for the programme, likewise subject to overall agreement on the MFF. (Although the

European Council eventually reached agreement on the MFF in February, the Parliament has still to pronounce.)

3.5 The Education Council also issued a set of conclusions on the progress made in delivering the **Education and Training 2020** policy objectives. With economic growth its paramount concern, it stressed the importance of investment in education and of measures to promote employability. It also committed Education ministers to closer liaison with Council formations addressing economic, financial and budgetary affairs. The full text is available at [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/133791.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/133791.pdf)

3.6 In provisional minutes put out to the press, the Council reported political agreement regarding a Recommendation on the **validation of non-formal and informal learning**. Clarification of its perspective on validation will hopefully be forthcoming in due course.

It invites member states to put in place arrangements for validating these types of learning no later than 2018 – in accordance with national circumstances and specificities – and seeks to define which principles and components should be taken into account for a validation process to be effective.

Whilst acknowledging that the primary focus of the education system should remain on formal education and on endeavouring to ensure high quality learning outcomes for all pupils and students, the Presidency underlined that in today's situation of rising unemployment and lack of economic growth, making use of new learning opportunities and making the most of knowledge, skills and competences acquired outside formal education could play an important role in enhancing employability and mobility, as well as providing more motivation for lifelong learning, particularly in the case of the socio-economically disadvantaged or low-qualified groups.

Some member states indicated that they already had arrangements in place for validating learning outcomes, while others were preparing such arrangements.

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/133836.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/133836.pdf)

3.7 In December the **Competitiveness Council** touched on the professional qualifications dossier, but only to acknowledge sight of a Presidency 'note' published in November. The note updated the Council on the then state of play:

The Working Party on Establishment and Services has examined the proposal at ten meetings (twelve days, seven of which under Cyprus Presidency), most recently on 28 and 29 November 2012. The discussions were based primarily on two compromise texts presented respectively by the Danish and the Cyprus Presidencies. The Presidency had also contacts with the IMCO Rapporteur, Ms Vergnaud. [...]

The proposal has been welcomed by all Member States in general since it aims to modernise, simplify and accelerate the recognition procedures. However, delegations have reservations on a considerable number of issues, which the Presidency has tried to address by presenting compromise proposals. In particular, the Working Party has discussed in depth the following elements of the proposal:

### **A. European Professional Card**

The European Council of 30 January 2012 welcomed the idea of the European Professional Card, an instrument which would simplify and accelerate the recognition procedures. However, the practical modalities of the implementation of the card are still to be agreed in greater detail. Further important progress has been made on the basis of a compromise text presented by the Presidency in October. The Presidency also notes the high expectations in the European Parliament on this issue supported by the IMCO Rapporteur.

### **B. Transparency of regulated professions**

The European Council of 2 March 2012 stressed the importance of reducing the number of regulated professions and removing unjustified regulatory barriers. The proposal provides for a transparency exercise involving an evaluation of the justification of the need for regulation against the principles of necessity, proportionality and non-discrimination. The discussions have shown a difference of views among Member States. While some Member States would prefer to start the mutual evaluation as quickly as possible, others advocate a more cautious approach underlining the competence of the Member State to regulate the professions. The Presidency notes the intention of the Commission, announced in its Communication on the implementation of the Services Directive of 8 June 2012, to publish in 2013, once the revised Directive has been adopted, a Communication drawing on progress made with the country specific recommendations and other developments in Member States as regards the regulation of professions and setting out a common methodology for the evaluation in this field.

### **C. Other horizontal issues**

Discussion progressed well on all the other horizontal aspects of the proposal. More specifically:

- Member States tend to agree regarding the exclusion of health professions from the scope of the **partial access principle**.
- The conditions for **recognition of remunerated traineeships** need further clarification but Member States largely agree that the remuneration element should not be decisive.
- Further discussions are needed also regarding the scope of the **alert mechanism**.

### **D. Individual professions**

The proposal foresees updating the minimum training requirements for the sectoral professions and the inclusion of notaries – under specific conditions – in the scope of the Directive. The discussions regarding the update of the minimum training requirements focused especially on the training conditions for **doctors** and on the access conditions to **nurse** education, where significant progress has been achieved on the basis of a possible compromise formula presented by the Presidency. A number of Member States have specific needs for this sector and a balanced compromise should be found. Member States agree that the current rules regarding traineeship for **pharmacists** should not change. Significant progress has also been made regarding the minimum training requirements for **architects**. There is support for the exclusion of **notaries** from the scope of the Directive. The Commission is reflecting on a pragmatic way forward, suggesting as a possible solution the provision of a review and a standstill clause.

