



CEPLIS TELEGRAM

*The European Council of the Liberal
Professions*

Coudenberg 70

B-1000 Brussels

Tel : +32.2.511.44.39 - Fax : +32.2.511 01 24

E-mail: ceplis@scarlet.be

www.ceplis.org

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- **Cross-border recognition of professional skills needs to be faster and safer, says Internal Market Committee of the European Parliament**
- **“Current EU rules put patients in the UK and elsewhere at risk” say the UK’s House of Lords**
- **The European Commission consults on pharmacovigilance**

- Cross-border recognition of professional skills needs to be faster and safer, says Internal Market Committee of the European Parliament



The skills of doctors, engineers, dentists and other professionals applying to work in another EU Member State must be recognized faster, but without compromising the reliability or safety of their services to citizens, said the Internal Market Committee on Monday, voting on its input to forthcoming proposals to revise EU rules on cross-border mobility for professionals.

Modernising the system for recognizing professional qualifications is vital to spur economic growth, add flexibility to the labour market and respond to demographic shortages in the EU, says the report on "The implementation of the Professional

Qualifications Directive", approved by the Internal Market Committee with 32 votes in favour and 1 abstention.

- **Professional card linked to an electronic exchange system**

A voluntary professional card linked to an electronic exchange system connecting public authorities across the EU known as the Internal Market Information System (IMI), could be "a useful tool to aid mobility for some professions" and "simplify administrative procedures", MEPs say, describing the current system as "overly cumbersome and time-consuming" for both competent authorities and users.

However, "the introduction of any card must meet specific safety and data protection conditions", they add, insisting that "the necessary safeguards against abuse and fraud must be established".

- **Improving safety for citizens**

A "proactive alert mechanism" should be established within IMI to ensure that all Member States are alerted when regulatory action is taken against a professional's registration or their right to provide services, says the report.

MEPs also consider that the current directive's rules on language requirements must be clarified and call on the Commission and the Member States to revise them for the healthcare professions so as to allow the competent authorities to ascertain and, if necessary, "test the technical and conversational language skills of professionals as part of the recognition process".

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- **“Current EU rules put patients in the UK and elsewhere at risk” say the UK House of Lords**



As you maybe already know, the committee of the Upper House of the UK's Parliament (House of Lords) has recently adopted a report on the mobility of Healthcare Professionals. In this report, Lords committee underlines that the currently under review European Directive on the mobility of the professionals “*strikes the wrong balance between allowing healthcare professionals to work in other EU countries and ensuring the safety of patients*”.

For the Lords, foreign doctors and nurses who cannot speak good English pose an unacceptable risk to patients because their language skills cannot be tested, Lords have warned. Nowadays, only doctors and nurses from outside of Europe are tested for their language skills. Those trained in Europe can't be tested due to the EU's Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive, which assures freedom of movement for them.

To solve this problem, The Lords' Social Policies and Consumer Protection EU Sub-Committee recommends that all regulatory bodies, such as the **General Medical Council (GMC)** and **Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)** be allowed to test the language skills of all non-UK applicants. Moreover, an alert mechanism should be implemented so that authorities can share fitness to practice information and warn each other about practitioners who have been subject to disciplinary proceedings. Finally, the list of qualifications and skills recognized by the EU Directive must be updated.

On the behalf of the professions concerned, Mr.Niall Dickson, Chief Executive of the GMC, has expressed in public his support for the Committee: "*The Committee is right; the safety of patients should always come first*". He added "*The Committee also supports our view that the case for a European professional card has not been made and that it could become a costly and unnecessary measure*".

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**- The European Commission consults on
pharmacovigilance**



The European Commission has released a concept paper for public consultation that provides details about implementing pharmacovigilance measures, which will be necessary as part of the Commission's 2010 amended pharmacovigilance legislation.

In order to harmonize the performance of the new pharmacovigilance activities, the Commission should indeed adopt several measures. This document provides technical details that the European Medicines Agency, medicines regulatory authorities in European Union (EU) Member States and marketing-authorization holders will need to apply when implementing the new pharmacovigilance legislation.

With this public consultation, the European Commission would like to describe the scope and content of the implementing measure and seek views and feedbacks from stakeholders on this issue.

The concept paper is available to download from the European Commission's pages on [pharmacovigilance](#)². All comments on the paper should be sent directly to the Commission. (The period of consultation ends on 7 November 2011).

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**Coming event: General Assembly meeting of CEPLIS the 21
November in Brussels**