

Professional qualifications: Commission provides improved information and guidance on how EU rules work in practice

The European Commission has published a scoreboard offering an overview of where Member States stand in implementing the Professional Qualifications Directive into national law, as well as a "user's guide" allowing citizens to find responses to their questions about how the Directive works. The Professional Qualifications Directive of 2005 facilitates free movement of citizens who wish to establish themselves as a self-employed person or as a worker, or who wish to go cross-border on a temporary basis.

Internal Market and Services Commissioner Charlie McCreevy said: *"This user's guide gives professionals valuable practical information on how to exercise their Internal Market rights. On implementation, I encourage those Member States still lagging behind to ensure that this important Directive is operational as soon as possible."*

Scoreboard

All Member States should have implemented the Directive by 20 October 2007. More than two years later, five Member States – Austria, Belgium, France, Greece and Luxembourg – have not done so. One of them – Greece – has not notified any measure. The scoreboard the Commission published today gives a more detailed overview of how Member States have implemented the Directive.

User's guide

To enable citizens to make better use of the Directive, the Commission also published a "user's guide" in which 66 questions and 66 responses are given depending on the individual situation a professional might be confronted with in terms of the recognition of his/her qualification when moving to another Member State. For instance, the guide explains to citizens how they can benefit from the Directive when they want to work temporarily in another Member State.

About the Professional Qualifications Directive

The Professional Qualifications Directive is a central piece of legislation of the Internal Market. It covers more than 800 professions which Member States regulate and which can be pursued in a Member State only if certain professional qualifications have been acquired. A number of professionals in the health sector and architects enjoy automatic recognition of their qualifications acquired in the country of origin because the conditions for such qualifications are harmonised at European level.

Professionals from the craft sector benefit from automatic recognition of their qualifications if they have reached a certain professional experience in their Member State of origin. For the remaining professions, the Directive foresees a system of mutual recognition of qualifications on a case by case basis in order to allow qualified citizens to have their qualifications recognised in the host Member State where they wish to be active.

More information is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/news_en.htm