

Recognition of professional qualifications – EUA Update no. 10, September 2012

Since the last Update (June 2012), there has been movement on three fronts:

- The Bologna Follow-Up Group has met to discuss how to carry forward the good intentions formulated by Bologna Ministers in Bucharest in April.
- The EU institutions have published their plans for the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Single Market.
- The lead European Parliament committee debating the proposed amendments to the Professional Qualifications Directive has produced its initial draft report.

This Update looks at these and other relevant developments. In **annex**, it offers a tabulation of the HE-related elements of the Directive:

Current Directive	Commission proposals	Draft IMCO report
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Previous Updates are available at

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

1 The Bologna Process

1.1 Following the April summit meeting of Bologna ministers in Bucharest, the Bologna Follow-Up Group has considered how to progress the substance of the Communiqué during the coming three years. The **BFUG work plan** is not in the public domain, but it is understood to contain a focus on the recognition of qualifications, both academic and professional. It will address the closer

articulation of the Bologna Process and the amended Directive, notably in respect of ECTS and quality assurance.

1.2 Ministers requested the E4 Group (ENQA, ESU, EUA, EURASHE) in cooperation with BUSINESSEUROPE, Education International and EQAR to revise the **European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance** [ESG]. The seven organisations will work together during the coming year to develop an initial proposal for the revision. It is understood that in early 2013, interested organisations and individuals will be invited to make proposals to improve the clarity, applicability and usefulness of the ESG.

1.3 The next scheduled ministerial meeting will take place in Yerevan in 2015. Responsibility for its preparation lies with the newly constituted **Armenian secretariat**, details of which have been posted on the EHEA website at <http://www.ehea.info/article-details.aspx?ArticleId=9>

1.4 EQAR, the **European Quality Assurance Register**, has announced that higher education institutions in the Flemish Community of Belgium and in Kazakhstan can now opt to have their accreditation review carried out by foreign EQAR-registered agencies. In Flanders, such reviews will be the basis for a second accreditation of study programmes by the NVAO (Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders). Before being allowed to accredit study programmes in Kazakhstan, agencies have to be included on a national register of accreditation bodies. European agencies can only be admitted to the national register if they are registered on EQAR. In Bucharest, ministers had agreed to "allow EQAR-registered agencies to perform their activities across the EHEA, while complying with national requirements". Examples of national legislations which permit cross-border quality assurance are provided at <http://www.eqar.eu/register/national-legislation.html>

1.5 The next **deadline for applications for inclusion on EQAR** is Sunday 7 October 2012. For more information, go to <http://www.eqar.eu/application.html>

1.6 **ENQA's** annual International Quality Assurance seminar took place in Spain in the summer. Details of the programme and copies of the presentations can be found at <http://www.engq.eu/eventitem.lasso?id=420&cont=pasteventDetail>

2 The European Commission

2.1 DG MARKET

2.1.1 The week beginning October 15 has been designated **Single Market Week**. To mark its (almost) 20-year history, the Commission has invested in a publicity campaign which is supported by events in most Member States. Details are on the dedicated website at <http://www.singlemarket20.eu/home>

2.1.2 In August, the Commission issued a Communication updating **Annex V** of the Directive with formal qualifications newly notified by Member States. The majority of new programmes are in the field of architecture. See <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:244:0001:0006:EN:PDF>

2.1.3 Also in August, it published the full updated list of architecture programmes, as an amended **Annex V.7.1** of the Directive. See http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/policy_developments/legislation_en.htm#annexes

2.1.4 The July meeting of the **Coordinators** discussed a number of items, some of which are boxed below:

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2) The Commission indicated that it will present a communication on regulated professions after the adoption of a revised Professional Qualifications Directive. The purpose of this communication would be to take stock of on-going developments in Member States as regards the access to regulated professions and to devise a methodology for the mutual evaluation exercise foreseen in the legislative proposal. Member States commented on the scope, timing and preparation of this communication. Some Member States expressed an interest to present their initiatives on regulated professions at the next meeting of the Group.

