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Nurses deploying the European Professional Card

The modernised Directive on Professional Qualifications (2005/36/EC) introduced the European Professional Card (EPC), a fully electronic recognition procedure which helps professionals to move across the EU. It is based on the IMI-system, an electronic system that allows public authorities in different Member States to communicate with each other. Through the EPC the individual nurse can now communicate directly with those public authorities electronically, which makes the entire process more transparent, efficient and quick. For the moment, nurses responsible for general care, pharmacists, physiotherapists, real estate agents and mountain guides, are the professionals who can use it.

Today, two months after the launch of the EPC, stakeholders shared experiences and views on this novelty. The day was also marked by the first nurse receiving her EPC! Paul De Raeve, EFN Secretary General, focused in the European Commission discussions on the reasons why the nurses decided to apply for and join the EPC procedure. He highlighted the advantages of this electronic procedure; increased efficiency and speed of the procedure, the opportunity to gather reliable and comparable data on mobility, and safeguards that the alert mechanism guarantees. For many year now, EFN advocates for getting data; this is the chance to get them!

He also insisted on the importance of the correct implementation of the modernised Directive. The EPC is a very innovative procedure but the cornerstone of its function is trust. Competent authorities need to trust each other; it is not blind trust that is needed, but trust that emanates from compliance with EU law. This is not the responsibility of one government or one regulator but a collective responsibility of nursing schools, regulators, professional associations, competent authorities and last but not least, the individual applying for mutual recognition. Mr. De Raeve therefore insisted that a delegated act would heavily influence this trust as the high level education set out in the Directive needs to be implemented in all curricula.

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