



ARCHITECTS' COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DES ARCHITECTES D'EUROPE

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Review of the Professional Qualifications Directive: the Architects Council of Europe welcomes the report adopted by the Internal Market Committee

Final negotiations between the European institutions are about to begin on the modernisation of the Professional Qualifications Directive (PQD). Although the report adopted by the Internal Market Committee of the European Parliament (IMCO) falls far short of what the Architects' Council of Europe sought, on balance the ACE can draw some positive conclusions from that report.

Following IMCO adoption of Bernadette Vergnaud's final report on modernisation of the PQD in January 2013, the IMCO voted on 21 February to start first reading negotiations with the European Commission and with the Council of Ministers.

The review of the Professional Qualifications Directive is one of the twelve priorities established by the Single Market Act – the European Commission's action plan to improve the functioning of the single market. The PQD, adopted in 2005, includes automatic recognition for seven sectoral professions across Europe, including the architectural profession.

Since the beginning of the consultative and legislative procedures, initiated by the Commission in 2010, the Architects Council of Europe has sought to ensure that the interests of the profession are taken into account by the European policy-makers. Regarding the main innovation of the Commission's proposal, the ACE supports the transition to an e-certificate format for the European Professional Card. The ACE remains unconvinced that the professional card would prove beneficial to the process for recognising architects who are subject to automatic recognition provisions.

According to the report adopted by the Internal Market Committee, architectural training should now comprise either "a total of at least five years of full-time study" ("5+0"), or "not less than four years of full-time study (...) accompanied by a certificate attesting to the completion of two years of traineeship" ("4+2"). While the ACE continues to advocate a minimum of five-years academic training complemented by 2 years of traineeship ("5+2") in order to gain automatic recognition in other Member States, the options adopted by the IMCO committee represent an improvement compared with "4+0" in the 2005 Directive. In addition, the ACE has secured exclusion of the architectural profession from partial access measures, and has supported flexibility to permit recognition of different approaches to traineeship under the amended directive.

In the coming weeks, the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council will work to reach an agreement at first reading. The ACE remains committed to making the voice of European architects heard and to working towards further revisions, by 2017, that will align the EU position more closely with prevailing national and international standards.

The Architects' Council of Europe (ACE) is the representative organisation for the architectural profession at European level: it aspires to speak with a single voice on its behalf in order to achieve its aims. Its growing membership currently consists of 46 Member Organisations, which are the regulatory and professional representative bodies in all European Union (EU) Member States, Accession Countries, Switzerland and Norway. Through them, the ACE represents the interests of over 545.000 architects from 33 countries in Europe.

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