## **III. CONCLUSION**

The Presidency, in cooperation with the forthcoming Irish Presidency, intends to finalise a new compromise text, which will serve as a basis for further discussions in the



Working Party as from January 2013, and to assist the incoming Presidency to reach a rapid agreement with the European Parliament.

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/12/st16/st16293.en12.pdf>

3.8 1 January marked the first day of the **incoming Irish Presidency**. The Education Council had already noted the Irish 'priorities for the next half-year in the field of education, namely the pursuit of negotiations on ERASMUS For ALL, initiatives on skills development and teacher training as well as the social dimension of higher education'. Labour education minister Ruairi Quinn takes the chair for the two scheduled meetings of the six-month term: on 15 February, when the Council discussed the Commission's paper on 'Rethinking Education' and on 16-17 May, when the topic will be the social dimension of higher education.

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/fc/134579.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/fc/134579.pdf)

The Competitiveness Council, meanwhile, is chaired by the Fine Gael (centre-right) minister for jobs, enterprise and innovation, Richard Bruton. Draft agendas for its two meetings indicate no substantive discussion of professional qualifications. The Presidency's commitment is to 'reach agreement with the Parliament'. See the Presidency's programme at

[http://www.eu2013.ie/media/eupresidency/content/documents/EU-Pres\\_Prog\\_A4.pdf](http://www.eu2013.ie/media/eupresidency/content/documents/EU-Pres_Prog_A4.pdf)

The Presidency has so far ensured that the Directive has been discussed in a Council Working Party which met in January and twice in February. It aimed to progress the dossier through the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER I) in early March, in order to trigger the sequence of dialogues.

## 4 The European Parliament

### 4.1 CULT Culture and Education

4.1.1 The Commission's proposals for **ERASMUS for All** continued their passage through the Committee. The 6 November meeting considered over 1,000 amendments. The minutes note that 'there was a large measure of agreement on a number of issues – the reinstatement of a separate youth chapter, the retention of well-established brand names such as Comenius, Grundtvig and Leonardo, minimum allocation funding for separate sectors and a list of institutions to be supported by the Jean Monnet programme. More controversial areas were: the practical arrangements for the loan guarantee facility for students taking Masters and PhD degrees abroad; the programme title (the rapporteur had proposed changing this to YES EUROPE); the participation of overseas countries and territories in the programme; and the need for a transnational approach to grassroots sports in Member States.'

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009\\_2014/documents/cult/pv/917/917658/917658en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/cult/pv/917/917658/917658en.pdf)

4.1.2 On 27 November the report was adopted. CULT did indeed vote to change the name of the programme to '**YES Europe**', while retaining the brand names of existing actions: *Erasmus* for mobility in higher education; *Grundtvig* for adult learning; *Leonardo da Vinci* for vocational education and training abroad; *Erasmus Mundus* for international students' and teachers' mobility; and *Comenius*

for school education. CULT also voted to support the granting of loans of up to €12,000 for a one-year Master's programme and up to €18,000 for a two-year Master's course. Doris Pack's report can be found at

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fNONSGML%2bREPORT%2bA7-2012-0405%2b0%2bDOC%2bPDF%2bV0%2f%2fEN>

4.1.3 In December CULT approved the decision to move to the **trialogue** stage.

## 4.2 IMCO Internal Market and Consumer Protection

4.2.1 In the week beginning 15 October, IMCO marked the **launch of Single Market Week** with an event featuring contributions from its chair Malcolm Harbour, Commission president Barroso, Commissioner Barnier and Italian prime minister Mario Monti. The video can be retrieved from the EP archive at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/other-events/>

4.2.2 In the same month, Parliament endorsed IMCO's own-initiative resolution drafted by Portuguese EPP member Regina Bastos. Noting the **twenty main concerns of european citizens and business with the functioning of the Single Market**, the report welcomed the upcoming revision of the Directive, in particular the alert mechanism and the professional card, and called for assessment of the possibility of extending automatic recognition to professions other than the seven sectoral professions.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A7-2012-0310+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>

4.2.3 IMCO Vice-Chair **Bernadette Vergnaud**'s report on the Commission's proposals was adopted on 23 February, with 33 in favour, four against and two abstentions. As indicated earlier in this Update, it will not bring great satisfaction to those who seek the transparency that would be brought by aligning the Directive with the Bologna Process.

