Recognition of professional qualifications: European Professional Card supported by the Internal Market Information System (IMI)

2011/0435(COD) - 30/05/2012

The Council held a **debate** on a draft directive aimed at improving the system of recognition of professional qualifications with the purpose of facilitating the mobility of skilled workers across the EU. The outcome of the debate provides political guidance for future work.

During the debate, ministers expressed views on two main aspects of the reform:

1. the creation and practical implementation of the European professional card;
2. the proposed transparency exercise which would subsequently lead to mutual evaluation and, possibly, to a simplification of the national legal frameworks for the regulated professions.

Many delegations pointed out the potential possible benefits for the mobility of skilled workers arising from the introduction of a professional card, **provided that the card is cost effective and has "EU added value"**.

Delegations broadly acknowledged the need to look into ways of reducing the number of regulated professions in the Member States so as to facilitate access to these professions by removing unjustified regulatory barriers.

The European professional card would be an electronic certificate issued by the professional's country of departure that would facilitate the automatic recognition in the host country (the country where the professional seeks establishment). Applications for professional cards would be made through the competent national authorities using the IMI system.

The introduction of professional cards would be considered for a particular profession where:

- there is clear interest from professionals, the national authorities and the business community;
- the mobility of the professionals concerned has significant potential;
- the profession is regulated in a significant number of Member States.