3) The Commission reported on the peer review conducted in Croatia in July 2012 to evaluate progress made in the implementation of the Professional Qualifications Directive in relation to four sectoral professions (doctors, dental practitioners, nurses and midwives).

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5) The Commission recalled the agreement of December 2012 to extend the scope of IMI (Internal Market Information System) to all regulated professions and reported on a networking event organised for IMI Coordinators on 14 June 2012.

6) The Commission informed on the progress of the study evaluating the Lawyers' Directives conducted by Panteia and Maastricht University. An interim report has been prepared and an online survey is about to be launched. The final report on the study is scheduled for the end of 2012.

The full report is on the DG's website at http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/docs/coordinators/20120709_summary_en.pdf

2.2 DG SANCO

2.2.1 At the end of last year the Commission published its proposal for a **Health for Growth Programme**. It intends, inter alia, to

develop effective health workforce forecasting and planning in terms of numbers, scope of practice and skills, monitor mobility (within the Union) and migration of health professionals, establish efficient recruitment and retention strategies and capacity development.

The full text is downloadable from http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/docs/prop_prog2014_en.pdf

2.3 DG EAC

2.3.1 The Commission has proposed a **Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning**. So far only four Member States have comprehensive systems up and running. The proposal intends to give lesser-

qualified citizens greater access to higher education and to the labour market. Mature students will be major beneficiaries. The text has been posted at http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/informal/proposal2012_en.pdf

2.3.2 CEDEFOP has published a survey of **international qualifications**. It establishes a conceptual framework setting out the relationship of non-state qualifications to the EQF and to the ESCO project (which is currently matching the ILO classification of occupations and skills to the levels of the EQF). See http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/4116_en.pdf

2.3.3 CEDEFOP has also published a briefing note reviewing the operation of **EUROPASS** since 2005 and outlining its planned evolution up to 2020. In the past seven years, 18 million EUROPASS CVs have been created online and an estimated 300,000 EUROPASS Mobility documents (which record study and work experience abroad) have been issued. Between now and 2015 the EUROPASS mobility instruments will be better aligned with the EQF and ESCO, as well as with ECVET, the credit accumulation and transfer framework for vocational training. This work will be undertaken in the context of the European Skills Passport. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/19980.aspx>

2.3.4 EURYDICE has published a country-by-country overview of the organisation of the **higher education academic year**. It can be downloaded from http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/tools/academic_calendar_EN_2012_13.pdf

2.3.5 DG EAC has set up a **High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education**. Chaired by former Irish President Mary McAleese, it will have a specific brief to advise on excellence in teaching and to “identify best practices and creative solutions, as well as making recommendations to national and European policy makers, universities and colleges”. It will report for the first time in 2013 and its mandate will run until 2015. It is composed mainly of academics, but also includes the chairman of Microsoft Europe. The group will consult experts from higher education, government and business, as well as students and teachers. The press release can be found at <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/12/976&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

3 The European Council

3.1 The **Cypriot Presidency**, in place from July to December, has published the draft calendar of Council meetings to the end of the year. It foresees an informal session of the Education Council on October 4-5 and a formal session on November 22-23. The Competitiveness Council, meanwhile, meets in formal sessions on October 10-11 and on December 10-11. The Education formation handles Bologna Process-related business, while Competitiveness is responsible for policy resolution on internal market matters. It is rare that a Member State ministry combines both functions. The European Council (heads of state and government), meanwhile, meets on October 18-19 and on December 14. At the October meeting of the Competitiveness Council, ministers ‘will take stock of the state of play on the **twelve priority measures included in the Single Market Act I** and will hold a debate on the way forward. [...] They will also take note of the state of preparation for the second wave of priority proposals to be presented by the Commission this autumn under the Single Market Act II.’

