

European professional card for services providers

2008/2172(INI) - 19/02/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 607 votes to 21, with 27 abstentions, a resolution on the creation of a European professional card for service providers.

The resolution stresses that greater mobility of persons and services between Member States and between regions is an essential element in achieving the Lisbon agenda for growth and jobs. However, mobility in the EU remains low, given that only 4% of the workforce has ever lived and worked in another Member State and approximately 2% currently lives and works in another Member State. Moreover, there are still major obstacles for persons wanting to work in another Member State : 20% of complaints received by SOLVIT in 2007 concerned the recognition of professional qualifications required to pursue a regulated profession.

Directive 2005/32/EC states that the introduction, at European level, of professional cards by professional associations or organisations could facilitate the mobility of professionals, in particular by speeding up the exchange of information between the host Member State and the Member State of origin. In its [resolution](#) on the impact and consequences of the exclusion of health services from the Directive on services in the internal market, the Parliament called for the setting up of a European card to provide access to information on the skills of health care professionals.

Promote cross-border mobility: the Parliament encourages all initiatives that aim to facilitate cross-border mobility as a means to the efficient functioning of the services and labour markets. It underlines, however, the need for a more efficient and coordinated approach by the Commission between initiatives that aim to facilitate and stimulate the mobility of professionals between Member States, such as EUROPASS (European CV), EURES (job mobility portal) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), as well as between the different associated Community funded or co-funded networks involved in these issues, such as SOLVIT, IMI, EUROGUIDANCE and ENIC/NARIC.

Transposition of Directive 2005/36/EC: MEPs call on the Commission to assess the transposition of Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications and urge the Member States to strive for a more harmonised approach to the recognition of qualifications and competences, to simplify the administrative processes involved and to reduce the costs incurred by professionals.

Necessity of a European professional card: in some regulated and harmonised professions, such as lawyers and health professionals, European professional cards are in place or in development, but in other non- or less harmonised professions, the introduction of professional cards seems difficult. MEPs therefore call on the Commission to take stock of different initiatives concerning the development of professional cards and to report to Parliament on a representative inventory. They also call on the Commission to examine the initiatives in order to see whether a European professional card, in addition to other measures, could:

- contribute to the security of citizens in the event of contact with a provider of cross-border services;
- lead to administrative simplification and cost reductions and, in the long term, replace paper-based files and dossiers and increase transparency;
- stimulate the provision of temporary services;
- stimulate the provision of appropriate services of a high standard in the European Union and third countries;
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serve as means of communication of appropriate information to recipients of services in order to increase consumer health and safety;

- serve as means of communication of appropriate information to employers (in the public and private sectors) in order to facilitate cross-borders recruitment.

Characteristics of a European professional card: if there is sufficient demand to develop one, MEPs believe that any professional card should be as simple, easy and liberal as possible. It should avoid any new bureaucratic burdens and could establish a "common language" in the qualifications of certain professions.

In any event, a European professional card should not have a negative effect on crossborder mobility, and should only be used as proof of the right to move without being a condition for such movement. Information on a European professional card should be reliable, validated and updated by the competent national authorities and should comply with the highest standards of the protection of privacy. Where appropriate, information contained in EUROPASS CVs could also be included on the European professional card. MEPs believe that the professions themselves should finance the development and implementation of a European professional card, if felt appropriate.