- The report retains the option of using ECTS to express course duration in the basic training programmes of the sectoral professions.
- It gives a role to EQAR-registered quality assurance agencies in the appraisal of CPD provision.

But...

- It effectively excludes non-formal and informal learning from its vision of lifelong learning.
- It conceives of substantial difference in terms of course duration as well as of content.
- It does not allow the new Common Training Frameworks to be referenced against the EQF, preferring the existing 5-level grid which is used to calibrate compensation measures in the General System.
- It restores the confusion between the grid's levels 'd' and 'e', which the Commission had sought to eliminate.

The points relevant to higher education have been incorporated into the tabulation to be found in the Annex to this update. The full text of the report is available at

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009\\_2014/documents/imco/dv/vergnaud\\_profqual\\_finalreport\\_/vergnaud\\_profqual\\_finalreport\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/imco/dv/vergnaud_profqual_finalreport_/vergnaud_profqual_finalreport_en.pdf)

## 5 Professional, academic, regulatory and student bodies

### Healthcare Professions Crossing Borders

- The September issue of the HPCB Newsletter Update carried a number of reactions to the Commission's proposals: the **European Patients Forum** (EPF) on language testing; the **European Network of Medical Competent Authorities** (ENMCA) on the alert mechanism; the **Forum for Osteopathic Regulation in Europe** (FORE) on common training frameworks. The views of dental, nursing and pharmaceutical bodies are referenced below.

[http://www.hpcb.eu/news/documents/Issue%2024%20-%20September%202012.pdf?dm\\_i=CUG,ZEEN,7OALW4,2Z5K2,1](http://www.hpcb.eu/news/documents/Issue%2024%20-%20September%202012.pdf?dm_i=CUG,ZEEN,7OALW4,2Z5K2,1)

### Medical doctor

- The **Standing Committee of European Doctors** (CPME), along with seven other bodies including ENSA (medical students) issued a statement last summer on the Commission's proposals. It presents joint positions on partial access, tacit authorisation, family medicine as a specialism, and on consultation. (More recently, it has noted the IMCO report, but without comment). See <http://cpme.dyndns.org:591/adopted/2012/POD.FINAL.joint.statement.EMOs.August2012.pdf>
- The **European Union of Medical Specialists** (UEMS), for its part, regards the IMCO report as a great step forward, particularly in respect of: its emphasis on competence-based training; the firming up of the provisions on continuing professional development; the scope for developing common training frameworks. See [http://www.uems.net/index.php?id=57&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=46&Hash=33e9d22773976a4b84379b127dde5a45](http://www.uems.net/index.php?id=57&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=46&Hash=33e9d22773976a4b84379b127dde5a45)
- The next meeting of the **ECTS Medicine Association** (ECTSMA) will be held in Pavia in May. <http://www.ectsma.eu/annualmeetings.html>

### Dentist

- The September 2012 HPCB Update carried comments on comitology by the **French Dental Council** (ONCD). See [http://www.hpcb.eu/news/documents/Issue%2024%20-%20September%202012.pdf?dm\\_i=CUG,ZEEN,7OALW4,2Z5K2,1](http://www.hpcb.eu/news/documents/Issue%2024%20-%20September%202012.pdf?dm_i=CUG,ZEEN,7OALW4,2Z5K2,1)
- The **Council of European Dentists** (CED) gave a warm welcome to IMCO's specification of the minimum training duration as five years or 5,000 hours, expressible as ECTS. See its January Newsletter at <http://www.eudental.eu/index.php?ID=43776>

### General care nurse

- The **European Federation of Nurses Associations** (EFN) has welcomed the IMCO report: 'very positively for the EFN, the most important issue for the nurses, Article 31 – training of nurses responsible for general care –

embraces existing systems of nurse education, reinforces the number of years (3 years) AND hours (4,600 hours) for nurse training, keeps the right balance of theory (1/3) and practice (1/2) and allows delegated acts to further update the Annex V. Solid compromises have been also reached on partial access, language requirements, common training frameworks, alert mechanism, Continuous Professional Development, among others.' EFN is due to participate in a triologue meeting on 11 April.

