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Green Paper on “Modernising the Professional Qualifications Directive”: “Giving the professional more ownership of the system”

07/09 : CEPLIS’ discussion with European Parliament and Commission on the future of Mutual Recognition of qualifications.



Ms. Vergnaud (MEP), Mr. Reignault, Mr. Tiedje

Representatives from more than 40 professional organisation-members of CEPLIS from all over Europe have gathered in the premises of the European Parliament last Wednesday (07/09) in Brussels, in order to discuss

the European Commission’s Green Paper “Modernising the Professional Qualifications Directive” with the Head of Unit for “Professional Qualifications” of DG MARKT, **Mr. Jürgen Tiedje**, whose team has drafted the document.

The event was launched by **Ms. Bernadette Vergnaud, MEP**, expected to become the Parliament’s rapporteur on the legislative proposal the Commission is now preparing in replacement of 2005/36. A long-time friend of CEPLIS, Ms. Vergnaud reaffirmed the House’s interest in the liberal professions, underlining that they constitute a key sector

for the growth of European economy. The Euro-parliamentarian stressed the fact that modernising of the Professional Qualification Directive is a priority for the European Parliament and that MEPs from all sides of the political scene are attaching special attention notably on European Professional Cards and Professional Insurance.

Taking the floor after Ms.Vergnaud, Jürgen Tiedje centred his intervention on three Key Questions:

Who is the addressee of the policies proposed by the Green Paper?

The Head of Unit insisted on the fact that the regulated professions are not the only ones concerned by the “Mutual Recognition” Directive. According to him, it is important to be aware that the scope of the Directive in question is broader: it embraces the partially qualified professions as well as the non-regulated ones.

Why has the Euro Commission decided to act now?

For Jürgen Tiedje the main reasons that led DG MARKT to push forward the modernization of 2005/36 are the need to increase confidence in what the Single Market actually does, and the need to increase growth in Europe. The free movement of persons is in fact a major contribution to growth because when people move, creativity and ideas move too! As the speaker pointed out: *“Growth is coming also from people, not only from capital”*.

Where does the Commission want to go?

A new challenge for the Commission is to give a European dimension to the recognition of professional qualifications using the means of the 21st century. In this context, a European Professional Card could be a major improvement of the current recognition process. Such a Card could in fact not only accelerate the procedure in question but enable at the same time the professionals to get more ownership of the system by getting the country of origin directly involved. For Jürgen Tiedje, *the Internal Market Information System*



**Jürgen Tiedje, Head of Unit,
DG MARKT – European
Commission**

(IMI) could play the role of “back office” for cooperation between Member States but it should not be considered as an “alternative” to the Card: IMI is in fact confidential and therefore not accessible to Clients and Patients. The Head of Unit also made clear that the Commission is not intending to impose European professional cards to professions that are, for their own reasons, not interested in it.

On the issue of the **Common Platforms**, Mr.Tiedje underlined that bringing the minimum required number to only nine Member-States constitutes a radical improvement. Reminding the difficulties the professions concerned by the platforms have faced in the past, the speaker strongly advised the professions to secure the Member-States’ agreement before coming to the Commission with their proposal.

On **Language Requirements**, the Head of Unit repeated that the Commission is in favour of some controls but cannot allow the issue to become a barrier for the movement of professionals.

Another sensitive topic addressed by Jürgen Tiedje was the **Alert Mechanism**. For the European Commission, a professional who decides to move needs to demonstrate his/her legal status. Both the professional and the citizen must have an easy access on information relating to who is the competent authority in each country and what are the documents required for the recognition of qualifications by the host State.

Still many important questions remain unanswered such as for example: the necessity or not to immediately alert when a professional has a legal procedure still pending on him...

Taking the floor after Jürgen Tiedje, **Jacques Reignault**, the President of CEPLIS, thanked the Commission for having conducted the process of consultation with an open mind and for having taken into consideration a non-negligible number of CEPLIS’ remarks. Jacques Reignault expressed confidence that this positive climate will prevail both at the level of the coming two meetings of the Steering Group on Professional Cards and at the drafting of the legislative proposal that will follow the Green Paper.

“Europe is not here to solve all problems”

The possibility was afterwards given to the representatives of CEPLIS Members to discuss their specific questions with Mr. *Tiedje*. Many among them took this opportunity to ask clarifications on several issues such as the possibility of associating common platforms and the future professional card (Mr. Tiedje excluded this possibility since, in such case the consent of all 27 Member States would be needed instead of that of 9), or who would be the issuer of the Professional Card (Jürgen *Tiedje* insisted on the fact that the card should be issued only by competent authorities, the latter being defined by the Member States). The importance of CPD and the difficulty of making it mandatory was also tackled by CEPLIS Members. According to Mr *Tiedje*, a lobby on this issue is also needed at the Member States’ level. “*Europe is not here to solve all problems*” Tiedje said.



Ms. Bernadette Vergnaud added that the European Parliament is currently having a positive collaboration with Mr. Tiedje’s Unit on the issue.

Forthcoming European Commission conference the 7th of November;

At the end of the meeting, Mr Tiedje took this opportunity to announce that **the European Commission will organise a conference the 7th of November with the participation of the Commissioner Barnier in order to present its analysis of the answers of stakeholders to the Green Paper**. The meeting closed on a positive note, many members had afterwards the opportunity to interact with our guests about issues and preoccupations proper to their professions.

