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New UK legislation regarding the recognition of professional qualifications

A new approach to recognising professional qualifications gained overseas is now in force following Royal Assent, the UK government has announced on the 28th of April.



The Professional Qualifications Act revokes the previous EU system for how certain professional qualifications gained overseas are recognised in the UK.

The previous EU-derived system often gave preferential treatment to holders of qualifications from the European Economic Area and Switzerland. These arrangements were unreciprocated since the UK left the EU. **Under the new system, UK regulators have the autonomy to decide on the right approach to recognising overseas professional qualifications.**

The freedom of UK regulators of professions, such as the Architects Registration Board and the General Medical Council, to decide who is fit to practise is now enshrined in UK law for the first time. This ensures UK regulators can make recognition decisions in the best interests of their profession – upholding the UK’s high professional standards.

British Labour Markets Minister Paul Scully declared that *“We’re freeing our professions from outdated EU arrangements so they can decide for themselves which individuals hold the qualifications, skills and experience to meet the UK’s high standards.” “Making sure regulators have the powers to uphold standards is a huge step forward in making the UK the best place to work and do business.”*

Minister for Investment Lord Gerry Grimstone said that *“The Professional Qualifications Act helps deliver a Global Britain by bolstering regulators’ ability to strike ambitious international agreements, helping UK professionals get their qualifications recognised around the world.” “This will spread UK*

skills, knowledge and innovation further across the globe, providing a boost to UK businesses exporting their services."

The Act supports the UK's world-leading professions to export their services and strengthens the UK's ability to negotiate and implement ambitious deals on the recognition of professional qualifications.

It also helps UK professionals to be recognised abroad by ensuring UK regulators can strike recognition deals with overseas counterparts including those in Australia and New Zealand following our new trade deals with those partners.

By improving information sharing between regulators and making professions' entry requirements clearer, the Act also helps aspiring professionals understand how to be recognised in the UK.

The Professional Qualifications Act will enable Architects Registration Board to enter agreements with regulators in other countries so that for example UK architects can more easily register and practise internationally and international architects can register and practise in the UK. These Mutual Recognition Agreements, in which the UK is already in advanced stages of negotiation with the USA, Australia and New Zealand, will ensure standards are maintained and the public can remain confident that only suitably qualified and competent architects can practise in the UK.

The Act applies across the UK and provides for the devolved administrations to make regulations within devolved legislative competence.

The Act also includes targeted measures to improve the regulation of professions across the UK. This includes increasing transparency around entry and practice requirements and improving information sharing between regulators. Taken together, this will help professionals navigate the regulatory landscape through greater transparency around entry and practice requirements.

The Act's key provisions will come into effect between now and the Autumn and the government will work closely with regulators and other stakeholders on the dates for commencement and to make sure regulators are well prepared.

The UK government can further empower UK regulators to strike deals on recognition with their overseas counterparts, helping UK professionals get their qualifications recognized internationally.

The Act provides for an assistance center to help professionals seeking to get their qualifications recognized overseas.

Obesity causes 1.2m deaths in Europe each year

A new report from the World Health Organisation (WHO) has revealed that overweight and obesity causes 1.2 million European deaths every year, while not a single EU country is on track to reach the target of reducing obesity rates by 2025.

Obesity is a complex multifactorial disease, which affects almost 60% of adults and 1 in 3 children, according to the WHO. It was categorised as a chronic disease by the European Commission in 2021.

Kremlin Wickramasinghe, prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) acting head at WHO European Office, named the crisis a *“tsunami of obesity,”* adding that *“we urgently need to pull together all that we have in order to stop this pandemic”*.

During the report launch event on Tuesday 3rd of May, Francesco Branca, nutrition and food safety director at WHO, highlighted that obesity is not only responsible for non-communicable diseases but also raises the risk of infectious diseases. During the COVID-19 pandemic, people living with obesity had an increased risk of severe complications by up to four times.

Following this report on 4th March, the MEP Interest Group on Obesity released a joint declaration, calling for mandatory integration of obesity as an NCD and the biology of obesity for medical education as per the EU Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive.

