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Opinion of the EESC on the European Commission's Green Paper on the Mobility of young workers

As you will recall, in the FEPI News from Brussels issue number 33 of the 29/09/09, we informed you about the open consultation launched by the European Commission's DG Education and Culture by means of its Green Paper 'Promoting the Learning Mobility for young People. The consultation in question ended on the 15/12/09 and, one day after, on the 16/12/09, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) has published its own opinion on the Green Paper in question. As you know, under the article 262 of the Treaty establishing the European Union, the European Economic and Social Committee is to be consulted on any European Parliament or Commission's proposals.



In this document (available by the FEPI Secretariat), the EESC observes that: *'the learning mobility targets can only be met if there is full and widespread cooperation and efforts are made at all levels (EU, Member States, regions, educational establishments, social partners and civil society organisations, as well as by young people themselves)'* and underlines the role to be played by the Members-States and the stakeholders by stating that *'the Commission and Member States should increase their efforts to eliminate barriers to mobility and to exchange best practices. The Committee calls on the Member States to implement community law correctly and to remove the administrative and legislative obstacles relating to residence permits, social security rights and recognition of student cards from other countries. Learning mobility was the key to the success of the Bologna process and the European Higher Education Area.*

The Committee believes that mobility can also be the key to the development of the Common European Life Long Learning Area. The introduction of a "European Trainee Statute" or "European Student Statute" will ensure equal treatment and address many fears and concerns about issues such as the recognition of degrees, health care and student support'.

On the question of 'Recognition and Validation' of both formal and non-formal learning, raised by the Green Paper of the European Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee proposes the following: *'the Committee recommends that all Member States should immediately recognize, ratify and implement correctly the Lisbon convention on recognition'* and that *'the Committee supports the idea that learning mobility should be available for young people in all forms of education and in all forms of learning: formal, non-formal and informal. Educational mobility between the different educational levels needs to be promoted. Links need to be built between general education, vocational training and higher education, and credit systems should be fully implemented to ease mobility in VET where national structures differ considerably. In addition, pathways should be developed connecting initial and continuing training. Crucial to achieving this will be a swift and coherent implementation of the European Qualifications Framework'.*

The Austrian Federal Ministry of Health request an update to Annex II of the European Commission's Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (2005/36)

As you know, the European Commission Directorate General for Internal Market (DG MARKT) is preparing for the revision of the Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (2005/36).

Dr. Ryan, with the help of the FEPI's Working Group on Training, Education and Competences, Dr. Anne-Marie Ryan is chairing, is in fact currently working on reviewing the Annex V (5.2.2.) of the Directive in question.

At the same time, it came to our ears that the Austrian Federal Ministry of Health, through a civil servant, whom many of you know since she took part in previous FEPI meetings, Mrs. Alexandra Lust, has sent an official letter to the European Commission's DG MARKT, in order to request an update of the Annex II of the Directive. This Annex II focuses on 'List of courses having a special structure referred to in Article 11 point (c) subparagraph (ii)', this article presenting the 'levels of qualification'.

In its letter (available at the FEPI Secretariat), the Federal Ministry of Health of Austria, which is the competent authority for the regulation of the nursing

profession, as well as all the other health-related professions in that country, requests the inclusion of some special trainings for health care and nursing. These trainings include psychiatric healthcare and nursing (one year (1,600 hours), anesthesia-related nursing (7 months (1,000 hours), renal replacement therapy related nursing (7 months (1,000 hours), operation department nursing (7 months (1,000 hours), as well as teaching and management tasks in health care and nursing (both one year (1,600 hours).

For these training paths, the Federal Ministry of Health asks for the inclusion of the following:

“An education and training period of a minimum of 13~ to 14 years is necessary, of which:

- **at least 10 years' general education,**
- **a further 3 years' basic training in the upper-grade public service for health care and nursing and**
- **a further 6to 12 months' special training in aspecialised, teaching or management task”.**

According to the official letter of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Health, ‘the special training courses, each for duration of 6 to 12 months, presuppose professional qualification for the upper-grade public service for health care and nursing’. ”This means that the entire education and training period generally completed is structured as follows for the training paths included in the application”: Successful completion of ten school years of general education, followed by a degree in “upper-grade public service for health care and nursing” of a duration of 3 years.

As you understand by reading these lines, this request highlights an issue of particular interest to FEPI and its members. If you feel FEPI should analyze this official request and propose a response to this issue, please do not hesitate to contact the FEPI Secretariat.

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