<http://www.efnweb.be/?p=3609>

- The November conference of the **European Council of Nursing Regulators** (FEPI) reached agreement on four core competences which it wishes to see enshrined in the amended Directive: safe and ethical practice; decision-making; teamwork and delegation; health promotion and teaching.  
[http://www.fepi.org/userfiles/files/statement\\_fepi\\_international\\_conference.pdf](http://www.fepi.org/userfiles/files/statement_fepi_international_conference.pdf)
- The September 2012 HPCB Update carried comment on the 10/12-year prior education requirement by the **Portuguese Order of Nurses**  
[http://www.hpcb.eu/news/documents/Issue%2024%20-%20September%202012.pdf?dm\\_i=CUG,ZEEN,7OALW4,2Z5K2,1](http://www.hpcb.eu/news/documents/Issue%2024%20-%20September%202012.pdf?dm_i=CUG,ZEEN,7OALW4,2Z5K2,1)

### Veterinary surgeon

- The December Newsletter of the **Federation of Veterinarians of Europe** reported that FVE, in collaboration with the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE), had updated the list of subjects which, in its view, should constitute the curriculum of the basic training programme.  
[http://www.fve.org/uploads/publications/docs/fve\\_newsletter\\_2012\\_4\\_for\\_web.pdf](http://www.fve.org/uploads/publications/docs/fve_newsletter_2012_4_for_web.pdf)

### Pharmacist

- The second stage of the **PHARMINE** project has now been funded by the Commission. See: [http://www.pharmine.org/losse\\_paginas/New\\_Projects/](http://www.pharmine.org/losse_paginas/New_Projects/)
- The next conference of **EAFP**, the European Association of Faculties of Pharmacy, will be held in Ankara in May 2013. Its theme will be "Curriculum optimisation, towards learning outcomes: practical experiences". The conference website address is <http://www.eafp2013.com/>

### Architect

- The **Architects Council of Europe** (ACE) has welcomed the IMCO report, commending it for strengthening the minimum training requirement: 'According to the report adopted by the Internal Market Committee, architectural training should now comprise either "a total of at least five years of full-time study" ("5+0"), or "not less than four years of full-time study (...) accompanied by a certificate attesting to the completion of two years of traineeship" ("4+2"). While the ACE continues to advocate a minimum of five-years academic training complemented by 2 years of traineeship ("5+2") in order to gain automatic recognition in other Member States, the options adopted by the IMCO committee represent an improvement compared with "4+0" in the 2005 Directive.' [taken from ACE press release]

- The March 2013 conference of the **European Association for Architectural Education (EAAE)**, to be held in Istanbul, will take as its theme 'Educating the Future: architectural education in international perspective'.  
<http://eaaeiku.iku.edu.tr/index.php/eaaeIKU/2013>

## 6 The European University Association

**EUA** engages in a range of activities on a number of policy fronts: the Bologna Process, in which it is a major stakeholder, research, higher education governance and funding, quality assurance and capacity building.

6.1 The 7th **European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF)**, held in Tallinn in November, brought together around 400 higher education stakeholders from approximately 50 countries to discuss the latest developments and trends in quality assurance. Participants discussed the impact of external and internal QA on higher education policies and institutional realities, as well as the increased international dimension of external QA (e.g. cross-border accreditation and recognition of joint programmes). The Forum is organised by the E4 Group consisting of EUA, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European Students' Union (ESU) and the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE).  
See [http://www.eua.be/EQAF\\_Tallinn.aspx](http://www.eua.be/EQAF_Tallinn.aspx)

6.2 The call for papers and workshops for the E4 Group's annual **European Quality Assurance Forum**, which this year will be held in Gothenburg in November, is now open at [http://www.eua.be/news/13-03-21/Call\\_for\\_contributions\\_8th\\_European\\_Quality\\_Assurance\\_Forum\\_Gothenburg\\_Sweden\\_21-23\\_November\\_2013.aspx](http://www.eua.be/news/13-03-21/Call_for_contributions_8th_European_Quality_Assurance_Forum_Gothenburg_Sweden_21-23_November_2013.aspx)

