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EU finalizes Croatia membership treaty



As you may have already heard, the European Union has now concluded its negotiations with Zagreb on Croatia's Accession Treaty, paving the way for the signature of the document this coming December. The final (English) version of the Treaty was indeed agreed in mid-September by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (Coreper).





The document in question will be signed the 19 of this coming December in Warsaw has announced Konrad Niklewicz, spokesman for the Polish EU Council Presidency: “We are in the process of sending invitations to the EU member states

and institutions for the signing ceremony”. However this ceremony is not the final step to accession. The country will in fact become the Union's 28th member only the 1st of July 2013 once all current Members have ratified the Treaty in accordance with their national procedures.

Croatia itself is going to hold a referendum on its accession in the weeks following the signing of the document. Holding an accession referendum is not a requirement from the EU, but rather Croatia's sovereign decision. The catastrophic scenario in which the results of the referendum are negative for the treaty is thankfully highly unlikely, Croatian public opinion being generally supportive of the EU accession process.

It is also interesting to note that Croatia's EU membership does not mean that the country will automatically become part of the Schengen area comprising 25 states, including non-EU members like Switzerland, Norway and Iceland. "The Schengen [laws] are different and they might also change meanwhile, so Croatia's membership in that area will be discussed at a later stage” affirmed an official of the Polish Presidency.

Green paper on “Modernising the Professional Qualifications Directive” – Comparison of the answers of the main social partners

	CEPLIS 	UEAPME 	EUROCADRES– ETUC (Joint Contribution) 	BUSINESSEUROPE 
Article 11 / EQF (Q9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘No’ to the idea that no level at all should be used. • Could eventually consider a future possible replacement of Article 11 by levels based on the EQF ones. <p style="text-align: center;">“Don’t delete the article but improve it”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not support the deletion of the existing classification. • The deletion of Article 11 would make it impossible to compare the various qualification levels. <p style="text-align: center;">“Don’t delete the article ”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In favor of aligning the classification outlined in Article 11 with the EQF levels. • Retaining two systems would be very confusing and is to be avoided. <p style="text-align: center;">“We should harmonize Article 11 with EQF”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The co-existence of two systems should be given more attention by the Commission. There is a need to clarify the situation, to outline how their future co-existence is envisaged. <p style="text-align: center;">“The Commission should clarify the situation”</p>

<p>Temporary Mobility (Q7)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It should be left to the consumers' choice, excepted in the cases where there is a greater public interest or a need for interaction with the professional services of the host Member State, the two years' professional experience requirement should be maintained. • In favor of maintaining the right of the Host Member State to require a prior declaration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In favor of maintaining the requirement of two years 'professional experience in the case of a professional coming from a non-regulating Member State. • In favor of maintaining the right of the Host Member State to require a prior declaration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In favor of maintaining the requirement of two years 'professional experience in the case of a professional coming from a non-regulating Member State. • In favor of maintaining the right of the Host Member State to require a prior declaration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BUSSINESSEUROPE has chosen not to address this issue.
<p>Professional Card</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A European professional card could be built around the fast communication technologies of the 21st century. Its aim 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Professional Card could facilitate the recognition of qualifications. • The card should 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The card would accelerate the recognition procedure if IMI was used by all the Member States' competent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not convinced that the introduction of a professional card is the best approach to solve the problem of trust between receiving and sending countries.

	<p>should be to create a mechanism that will produce concrete and well-tailored effects under a modernized Professional Qualifications Directive. IMI could facilitate much faster cooperation between the issuing Member State and the receiving Member State.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issue would be around the means of engineering the software, communication and information systems to ensure accessibility to real-time data, reliability and security at an affordable and proportionate cost. 	<p>only be issued by public authorities registered with IMI.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The card should not replace the declaration as foreseen in Article 7. 	<p>authorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The declaration Regime should be maintained but the card could be presented in place of any accompanying documents. • No commercial authorities should be allowed to become competent authorities. 	
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<p>Common Platforms (Q4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support for the idea of ‘common platforms’ in the form of a meta-framework for professional qualifications, on which national formation arrangements can be mapped. • Welcomes the rehabilitation of the common platform concept, supports the lowering of the ‘quorum’ threshold as proposed, and believes that proportionality can best be achieved by use of a meta-framework against which national routes can be mapped. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not support the lowering of the threshold for common platforms as a way to increase chances to approve common platform. • The common platform system has failed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the lowering of the current thresholds of two-thirds of the Member States to one-third as a condition for the creation of a common platform. • There is a need for a clear procedure for the endorsement of a common platform base on a decision-making system that involves all appropriate stakeholders, including the social partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BUSSINESSEUROPE has chosen not to address this issue.
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Coming events

- DG MARKT of the European Commission is going to organise a conference the **7th of this coming November** with the participation of the Commissioner Barnier in order to present its analysis of the answers of stakeholders to the Green Paper.

When and where?

On Monday, **7 November 2011**, 09:30 to 17:00 in the premises of the European Commission:

Charlemagne building

Rue de la Loi 170

1040 Brussels

Belgium