



**Discussion points of the European Council of Nursing  
Regulators (FEPI)  
On the  
Re-evaluation process of the 2005/36 Directive of the European  
Parliament and of the Council  
Of 7 September 2005  
On the recognition of professional qualifications**

**1. Preliminary remarks**

The European Federation of Nursing Regulators – FEPI [www.fepi.org](http://www.fepi.org) - represents the majority of regulatory bodies for nursing across Europe (beyond the EU-25). The main objective of FEPI is to protect, maintain and promote the health and safety of the public by creating and maintaining the highest standards of competence and conduct by healthcare professionals and indeed nursing professionals.

The functions of regulation that FEPI promotes include: education and continuous training and development of the profession; standards of competence; codes of conduct; registration and fitness to practice. We are

precisely committed to consumer/patient protection through nursing excellence.

The European Council of Nursing regulators welcomes the European Commission's initiative to seek advice from professional organizations and competent authorities of professions covered by the 2005/36 Directive about the weaknesses of the latter.

## **2. Core issues FEPI wishes to underline in the context of the re-evaluation of the 2005/36 EC Directive**

### **▪ Minimum education requirements**

In this subject, the European Council of Nursing regulators feels that the situation currently provided - the implementation of a single committee for the recognition of professional qualifications - is rather weak. Other possibilities should be examined, like the establishment of a separate committee including representatives of regulatory bodies to ensure requirements in terms of minimum training to be up-to-date and line with advances in modern healthcare.

### **▪ Exchange of information on practice skills**

For patient safety and public protection reasons, information about the service provider must be checked before it is shared between the Member State of establishment and the host Member State. In order to coordinate the flow of information between Member States, FEPI has claimed for the implementation of a Pan-European information exchange system among national authorities since its first statement on the 2005/36 Directive. Today, the National

Contact Points still do not exist in all countries. Moreover, the European Council of Nursing Regulators wants to put forward one potential solution, which is a supranational organization monitoring national contact points and facilitating the exchange of information between them. We believe that such an organization could be a fruitful path towards a transparent and efficient exchange of information between Member States on practice skills of service providers. This approach would balance the goal of enhanced access with the need to ensure that providers are safe and competent.

- **Language tests**

The experience on field of FEPI has persuaded us of the necessity for a mandatory control of the service provider's language skills by the host Member State. We acknowledge that the 2005/36 Directive allows us to control these language skills but we truly feel it should be performed in a systematic way.

The language issue is even more important for healthcare professions, because practical/scientific vocabulary in the language of the host Member State has to be perfectly mastered by the service provider. The directive allows the competent authority of the Member State to test the language proficiency of the applicant but we believe that in the interests of public safety, this should be mandatory.

- **Continuous professional development**

This topic has always been one of our major priorities. Considering the constant evolution of medical science and practice, as said above for minimal training requirements, we do believe that there is space for improvement in the 2005/36 Directive regarding the importance given to Continuous professional development by making it compulsory for all health professionals, as already happens in many Members States . Such an improvement would benefit both patients and service providers.

- **Temporary license to practice.**

Before the Directive came into force, the European Council of Nursing Regulators expressed some worries about the lack of substantial safeguard against a service provider who has been previously charged of professional misconduct, sanctioned or is currently going through legal procedures for crime in his Member State of establishment, or was not sufficiently qualified to practice. The prior declaration by the hosting country regulatory body stating that the provider is fit for practice and is not charged of misconduct or crime, including a proof of nationality which addresses FEPI's concern about the control of the service provider's identity, guarantees patient safety and allows the pursue of investigations, in case of malpractice.

### **3. Conclusion**

The European Council of Nursing Regulators is confident that the European Commission is going to carefully note its remarks and will to work towards an improvement of the actual Directive thanks to the current re-evaluation process. At the same time, FEPI wishes to acknowledge the substantial progress in the Recognition of Professional Qualifications at the European level and we would like to congratulate the European Commission for the amount of work that has already been achieved.

### **4. More about FEPI**

FEPI is actively working in several areas of expertise and activity:

- Policy development at European level with a focus on patient safety and public protection across the internal market and beyond,
- Active participation and positioning with regard to European legislation in the field (especially on the 2005/36 EC Directive),
- Data collection and dissemination of issues regarding registration, fitness to practice and codes of conduct at European level (set up of European database of nursing regulators),
- Support of self-regulation practice in those European countries where the area needs development (transfer of good regulation practice),
- Promotion of continuous nursing education and training in line with European Life Long Learning policies.