



European Council of the Liberal Professions

Coudenberg 70

1000 Brussels

Belgium

Tél.: + 32 2 511 44 39

[ceplis@scarlet.be](mailto:ceplis@scarlet.be)

<http://www.ceplis.org>

## ***CEPLIS Memorandum for European Elections 2019***

---

The European Council of the Liberal Professions (CEPLIS) is the only inter-professional association bringing together the liberal professionals at the Community level.

Its members are national inter-professional and European mono-professional bodies representative of our sector. Several Working Groups ensure an efficient following up of all legislative proposals of relevance to the liberal professions and of issues specific to each one of the professional families.

In fact, the Liberal Professions in Europe - those who provide their services on the basis of an **independence** of professional judgment, a professional **responsibility** and a **control** of their exercise by a system of autoregulation that assures a universal, homogeneous professional **deontology** and guarantees **implementation** of the code of conduct of the profession – are a very important contributor to the Union's Growth and a key job creator EU-wide.

It is estimated that we today represent approximately 10% of Community gross domestic product. Despite of this fact, a number of concerns that our professions have several times shared with the European institutions remain to this day unresolved with negative consequences for both the overall growth of our economy and the well-being of our clients-patients, the citizens of the EU.

**Entrepreneurship in the field of our professions** is the first of these concerns. Our specificities, linked notably to our obligation to abide by strict ethical codes, render liberal professions' small and medium size enterprises different to the others. Former Commissioner Tajani has realised that and has tried to bring innovating solutions in a WG composed of representatives of our sector.

Unfortunately, the suggestions of the said WG remained unrealised in this day.

Acting upon them should be a priority for the new Commission.

The EP should encourage the Commission to do so, via a Resolution.

**In general, we call upon the EU institutions to understand and take into account the specificities of our professions and not to apply upon our enterprises a strict market logic and criteria that do not respond to the essence of our exercise, which is not exclusively oriented towards gain.**

At the same time, we consider **extremely important that both the Commission and the EP monitor the implementation of the “Proportionality” and the “Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications” Directives** with a view to avoid unfair situations between Member-States and to guarantee the achievement of these Directives. Especially with regards to the Directive on Mutual Recognition of Qualifications, our feeling is that the practice has proven that at least some revision during the coming EP term is absolutely necessary in order to bring more clarity to the text, render more efficient a number of provisions such as for example the one related to the CTF or strengthening concepts such as Continuous Professional Development.

**Brexit** is obviously one of our major concerns. The departure of the UK where several EU professions continue to propose their advice and services and whilst several of its citizens are working as our colleagues in various EU Member-States, raises questions, notably about the mutual recognition of diplomas, transborder services etc. We feel that the European Parliament could call upon the Commission in order for the latter to prepare a number of documents explaining to the professionals the way forward, notably in matters of recognition of qualifications and working in the UK.

Another issue of importance to our sector is that **not all of our professions are recognised in the same way by all Member States throughout the Single Market**, thus preventing several of our colleagues to benefit from the freedom of movement and the rest of the Union’s advantages when it comes to broadening their activities and envisaging expanding their services EU wide.

However, an exception must be made in the context of health professions where freedom of movement must be accompanied by a recognition of professional qualifications according to the criteria of the host country for overriding reasons of general interest relating to public health or patients’ safety.

Similarly, the tourist guide profession requires to be treated as an exception, since that profession is standardised as area-specific in the CEN definition EN13809:2003 and for reasons of overriding general interest as found in ECJ Cases C-154/89 and C-198/89.

We are obviously concerned also by the effects of **digitalisation in our field**, the digital transformation and all the electronic services-related issues. In that context we strongly believe that the European Commission’s “Services” package could be reviewed in order to better take into consideration our specificities and the exigences related to public health and safety.

Our professions share of course with the European citizens a number of other general concerns, such as the need to **reinforce the State of Law and the respect for Human Rights**, possibly via the setting up of a European mechanism – observatory, the need to **guarantee a genuine equality of rights for our female colleagues**, or the need to **respect the UN Sustainable Development goals** and the 2030 Agenda.

We strongly believe that in order for all the above issues and for several others, concerning specific professions, **a structured and sustainable dialogue must be established between our socio-economic category and the Union’s institutions**. The results of the research done in the context of the EU-funded project carried out by many of our representative organisations EU-wide under the leadership of our Italian interprofessional member, Confprofessioni, could be of a substantial help on this. In general, CEPLIS underlines the necessity of a better scientific approach of the realities of our sector EU-wide through objective and scientifically proven studies.

Last but not least, the European Council of the Liberal Professions underlines the strong belief of our professions on the essential link that exists between professional ethics and codes of conduct on the one hand and the quality of advice and service provided by our professions to our clients and patients on the other hand. CEPLIS strongly feels that it is of capital importance to take this link into consideration every time the discussion on the compatibility of our regulations with the Single Market arises and of course in the context of the “Proportionality” Directive.