



## MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

The EFFA Registrar, Miles Williamson-Noble, attended a consultation meeting in London on changes to the European Directive 2005/36 on the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications. The meeting was led by Jürgen Tiedje who is the member of the European Commission staff responsible for this directive. It was he who met the EFFA team that visited Brussels last year.

Mr Tiedje reminded the meeting that although the directive was issued in 2005, it was a combination of lots of earlier directives, some of which dated from the 1950s and 1960s. The idea, he explained, was to look at directives and change them where they were out of date, or where things had not worked properly. The Commission will not produce a completely new directive. Consultation started in March 2010, and EFFA has made a number of written contributions to this exercise. A summary of proposed changes will be produced by the end of this year, and the revised directive will be issued during 2012.

There are a number of suggested changes that could be of interest to farriers.

### European Professional Card

It has been suggested that those professions that would like it could have a European Professional Card, which would give automatic recognition in other countries where the profession is regulated. The cards would be backed up by a central Internal Market Information System that could be accessed by regulating bodies. This is of particular use to professions where training and examination are requirements for mutual recognition, but could still be attractive for farriers.

### Partial Access

The intention is to allow someone who has completed their training in one country to acquire their necessary experience in

another without the need to go through that country's training system.

### Common Platforms

The Commission accepts that the idea of Common Platforms contained in the present directive has not worked. The idea would be to allow professional associations from one third of member states (9) to agree a common standard that would automatically be accepted in the other states that had entered into the agreement. Previously, the requirement was for two thirds of member states (18) to agree, and there was confusion over whether the common platform was a basic standard or a set of measures to compensate for shortfalls in training in other states.

### Number of Regulated Professions

There are at present 4700 different regulated professions split into 800 groups. Why some of them are regulated is not obvious. The Commission accepts that the descriptions of the professions in Annex IV, under which farriery is controlled, are not clear, and they would like to produce an updated list. This would mean that farriery would be listed by name as one of the professions covered. At present, it is included under metalworking, but it is not mentioned by name, and you would only know that it was included if you were aware of the history.

Mr Williamson-Noble asked on behalf of EFFA if the recognition on the basis of six year's experience without any formal training or examination could be removed for farriery, but the Commission was not keen to do so, as it would mean changes for lots of other professions, and they would not be able to get agreement in time for the deadlines. They are unlikely to change their minds on this unless there is evidence to show that a lot of EU farriers moving from one member state to another on the basis of their experience, but who do not have formal training and ex-



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aminations, have been causing serious horse welfare problems. Quoting problems with hoof trimmers would not be of any use as they are not included in the directive.

### **The Commission's Approach**

The Commission has made clear that it is responding to the political demands of making it easier for professionals to work in other member states. Suggestions that this should be balanced by the need to maintain animal welfare standards have been ignored by the staff. This is only likely to change if Members of the European Parliament receive lots of letters from their electorate expressing concern about the effects on animal welfare of untrained individuals from other member states carrying out farriery.

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