6.3 EUA has launched a new project on quality assurance. **Promoting Quality Culture [PQC]** will build on the recently completed EUA-led project Examining Quality Culture in higher education institutions. This showed that while the majority of universities in Europe have set up quality assurance systems, those in charge of managing quality processes at universities feel the need for further capacity building on how to incentivise all stakeholders (students, academic and administrative staff) to take on responsibility for quality. EUA's project partners will be the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the University of Duisburg-Essen, the University of Lisbon and the University of Zagreb. See the website at <http://www.eua.be/eua-work-and-policy-area/quality-assurance/projects/PQC.aspx>

**Please feel free to forward this Update to any other interested parties. Comments, corrections and news items will be welcome.**

<http://www.eua.be/eua-work-and-policy-area/building-the-european-higher-education-area/bologna-and-professional-qualifications.aspx>

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**Annex: the legislative process - current standing of issues relevant to higher education (as of March 2013)**

<i>issue</i>	<i>Current Directive</i>	<i>Commission's proposals</i>	<i>IMCO draft report</i>	<i>IMCO final report</i>	<i>EP plenary vote (June 2013)</i>
<b>Recognition of prior learning</b>	Only in respect of general care nurses (Art.31.3)	Also in respect of specialist medical qualifications (new Art.25.3a)	Emphasises that recognition may be cross-border	Also in respect of specialist medical qualifications	
<b>Continuing professional development in sectoral healthcare professions</b>	Responsibility of Member States (Art.22b)	MSs to submit quinquennial reports (new Art.22.2)	These reports to be backed by evaluations undertaken by EQAR-registered agencies	Mandatory CPD provision, with MSs required to submit assessment reports and to exchange best practice; training providers to be evaluated by EQAR-registered agencies	
<b>Lifelong learning</b>	No mention	Definition: general education, VET, non-formal and informal	No mention	Excludes informal learning; requires lifelong learning to be certified by Competent Authorities	
<b>ECTS</b>	No provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minimum duration 'may be expressed' as ECTS, for doctors, dentists, vets and pharmacists</li> <li>- The levels (d) and (e) in the General System five-level grid may also be expressed as ECTS points</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Applies ECTS to specialist medical qualifications, which must be of 5 full-time years</li> <li>- Extends to general care nurses, midwives and architects</li> <li>- Includes a quantitative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extends to general care nurses, midwives</li> <li>- Includes a quantitative</li> </ul>	

			definition of ECTS, regarding student workload as much wider than class contact, but omitting any reference to learning outcomes	definition of ECTS, regarding student workload as much wider than class contact, but omitting any reference to learning outcomes	
<b>Qualifications frameworks</b>	<p>Use of 5-level grid in General System, as basis for stipulating compensatory measures (Art.11)</p> <p>'Substantial difference' applies to duration or content of qualification (Art.14.4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Retention of 5-level grid for General System</li> <li>- Clear distinction between levels (d) 'up to four years' and (e) 'more than four years'</li> <li>- EQF to be used as reference for Common Training Framework [CTF] (see below)</li> <li>- Substantial difference to be of content, not of duration</li> </ul>	No comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Excludes informal and non-formal learning from evidence of qualification</li> <li>- Level (e) 'at least four years' – restores the confusing overlap with level (d)</li> <li>- Reinstates the criterion of duration</li> </ul>	
<b>Competences and learning outcomes</b>	<p>Competences specified in sectoral profiles, but subordinated to stress on input criteria (i.e. bodies of specialist knowledge)</p>	<p>Moves away from exclusive concern with inputs, by virtue of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- use of ECTS</li> <li>- recourse to notion of 'substantial difference' in course content</li> <li>- use of EQF in CTF</li> <li>- rationale of CTF</li> <li>- introduction of skills and competences into criteria for compensatory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stresses the importance of competences in aptitude tests</li> <li>- Stresses the importance of competences in the definition of lifelong learning</li> <li>- But omits Learning Outcomes from its</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stresses the importance of competences in aptitude tests</li> <li>- Stresses the importance of competences in the definition of lifelong learning</li> <li>- But omits Learning Outcomes from its definition of ECTS</li> </ul>	

