



EFN POSITION PAPER ON THE DIRECTIVE ON MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

In the early 1970s the notion of mutual recognition of the professional qualifications of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, midwives, architects, dentists and vets - the so-called 'sectorial professions' - gained momentum. During this time the minimum requirements for the education of nurses were developed and agreed on. These requirements still form the basis of the so-called 'Acquis Communautaire'.

The EFN contributed significantly to the deliberations that lead to the new Directive on Recognition of Professional Qualification (Directive 2005/36/EC). The EFN takes a keen interest in the co-ordinated development of the education of nurses within the EU and the role education has in meeting modern needs and facilitating the mobility of professionals. The EFN is pleased that this development is more likely to be achieved under the new Directive than under previous legislative framework.

In order to safeguard Patient Safety, the EFN urges Member States to immediately implement (October 2007) Directive 36 and to provide clear guidelines on the conditions that need to be fulfilled in order to benefit from the recognition procedure.

Furthermore, the EFN, together with the International Council of Nurses (ICN), believes that a number of principles regarding the education of nurses should be implemented:

- Admission to education and training establishments must depend upon having completed secondary education, this being a minimum of 12 years, thus requiring the same conditions of access for university;
- The length of education and training programme should be sufficient to enable the acquisition of specific competencies and should not be less than three academic years (minimum bachelor level);
- There should be one European professional level of nurses only, according to the International level;
- The curriculum should be based on and consist of research, skills and competencies; and
- The education Institutes'/Course Director should be a qualified nurse - with a minimum master degree.

The EFN recognises Continuing Professional Development for practising nurses to be vitally important, as well as the development of post-graduate specialisations within sectors of nursing, and will continue to promote both these areas. Therefore, the EFN urges Member States to use the Structural Funds to support innovation within Continuous Professional Development.

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The European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN)
Registration Number 476.356.013
Clos du Parnasse 11A, 1050 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32 2 512 74 19 Fax: +32 2 512 35 50
Email: efn@efn.be Website: www.efnweb.org