The recent WHO report’s categorisation of obesity as an NCD *“really further opens the door for justifying the urgent need for obesity to be implemented under the NCD framework in its own right,”* said Jason Halford, president of the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO). Halford emphasised the need to provide a formal framework for early diagnosis, screening, treatment and long term management. *“It will reshape the professional education and activity required to provide effective treatment for people living with obesity, it will also ensure that those services are properly resourced and appropriately funded,”* he said.

Jacqueline Bowman-Busato, EASO’s EU policy lead and joint head of the scientific secretariat of MEP Interest Group on Obesity, explained that until this is done, the diagnosis of obesity will continue coming too late. *“[Body size] is a symptom of untreated, uncontrolled, unmanaged obesity. And that’s quite far down the road,”* Bowman-Busato said. *“Many people think that obesity is about the size and it’s about eating less, moving more. And that’s actually been the quite erroneous and harmful narrative of policy-makers,”* she added.

Pernille Weiss, Danish Christian Democrat MEP and chair of MEP Interest Group on Obesity, called for a broadening of the diagnosis toolkits on obesity, *“so that we are not only focusing on body mass index, to cover also innovative early diagnosis treatment technologies, such as biomarkers and mental health screening”*.

WHO European Regional Obesity Report 2022 is available [here](#)

The Joint Declaration Between the MEP Interest Group on Obesity and Health System Resilience, National Policymakers and Stakeholders is available [here](#)

Invitation: Human Rights Due Diligence - How to influence company strategies, Eurocadres/ETUC online event

The poster features a background of a modern glass skyscraper. On the left, five circular portraits of the speakers are arranged vertically. Each portrait is accompanied by a blue rectangular box containing the speaker's name and their affiliation. The event title and date are prominently displayed on the right side. Logos for Eurocadres and the Syndicat Européen Trade Union are located in the bottom right corner.

**Human Rights Due Diligence:
How to influence
company strategies**
June 1: 10:00 - 11:30 CET

Isabelle Schömann
ETUC

Nayla Glaise
EUROCADRES

Carola Dittmann
IG BCE - Germany

Pauline Moreau Avila
Force Ouvrière - France

Hugues Ghene
FGTB - Belgium

EUROCADRES

SYNDICAT EUROPEEN TRADE UNION

On 1st of this coming June our colleagues from Eurocadres invites us to discuss the importance of human rights due diligence, and how trade unions can influence company strategies for the benefit of workers and the environment.

Workers and trade unions will continue to play a crucial role in the implementation of sustainable business due diligence strategies, working towards ethical and environmentally friendly supply chains.

The European Commission's legislative proposal for Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence is needed, but fails to deliver sufficient change to business practices.

We will be joined by speakers:

Isabelle Schömann - ETUC

Nayla Glaise - Eurocadres

Carola Dittmann - IG BCE

Pauline Moreau Avila - Force Ouvrière

Hugues Ghene - FGFB

Registration is available through the following [link](#)

Prevention of harmful practices against women and girls

The 3rd of May, the European Commission published a call for evidence regarding Prevention of harmful practices against women and girls. Harmful practices are forms of violence committed primarily against women and girls. They are forms of gender-based violence and serious violations of women and children's rights. The most common forms of harmful practices include female genital mutilation or cutting, forced or early marriage and 'honour' based violence.

This initiative aims to tackle harmful practices by addressing prevention, support, training of professionals and victim-centred access to justice.

Harmful practices against women and girls are not unique to a particular culture or religion. The harm to the victims caused by these practices goes beyond the immediate physical and mental consequences and impairs the recognition, enjoyment and exercise of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. These practices negatively impact victims' dignity and their physical, psychosocial and moral integrity. They also damage victims' personal development, civic participation and empowerment, health, and educational, economic and social status. An estimated 600,000 women and girls in the EU and more than 200 million women and girls worldwide have undergone female genital mutilation. It is usually performed without the victim's consent. The Commission proposal for a directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence seeks to criminalise female genital mutilation in the EU, require Member States to ensure specialised support for female genital mutilation victims, and to take preventive measures. This initiative aims to supplement it with recommendations to address specific challenges of this harmful practice. These challenges include the need for:

- **knowledge among professionals from all sectors who come into contact with female genital mutilation;**
- education on the practices and their consequences;
- funding for grassroots communities;
- data and research;
- a systematic and holistic approach to providing culturally sensitive, accessible and safe support services to female genital mutilation victims .