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/fc/132528.pdf

3.2 Council's first reaction to DG SANCO's proposed **Health for Growth Programme** [see para.2.2.1 above] can be found at <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/12/st10/st10769.en12.pdf>

3.3 The **Conclusions of the European Council** meeting of June 28-29 stress the collective intent to deepen and improve the functioning of the Single Market. They note that 'agreement should be reached as soon as possible on the proposals on public procurement, e-signature and the recognition of professional qualifications'; whether the 'should' indicates estimation or injunction is not clear. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/131388.pdf

3.4 There is less ambiguity in the 'final report' of the informal **Future of Europe Group**, made up of the foreign ministers of 11 Member States. They are clear that 'at European level, we should take the Single Market, one of our main assets and the most powerful engine for growth, to a new stage of development.' They see the main thrust as being: greater support for SMEs, a stronger role for the European Investment Bank, and measures to combat youth unemployment. See <http://www.msz.gov.pl/files/docs/komunikaty/20120918RAPORT/report.pdf>

3.5 On October 11 the **UK House of Lords** will debate the EU's contribution to the modernisation of higher education in Europe. The Lords report has elicited a formal response from the UK government which, in reference to the proposed revision of the Directive, endorses the use of ECTS for the sectoral qualifications. Both the report and the response are accessible at <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/eu-home-affairs-sub-committee-f-/news/lords-to-debate-report-about-modernisation-of-higher-education-in-europe-on-11-october-2012/>

3.6 In October, the Cypriot presidency will host a meeting of **Member State Directors-General of higher education**. During the first day, emphasis will be given to "Quality Assurance and Cross Border Higher Education" and "Excellence in Teaching in Higher Education". On the second day, the DG for Higher Education and the DG for VET will join, to discuss "Expanding opportunities and raising skills: Opening pathways between Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education". Details are at <http://www.cy2012.eu/index.php/en/political-calendar/areas/education-youth-culture-and-sport/meeting-of-directors-general-for-higher-education>

During this period, the presidency will be overseeing inter-institutional negotiations on the eventual text of the ERASMUS for All legislation.

4 The European Parliament

4.1 CULT Culture and Education

4.1.1 CULT is currently debating the Commission's proposed **ERASMUS for All**, the programme intended to succeed the Lifelong Learning Programme. The minutes of its May meeting note that Committee Chair and rapporteur Doris Pack

'made a lengthy and detailed presentation about this dossier. She welcomed the proposal but called for, amongst other things, allocation of a larger share of the programme budget to specific actions; maintenance of established sector-specific brand names (Erasmus, Comenius, Leonardo, etc); more detailed description of the specific actions to be undertaken in each education sector; greater visibility for the youth sub-programme (currently a separate programme); and inclusion in the act of six named specialist institutions (e.g. European University Institute, Florence) for support under the Jean Monnet action.'

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/cult/pv/902/902865/902865en.pdf

4.1.2 When, in CULT's June meeting, **Commissioner Vassiliou** came to exchange views on the ERASMUS for All proposal, she – according to the minutes – 'spoke at length [and] argued that the streamlining of the programme would not cause sectors such as youth to lose their distinct identities. She defended a flexible budget breakdown, the proposed programme title, & the limited number of named beneficiary organisations. Members were generally critical on all of these points, the Chair expressing her disappointment at the Commission's reluctance to move an inch from its proposal.'

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/cult/pv/905/905256/905256en.pdf

4.2 IMCO Internal Market and Consumer Protection

4.2.1 IMCO Vice-Chair **Bernadette Vergnaud**'s draft report on the Commission's proposals was discussed on September 18; amendments are to be tabled by October 15 and debate will resume in November. The text is available at

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fNONSGML%2bCOMPARL%2bPE-494.470%2b01%2bDOC%2bPDF%2bV0%2f%2fEN>

See also the notes on its **HE-relevant points** set out in **annex to this Update**.

4.2.2 In September, Parliament endorsed by a large majority the Regulation which gives a legal basis to the Internal Market Information system [IMI] and lays down the conditions for its further development. The Regulation has to be approved by Council before it can come into force.

