

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005777/16
to the Commission
Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)
(13 July 2016)

Subject: The problem of the recognition of a qualification in EU Member States

The recognition of a qualification is still a major problem in the European Union. Each Member State can establish a legal procedure under which the right to pursue some professional career can be given only to the holders of a certain professional qualification which is traditionally considered as a professional qualification awarded in a host Member State. This creates obstacles for the free movement of specialists in the European Union as qualified workers who are entitled to pursue the same professional career in other Member State as in their home country are considered as having a different professional qualification because it was acquired in their Member States.

The recognition of competence may take 4 months. An employer may find this period too long being unsure whether a potential worker has a qualification or not. During this period the employer may easily find another worker. Due to the long time required for the recognition of a qualification the worker may become less competitive in the labour market.

Doesn't the Commission think that the period of time required for the recognition of a qualification is too long and makes the worker less competitive in the labour market? Couldn't a more speedy recognition of a qualification become one of the measures designed for combating unemployment?

In some cases, even when a qualification is recognised and the holder of a qualification knows the language of a host country employers are still suspicious about the qualification and not treat it as equal to local qualifications. Doesn't the Commission think that employers need to be informed and educated that qualifications acquired in other Member States are of the same quality as local qualifications?

Answer given by Ms Bieńkowska on behalf of the Commission
(6 September 2016)

The free movement of professionals is one of the fundamental freedoms provided by in the Treaties.

The directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications ('the directive') provides the European legal framework for the recognition of professional qualifications.

The directive ensures the possibility for fully qualified professionals to request recognition of their professional qualifications in any Member State, to gain access to the profession there, and to pursue it under the same conditions as its nationals. The directive provides for the professional to get an answer within 4 months. This deadline is not a minimum required, but rather a maximum limit. Private employers may hire employees independently of any recognition, unless the national regulation states otherwise, and the process therefore may be shorter.

Awareness of foreign diplomas is increasing, and the framework established by the directive 2005/36/EC by setting deadlines and guidelines for recognition helps to avoid unjustified obstacles to recognition of professional qualifications in this regard.

Finally, the directive also strongly promotes cooperation between national authorities in different forms ⁽¹⁾ that contributes in building a common understanding on the different national trainings and to strengthen the mutual trust between Member States.

⁽¹⁾ Amongst others, through the administrative cooperation between their competent authorities (Article 56(1) (2) of the directive), their national coordinators (Article 56(4) of the directive) or via their AssistanceCentres (Article 57b of the directive).