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PGEU PRESS RELEASE:
Pharmacists Discuss Professional Recognition Issues at PGEU Seminar

MEPs, pharmacists, Commission officials and competent authorities from all across the EU gathered in Brussels on 20 November to discuss issues related to the implementation of the Professional Recognition Directive¹ at a seminar organised by the PGEU.

The Directive, which was adopted on 6 June 2005, aims to facilitate the free movement of professionals throughout the EU. It establishes procedures for the recognition of professional qualifications by national authorities, either where the provision of services is of a temporary nature, or where the professional wishes to base his or herself in another Member State. For certain professions, such as pharmacy, such recognition is automatic, because minimum levels of qualification have been harmonized at EU level.

Competent authorities explained through cases studies a number of concerns raised with professional mobility in their daily practice. Participants highlighted the fact that there is a need to test the languages skills of the migrant pharmacist, as community pharmacists need to fully understand the needs of patients asking for treatment. The European Commission said that such test is envisaged by the Directive and could be put in place by member states but it should be on a case by case basis, not a systematic test, and should be 'proportionate'.

Participants also raised concerns about the recognition of third countries nationals and the recognition of pharmacist titles coming for EU countries which do not satisfy the conditions for automatic recognition.

The complexity of the text of the Directive and scope for discretion offered to member states on the implementation phase seem to show that further collaboration between Commission, competent authorities and professional organizations is needed to ensure the smooth implementation of the text.

John Chave, Secretary General of the PGEU, commented:

“ We believe that the Directive strikes a good balance between the need to remove obstacles to professional migration and the need to maintain public confidence in professional standards. It is also important to ensure that health professionals are subject to appropriate checks, so that public health is not compromised. There is no doubt that the Directive is a significant step forward, and pharmacists are in the forefront of professionals who will take advantage of it. We need to ensure however that clarity is provided in relation to some difficult

¹ Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications



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areas of the Directive, such as language testing and the recognition of pharmacist specialization.”

Information for Editors

The Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU) is the European association representing community pharmacists. PGEU's members are the national associations and professional bodies of pharmacists in 29 European countries, including EU Member States, EEA members and EU applicant countries.

As a follow up of the Seminar PGEU is drafting a report which will be published on our website soon.