

Professional qualifications: the amended Directive and the Bologna Process

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Outline of presentation

- Three questions
- Background: Bologna and the Directive
- Points of contact: notification of compliant programmes; traineeships; CPD; ECTS; competences; EQF; common training frameworks; comitology and consultation

Three questions...

- Good practice in professional recognition – are there lessons for academic recognition?
- Could EQAR play a role in QA of professional qualifications and recognition?
- What is the state of play in sector-specific QA? How can EQAR contribute?

The Bologna Process and the recognition of professional qualifications

At their 2012 summit in Bucharest, Bologna ministers...

- welcomed references to ECTS, EQF and learning outcomes in the Commission's proposals for an amended DIR
- requested BFUG to engage in dialogue with Commission and MS governments, in order to assure optimal alignment
- considered academic and professional recognition to include informal and non-formal learning
- requested BFUG to explore possibility of using **EQAR** as the agent of notification of compliant courses
- committed to easing professional recognition problems between EU MSs and non-EU Bologna signatories

EUA and Directive 2005/36/EC

- Contacts with DG MARKT since 2007
- Addressing relevant issues in *Survey of Master Degrees in Europe* (2009) and in *Trends 2010*
- Public meeting with DG MARKT and EP IMCO, 2010
- Responses to Commission consultations, including commissioned study by GHK, 2011
- Presentation to Commission's public hearing, 2011
- Submission to Bologna ministerial summit, 2012
- Periodic monitoring of relevant developments
- Sustained effort to bring DIR into line with Bologna

The current state of play

- Commission proposal for amended DIR, December 2011
- EP IMCO first reading, January 2013
- Trilogue meetings, early 2013
- EP plenary, approval of agreed text, October 2013
- Competitiveness Council, to approve, October/November 2013
- Two-year transposition period
- Entry into force, end 2015

DIR 2005/36/EC: recognition of professional qualifications

- EU legislation in place since 1980s
- DIR 2005/36/EC updated most of the body of law, covering all professions except law, and is ...
- now being amended in re-launch of Single Market
- 4000+ regulated professions in EU28 + EEA
- Too many... (DG COMP, DG MARKT)
- MS mutual evaluation exercise soon to begin
- Not enough automatic recognition (Mario Monti)

DIR 2005/36/EC: categories of professional qualifications

- 6 'sectoral' qualifications - automatic recognition on the basis of 'agreed minimum training conditions': medical doctor, dentist, general care nurse, midwife, veterinary surgeon, pharmacist...
- + 7th sectoral: architecture, of which recognition is not necessarily automatic
- The 'General System', based on identification of difference in attainment level, with application of compensation mechanisms

Notification: architecture

- Meeting the agreed minimum training conditions is mandatory only for programmes producing graduates for cross-border service delivery
- DG MARKT has to be notified accordingly...
- by MSs – of legislative, regulatory and administrative basis for recognition, plus
- ... detail of course duration and content

Traineeships: esp. pharmacy and architecture

- The Morgenbesser ruling: traineeship may be paid or unpaid; must comply with local labour legislation; must be contractual, specifying learning outcomes and assignments; may be undertaken in any Member State...
- ... and may be supervised in any MS, but home Competent Authority must approve the supervisor and evaluate the traineeship

Continuing professional development

- Commission has always regarded CPD provision as an MS responsibility, but headline horror stories in the healthcare sector induced it to recommend quinquennial reports by MSs
- EP IMCO resolved that CPD provision should be mandatory, with MSs obliged to exchange best practice; **EQAR**-registered agencies would evaluate CPD provision
- Final text is much weaker: MSs must 'encourage' updating of professional skills and must report to the Commission the measures they have taken

ECTS

- ECTS may be used to express course duration, but without prejudice to other requirements for automatic recognition
- This option covers all seven sectoral professions + levels 'd' and 'e' (i.e. Bachelor and Master, approximately) of General System's 5-level grid
- NB Take-up of this option in general care nursing and midwifery may involve EC-VET, but this is not mentioned in the final text
- The ECTS Users' Guide is currently being revised

Competences (academic, not legal)

- DIR: gradual shift from input-based to output-based criteria, in line with Bologna's emphasis on student-centred learning, Tuning, etc
- In the amended DIR, the concept of 'competence' supplements those of knowledge and skills
- It features in the Articles on sectoral profiles; aptitude tests; substantial difference in course content; notification; continuing professional development... and, of course, in use of ECTS
- It will feature prominently in the 2018 review (Art.60)

European Qualifications Framework - LLL

- Will not replace the 5-level grid used in the General System for the application of compensation measures...
- ... but its use is required in the setting up of common training frameworks

Common training frameworks

- In search of greater automaticity...
- ... the amended DIR contains a new facility: automatic recognition for 'common sets of knowledge, skills and competences', (to be referenced to EQF), which are agreed by at least one third of MSs (i.e. 10)
- The same facility is available to specialist (i.e. postgraduate) qualifications in medicine and dentistry; the threshold of agreement will be two fifths of MSs (i.e. 12)
- Proposals for CTFs may originate in professional bodies

The new comitology and consultation

- Working towards a review of DIR in 2018...
- During the transposition period (2013-15), working out the detail of Implementing Acts and Delegated Acts...
- Art.58a: when preparing Delegated Acts, the Commission will consult 'experts from competent authorities and bodies, professional associations and educational establishments of all the MSs'
- Scope for further alignment of Bologna and DIR
- Opportunity for EQAR to play a role?

Thank you for your attention

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

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