

## EFCA Working Party on Qualifications

### Activity Report 2007-2008

#### Background

FEANI (European Federation of National Engineering Associations) debated with the European Commission the 'mobility' proposals in the context of Directive 2005/36 (recognition of qualifications).

Under the Directive, the engineering profession is covered by the general system, based on the principle of mutual recognition.

To make the recognition of professional qualifications easier in cases where the content, title of diplomas and the use of a professional title vary significantly between the member states (such as engineering professional qualifications), the Directive provides for two procedures to facilitate mobility of professionals:

- the establishment of 'common platforms' by representative professional associations at both national and European level. 'Common platforms' are a set of criteria to compensate for differences in training requirements in at least two thirds of the member states, including all member states which regulate the profession;
- the introduction, at European level, of professional cards by professional associations or organisations.

FEANI dropped its original initiative to develop a 'common platform', as the system was complicated and would have required separate platforms for each profession within engineering.

#### 'ENGCARD' – feasibility study

FEANI, together with Eurocadres (Council of European Professional and Managerial Staff), submitted a proposal for a feasibility study on a European Engineering Professional Card – 'ENGCARD'.

The 18-months project, commissioned by the EC, is aimed at contributing to the cross-border mobility of individual engineers whilst ensuring transparency of qualifications and competences.

The EFCA public procurement committee, responsible for the follow-up of the implementation of the public procurement Directive considered recognition of qualifications to be an important issue for EFCA, in particular because the Directive adopts the principle of automatic recognition for the profession of architect.

Early 2006, the Board of Directors agreed to the proposal of the public procurement committee to establish a Working Party to monitor FEANI's 'ENGCARD' project. Maxime Mazloum was appointed to chair the Qualifications working party.

#### Potential relevance of the ENGCARD scheme

The current EUROPASS system would cover the needs of 85% of the engineering profession - as it is claimed by its supporters.

The ENGCARD concept would therefore benefit only the remaining 15% of engineers, working independently and in countries in which the profession is regulated (i.e. 5 to maximum 10% of the engineers).

The above postulation, however, is disputable, taking account of the fact that approximately only 5% of engineers in Europe work outside the country in which they have obtained their professional qualification.

#### EFCA views on the ENGCARD

EFCA is representing engineering consultancy firms, and is monitoring the exercise from the employers' side.

EFCA presented its views on the ENGCARD at the 14 May 2007 Roundtable on Mobility and Recognition of Qualifications.

EFCA stated that any proposed factual registration/certification system should be compatible with other EU initiatives and ensure comparability of qualifications ('competence grid') through free access for employers to a database on diplomas.

Furthermore, it needs to be conceived as a user-friendly, reliable, transparent and up to date recruitment tool, and should not lay any extra administrative burden on employers.

#### 1 April 2008 Conference on the 'ENGCARD'

On 1 April 2008, FEANI and EUROCADRES presented the outcome of the feasibility study on the 'ENGCARD' to the European Commission.

Speakers also addressed initiatives of other European organisations (best practices) and views of stakeholders.

FEANI investigated several aspects for the introduction of the 'ENGCARD': content; design; related database; organisation to issue the card; costs and conditions for success; etc.

The study fixed the price at ca. 150 euro for members; 210 euro for non-member, and 110 euro for Young Graduates.

***A necessary condition for the card's success is its recognition by all regulatory authorities within national administrations.***

***Moreover, different professional organisation structures and current national (political) sensibilities are still major obstacles which need to be addressed.***

Conclusion of the presentation was that, taking into account these obstacles, the 'ENGCARD' would only marginally increase the percentage of mobility.

Maxime Mazloum, chair of the EFCA working party, remarked that a professional card for engineers would set off a process towards transparency and exchange of information on qualifications or diploma.

In the engineering consultancy industry the percentage of engineers working outside their origin country is probably much higher than 5%.

In the context of the Services Directive, and the establishment of a European Code of Conduct, the Qualifications working party will continue to address the issue in consultation with the Public Procurement Committee.