		measures - readiness to accept dependence on prevailing quality assurance [QA] practice	definition of ECTS	- Rejects reference of CTF to EQF in favour of 5-level grid	
<b>Quality assurance</b>	No provision	National agency to notify compliant courses (new Art.21.a.2)	CPD reports to be backed by evaluations undertaken by EQAR-registered agencies	CPD training providers to be evaluated by EQAR-registered agencies	
<b>Updating of minimum training in the sectoral professions</b>	<p>Minimum full-time course duration for <b>medical doctors</b> is six years 'or' 5500 hours (Art.24.2)</p> <p><b>Nurses</b> Admission to training should be preceded by ten years of general education or by examination at comparable level (Art.31.1)</p> <p><b>Dental practitioners</b> Minimum of five years (Art.34.2)</p> <p><b>Veterinary surgeons</b> (Art.38.3)</p> <p><b>Midwives</b> At least three years, following at least 10</p>	<p>Reduction of minimum duration to five years or 5500 hours</p> <p>Raises requirement to twelve years of general education, but does not make general care nursing a graduate profession</p> <p>Five years which may be expressed in ECTS (likewise 3-year specialist courses)</p> <p>Five years which may be expressed in ECTS</p> <p>At least three years, following at least 12 years of general</p>	<p>No comment</p> <p>The required minimum 4600 hours may be expressed as ECTS</p> <p>Five years or 5000 hours, which may be expressed as ECTS</p> <p>No comment</p> <p>At least three years of at least 5000 hours in total, expressible as</p>	<p>DIR is no ground for reducing minimum durations already in force. Five fields of competences are specified.</p> <p>Requires either 12 years giving access to higher education or ten years giving access to a vocational nursing school. Five sets of competences are specified.</p> <p>Five years or 5000 hours, which may be expressed in ECTS</p> <p>Amended list of knowledge and skills</p> <p>At least three years (4500 hours) OR at least 2 years (3600 hours) of specific</p>	



	<p>years of general education, OR at least 18 months of specific training in addition to nursing training (Art.40.1)</p> <p><b>Pharmacists</b> At least five years, including at least 6-month traineeship (Art.44.2)</p> <p><b>Architects</b> Four years OR six years, at least three of which are full-time (Art.46.1)</p>	<p>education, OR at least 2 years (3600 hours) of specific training plus qualification as general care nurse OR at least 18 months (3000 hours) plus qualification as general care nurse plus one year of professional practice</p> <p>At least five years, expressible as ECTS, including at least 6-month terminal traineeship</p> <p>Four plus two (study plus terminal traineeship) OR five plus one</p>	<p>ECTS, OR at least 2 years (3600 hours, expressible as ECTS) of specific training plus qualification as general care nurse OR at least 18 months (3000 hours, expressible as ECTS) plus qualification as general care nurse plus one year of professional practice</p> <p>At least five years, expressible as ECTS, including at least 6-month formative OR terminal traineeship</p> <p>Amended list of knowledge and skills</p> <p>May be expressed as ECTS</p>	<p>training plus qualification as general care nurse OR at least 18 months plus qualification as general care nurse plus one year of professional practice; all durations expressible as ECTS</p> <p>Reformulated list of essential activities</p> <p>At least five years, expressible as ECTS, including at least 6-month formative OR terminal traineeship</p> <p>Reformulated list of essential activities</p> <p>At least five OR four plus two</p>	
<b>Development of new curricula in the General System</b>	Common platform for General System professions (Art.15)	Common training framework for General System professions, by which at least one third of MSs agree curricula of 'common sets of knowledge, skills and competences', to be referenced to EQF	No comment	Common training frameworks should also be applicable to sectoral specialist qualifications not covered by automatic recognition	

<b>Recognition of new specialist qualifications</b>	'Regulatory procedure by scrutiny' – for new medical specialties common to two fifths of MSs (Art.26)	Proposes that specialist medical and dental qualifications should be subject to automatic recognition, if common to one third of MSs (new Art.26.2)	Agrees and adds veterinary	Agrees and adds veterinary	
<b>Work placements</b>	No specific provision	To accommodate the ECJ Morgenbesser ruling, remunerated placements fall within the scope of DIR	Extends to work placements, whether remunerated or not	Extends to work placements, whether remunerated or not, and requires cover by working conditions legislation, plus a contract specifying learning objectives and assigned tasks.	
<b>Consultation (Art.59)</b>	Experts from professional groups	Experts	Amends to specify national authorities, professional bodies, academic representatives and social partners	Adds scientific organisations	