

27.11.2013

## Modernization of the European Professional Qualifications Directive

---

The new Professional Qualification Directive was finally published as Directive 2013/55/EU on 28 December 2013.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:354:0132:0170:en:PDF>

The implementation period ends on 18 January 2016.

Some ECEC views on the new Directive:

The most important achievement for ECEC is that the concept of the professional card as it is now very much follows the concept that was suggested by the ECEC. It has been clarified that a professional card is an electronic certificate within the IMI system that can only be issued by the competent authority. Especially in view to the efforts of private organisations to involve themselves in the issuing of professional cards this clarification was extremely important. It remains to be seen, if the card will be able to fulfil the expectations of the European Commission and be a boost for mobility. The ECEC has expressed its interest for a European Professional Card for Engineers.

Another important aspect of the new Directive is the concept of the Common Framework of Art 49a as it can be a possibility for certain engineering professions to gain something similar to automatic recognition. Nevertheless it is a problem that the common training frameworks shall be based on the levels of the European Qualifications Framework and not – as the ECEC would have preferred – on the qualification levels of Art 11. The regulation explicitly says that it shall be irrelevant whether the knowledge, skills and competences have been acquired as part of a general training course at university or a higher training institute **or as a part of a vocational training course**. The ECEC sees a university education of 5 years as the necessary minimum for the education of Chartered engineers and definitely do not see any possibility to compensate that with vocational training.

The ECEC sees it positive that the qualification levels of Art. 11 remain in the Directive. Nevertheless the system has been completely undermined - especially problematic are the changes in Art. 13 (4). The requirement that recognition for the same profession is only possible when the qualification level of the applicant is not lower than one level under the required level in

the host Member State has fallen and the Commission explicitly says that the five levels can no longer be used in order to exclude applicants whose qualifications are too low. Practically that means that also applicants with much lower qualifications can apply for access to professions for which a University degree is required. This will lead to additional practical efforts and costs in view to compensation measures. Additionally we see a danger of complete erosion of academic qualifications and of highly qualified national professions. Especially in the case of engineering services this is indeed very dangerous and undesirable as many of these services are provided in public interest and therefore have an impact on quality of life, security and health of persons.