This call for evidence is open for feedback until the 31st of May. Your input will be taken into account as we further develop and fine-tune this initiative. In order to contribute, please use the following [link](#).

Meeting with the European Association of Psychologists



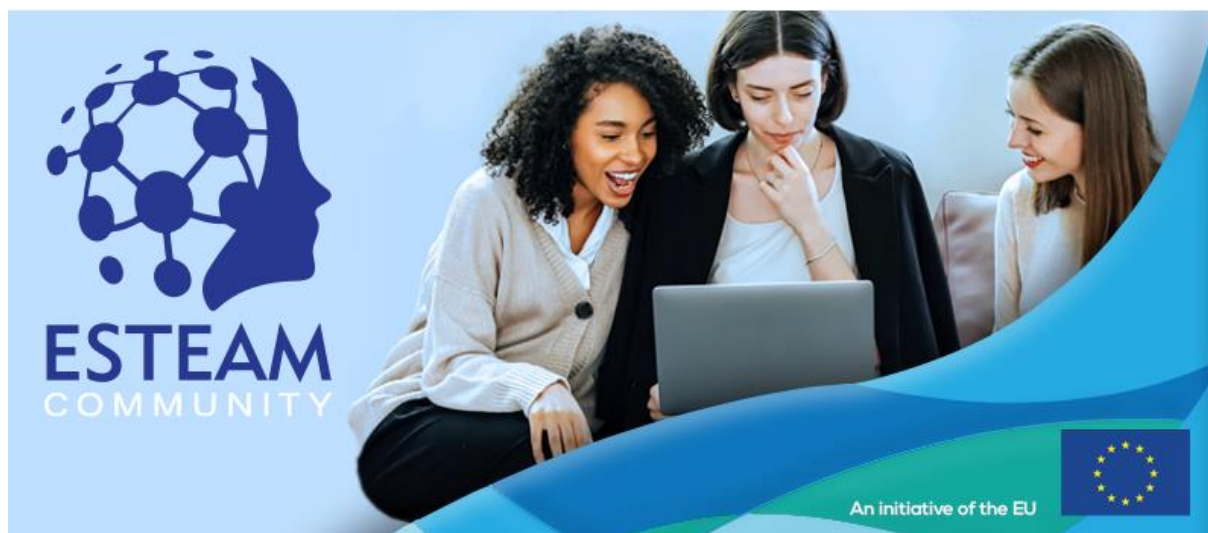
The 4th of May, CEPLIS was kindly invited at the Executive Board meeting of the European Federation of Psychologists Associations (EFPA), full member of ours.

Prof. Dr. Theodoros Koutroubas had the opportunity to raise awareness on the different fields in which CEPLIS is active these days.

The two organizations discussed ways to deepen and further improve their collaboration.

Belgium Women ESTEAM Fest

Deloitte together with the European Women Association (EWA) and Vlajo are conducting a project for the European Commission and the European Innovation and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA) to empower women and girls, in particular, by boosting their digital and entrepreneurial competences and increasing their confidence to choose STEM career paths.



Throughout the three years of the project, 11 ESTEAM Fests (ESTEAM stands for Entrepreneurship, Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) will be organised in 19 EU Member States to boost women and girls' competences, to inspire them, and to give them the chance to connect with like-minded peers. ESTEAM online communities, for women and girls, will also be built to sustain the momentum of the events and to allow them to keep learning and connecting with their peers online.

The Women ESTEAM Fest is an interactive event which will take place on 13 and 14 June 2022. The first day is fully online and the second day is in-person at the Deloitte office at Brussels Airport in Zaventem. You are welcome to participate in both days or only one of the two days. Each day is composed of different plenary sessions with inspiring speakers and workshops to boost your entrepreneurial and digital skills.

More specifically, you will:

- Learn about careers in STEM domains and develop your digital and entrepreneurial competences
- Through interactive and hands-on workshops, gain experience in problem-solving, pitching, public speaking, coding and much more, based on your interests
- Meet and interact with inspiring women who have succeeded in digital and entrepreneurial fields
- Become part of the Women ESTEAM community, in which you can meet like-minded women and participate in monthly online activities and much more

More information, the Agenda and the Registration link re available [here](#).