



## EUROPEAN UNION COMMITTEE Sub-Committee on Social Policies and Consumer Protection

### CALL FOR EVIDENCE

#### REVIEW OF THE PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS DIRECTIVE: MOBILITY OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

The EU Social Policies and Consumer Protection Sub-Committee is conducting an Inquiry into the mobility of health professionals within the context of the European Commission's review of the Professional Qualifications Directive<sup>1</sup>.

The Commission estimates that, in the last thirteen years, only about 200,000 citizens took advantage of the legislation in order to move within the Union. Boosting intra-EU mobility is an important part of the Europe 2020 Strategy<sup>2</sup>, and particularly of the New Skills and Jobs Agenda<sup>3</sup>. As part of this, the Commission plans to revise the current framework. It issued a consultation paper on 7 January 2011<sup>4</sup> and intends to follow that with a Green Paper in July 2011 and legislative proposals later in the year.

According to the consultation paper, the broad issues to be addressed are: simplification; integration of professionals into the single market through new measures such as a European Professional Card; and the need to inject more confidence into the system. The latter issue relates particularly to the movement of health professionals within the Union. Confidence in the system has been harmed by cases such as the UK's *Ubani* case<sup>5</sup>.

Under the current framework, training requirements are harmonised for seven professions (doctors, general care nurses, dentists, midwives, veterinary surgeons, pharmacists and architects), and Member States are obliged to recognise automatically qualifications fulfilling these requirements. According to the Commission, a significant proportion of migrant professionals belong to these professions.

As a Sub-Committee with responsibility for health and consumer policy as well as employment and mobility, we have chosen to focus our inquiry on the mobility of healthcare professionals. Our objective is to take written and oral evidence to inform a report responding to the Green Paper, scrutinising the UK Government's position on the Green Paper and providing input into the deliberations of the European institutions on the review.

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<sup>1</sup> Directive 2005/36/EC of 7 December 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications

<sup>2</sup> COM(2010) 2020, "Europe 2020, A Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth"

<sup>3</sup> COM(2010) 682 "An Agenda for new skills and jobs: A European contribution towards full employment"

<sup>4</sup> Consultation paper by DG Internal Market and Services on the Professional Qualifications Directive

<sup>5</sup> A German-registered doctor working as a locum doctor in the UK administered a fatal overdose of diamorphine to a patient (February 2008).

**Particular questions to which we invite you to respond are as follows:**

*Background: fundamental principles*

1. What benefits are derived by healthcare professionals and patients from mobility?
2. What risks have you observed arising from mobility and to what do you attribute those risks?
3. Where do you think the balance should lie between a regime covering the mobility of all workers, including non healthcare workers, with the objective of maintaining high standards of patient safety?

*Automatic recognition*

4. How content are you with the system of automatic recognition as currently applied to doctors, general care nurses, dentists, midwives and pharmacists? What suggestions do you have for improvements? Should it be extended at all to any other healthcare professionals?

*Administrative cooperation*

5. To what extent do you consider that appropriate systems are in place for administrative cooperation between Member States, particularly as regards the fitness to practise?

*Language competence*

6. Article 53 of Directive 2005/36/EC requires those benefiting from mobility under the Directive to have a knowledge of languages necessary for practising the profession in the host Member State. Are you content that this requirement has been applied satisfactorily as regards healthcare professionals and ought it to be strengthened?

*European Professional Card*

7. The Commission refers in its consultation paper to the possible introduction of a European Professional Card. What is your response to this suggestion? Under what conditions would it be helpful for healthcare professionals and patients?

**You need not respond to all of the questions, and we would welcome any views that you may have on aspects of the subject matter that are not covered in the questions.**

## Guidance for those submitting evidence

Submissions of evidence should be sent to:

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Emailed submissions in Word format are preferred.

The deadline for written evidence is **Friday 17 June 2011**.

Short submissions are preferred. A submission longer than six pages should include a one-page summary.

Evidence should be clearly printed or typed on single sides of A4 paper, unstapled. Paragraphs should be numbered. If drawings or charts are included, these must be black-and-white and of camera-ready quality. Evidence should be signed and dated, with a note of the author's name and status, and of whether the evidence is submitted on an individual or corporate basis. Only one copy is required. All submissions will be acknowledged promptly. The evidence should also be made available in electronic form as a Word document.

Evidence becomes the property of the committee, and may be printed or circulated by the committee at any stage. If your evidence is not printed, it will in due course be made available to the public in the Parliamentary Archives. Personal contact details supplied to the committee will be removed from evidence before publication and from the copy deposited in the Archives. However, personal contact details will be retained by the Committee Office and used for specific purposes relating to the committee's work, for instance to seek additional information or to send copies of the committee's report.

Once you have received acknowledgement that the evidence has been received, you may publicise or publish your evidence yourself, but in doing so you must indicate that it was prepared for the Committee. If you do this parliamentary privilege will not apply to your own publication.

Persons who submit written evidence, and others, may be invited to give oral evidence. Oral evidence is usually given in public at Westminster, broadcast in video format on the internet and transcripts are published. Persons invited to give oral evidence will be notified separately of the procedure to be followed and the topics likely to be discussed.

All communications to the Committee about the inquiry should be addressed through the Clerk or the Chairman of the Committee, whether or not they are intended to constitute formal evidence to the Committee.

**This is a public call for evidence. Please bring it to the attention of other groups and individuals who may not have received a copy direct.**

You may follow the progress of the inquiry from the Weekly Bulletin of House of Lords select committees. This can be found on the UK Parliament website, at <http://www.parliament.uk/hleug>.