5 Professional, academic, regulatory and student bodies

Healthcare Professions Crossing Borders

- **HPCB** has reported on the discussions in Parliament, stressing language requirements, the professional card [EPC] and the alert mechanism. See <http://www.hpcb.eu/news/>

See also the **HE-relevant points** set out in **annex to this Update**.

EMTRAIN

- **EMTRAIN**, the European Medicines Research Training Network, is to hold a Brussels workshop on November 20-21 on 'Shaping a common

framework for CPD in medicines research & development'. Details will be posted at <http://www.emtrain.eu/index.php/news/285-2nd-lifetrain-workshop>

- EMTRAIN, which is part of the EU's Innovative Medicines Initiative, runs a searchable **database of bio-medical courses** (CPD, Masters and PhD) on its On-Course website at <http://www.on-course.eu/index.htm>

Medical doctor

- The 2012 **AMSE** (Association of Medical Schools in Europe) conference scheduled for November has been postponed. Meanwhile, in conjunction with two other partners, AMSE has published 'Standards for PhD education in bio-medicine and health sciences in Europe'. These can be found at http://www.amse-med.eu/documents/orpheus-amse-wfmestandardsforphdeducation_december2011.pdf
- **AMEE** (Association for Medical Education in Europe) has launched a new programme – Aspire – which will 'recognise international excellence in medical schools'. 'The aim is to promote outstanding performance and excellence in medical schools in terms of their mission and teaching and learning programme, taking into account the challenges and contexts in which a school is operating.' See <http://www.aspire-to-excellence.org/>
- The final general partners meeting of the **MEDINE2 academic network** took place in Edinburgh in September. It received reports from its working groups. These will be consolidated into a final report to appear in spring 2013. The list of work packages is posted at http://medine2.com/Public/package_00.html
- The UK's General Medical Council has published the 2012 edition of its annual report on the **state of medical education and practice in the UK**. It shows that 63% of registered doctors obtained their primary medical qualification in the UK, 27% in third countries, and 10% in the EEA. The EEA group has risen by 5.6% in the past year, with Greek and Spanish doctors featuring prominently. An online app gives a country-by-country breakdown. The full report is accessible at <http://www.gmc-uk.org/publications/somep2012.asp>

Dentist

- The latest Council of European Dentists (**CED**) **Activities Info** bulletin includes details of its lobby of the IMCO and ENVI (Environment, Public Health and Food Safety) committees in Parliament, as well as of CED's involvement in the reference groups set up to inform the ESCO project. Details are at <http://www.eudental.eu/index.php?ID=43776>
- The bulletin also reports that the joint **CED-ADEE (Association of Dental Education in Europe) taskforce** looking at Annex 5.3.1 of the Directive will produce a further set of recommendations featuring learning outcomes and ECTS as well as competences. The text will be finalised in October.

General care nurse

- **EFN** (European Federation of Nurses Associations) held a roundtable event in the European Parliament in September to discuss the proposals to amend the Directive. A report of the session has been posted at <http://www.efnweb.be/?p=2709>

Veterinary surgeon

- **EAEVE** (European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education) president László Fodor's recent presentation of the **evaluation and accreditation of veterinary schools** in Europe has been posted at http://www.eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/publications/Fodor_presentation_Morioka_16_09_2012.pdf

Midwife

- **EMA**, the European Midwives Association, has issued a position paper on the Commission's proposals for the revised Directive. See <http://www.europeanmidwives.eu/images/news/ema%20response%20to%20the%20professional%20qualifications%20directive%20proposal.pdf>

Pharmacist

- The **Pharmine** consortium has announced a second phase of operation, to be funded by the European Commission throughout the period 2012-2015. Its focus of PHAR-QA will be on quality assurance in pharmacy education and training. The Pharmine website address is <http://www.pharmine.org/Pharmine/>
- **EAHP**, the European Association of Hospital Pharmacists, is committed to promoting the cross-border recognition of the hospital pharmacy specialisation. Its policy statement can be viewed at <http://www.eahp.eu/practice-and-policy/hospital-pharmacy-specialisation>

Architect

- **The European Association for Architectural Education (EAAE)**'s 2013 conference 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 In September, in conjunction with the University of Oslo and other partners, EUA ran a dissemination event to conclude its **MAUNIMO** project – MAPPING UNiversity MObility. The project covered student, researcher and staff mobility and focused on data collection and the inclusion of mobility policy in institutional strategic planning processes. The final report, 'Closing the gap between policy and practice', is available at

http://www.eua.be/Libraries/Publications_homepage_list/EUA_Maunimo.sflb.ashx

6.2 EUA has published a major report on **'Tracking Learners' and Graduates' Progression Paths – TRACKIT'**. It shows that national-level initiatives for student tracking are in place in 23 of the higher education systems considered by the project, and in 26 systems for graduate tracking. The full report can be downloaded from

http://www.eua.be//Libraries/Publications_homepage_list/EUA_Trackit_web.sflb.ashx

6.3 The call for papers and workshops for the E4 Group's annual **European Quality Assurance Forum**, which this year will be held in Tallinn on November 22-24, is now closed. The next call, for Gothenburg in autumn 2013, will be made in the spring. Registration for the Tallinn EQAF is open at

http://www.eua.be/EQAF_Tallinn.aspx

6.4 EUA has published the **collected papers** from the previous Forum (Antwerp, November 2011). These are available at

http://www.eua.be/News/12-04-12/New_publication_Collection_of_selected_contributions_from_the_6th_European_Quality_Assurance_Forum.aspx

7 Other sources

7.1 Quality Research International has updated the **glossary of quality assurance terminology** drawn up by Lee Harvey. It is available at

<http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/>

**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 (at mid-September 2012)

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Current Directive</i>	<i>Commission's proposals</i>	<i>IMCO draft report</i>
Recognition of prior learning	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
Continuing professional development	Responsibility of Member States	MSs to submit quinquennial reports (new Art.22.2)	These reports to be backed by evaluations undertaken by EQAR-registered agencies
ECTS	No provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimum duration 'may be expressed' as ECTS, for doctors, dentists, vets and pharmacists - The levels (d) and (e) in the General System five-level grid may also be expressed as ECTS points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extends to specialist medical qualifications, which must be of 5 full-time years - Extends to general care nurses, midwives and architects - Includes a quantitative definition of ECTS, regarding student workload as much wider than class contact, but omitting any reference to learning outcomes
Qualifications frameworks	Use of 5-level grid in General System, as basis for stipulating compensatory measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retention of 5-level grid for General System - EQF to be used as reference for Common Training Framework [CTF] 	No comment
Competences and learning outcomes	Competences specified in sectoral profiles, but subordinated to stress on input criteria (i.e. bodies of specialist knowledge)	<p>Moves away from exclusive concern with inputs, by virtue of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use of ECTS - recourse to notion of 'substantial difference' in course content - use of EQF in CTF - rationale of CTF - introduction of skills and competences into criteria for compensatory measures - readiness to accept dependence on prevailing QA practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stresses the importance of competences in aptitude tests - Stresses the importance of competences in the definition of lifelong learning - But omits Learning Outcomes from its definition of ECTS
Quality assurance	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
Development	Common	Common training	No comment

of new curricula in the General System	platform for General System professions	framework for General System professions, by which at least one third of MSs agree curricula based on 'common sets of knowledge, skills and competences'; these curricula to be referenced to EQF	
Recognition of new specialist qualifications	'Regulatory procedure by scrutiny' – for new medical specialties common to two fifths of MSs	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
Work placements	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
Consultation	Experts from professional groups	Experts	Amends to specify national authorities, professional bodies, academic representatives and social partners