



macedonian engineering week

the way towards an automatic recognition of professional qualifications

Skopje 18 october 2017

hansjörg letzner

If you look around you, everything you see that is not part of the natural world was the vision of an engineer or an architect. Every power station, every road, every railway, every bridge, every mobile phone, every airliner, every piece of equipment and every sewage works owes its existence to an engineer.

His Royal Highness, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh

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recognition of professional qualification in a *free market economy*

yet, this task appears unsurmountable even within Europe and its member states.

engineers are faced with the difficult task of having to prove on paper what they are really able to do

and yet every country has its engineers and technicians who design, plan and build things

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there are good and less good technicians everywhere

the idea of a free market economy and the wish of many young people to try their luck in another country turns the necessity for mutual recognition of professional competences into a priority

Within the European Union the topic has been regulated of two different guidelines:

2014/24/EU (directive on public procurement)

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2005/36/CE (System for the recognition of professional qualifications)

two sets of guidelines can often lead to paradoxical contradictions in their interpretation by the member states

this hardly seems logical!

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the EU Commission published a tender at the end of 2015 with the aim to find a set of guidelines for the engineering profession

to find mutually supported *common training principles*, such as those foreseen in Art. 49a and 49b of the qualifications directive.

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the following requirements counted as inalienable conditions:

- the profession has to be regulated in more than one third of the member states
- the common minimum number of knowledge, skills and competences has to correspond to the minimum number in at least one third of the member states
- knowledge, skills and competences do not necessarily have to arise from academic instruction

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- membership of a chamber must not be a condition for the fulfillment of a *CTF*
- the declared aim of the *common training principles* is to guarantee more mobility within the member states

when at least one third of the member states shares a *CTF* proposal, the Commission can introduce a generally-valid regulation via a delegated legal act

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the first aim was to obtain a more precise picture of how our profession is regulated in the various countries, and which laws it is subject to regarding the following specialist areas:

- civil and environmental engineers
- mechanical and industrial engineers
- geodetic surveyors
- electro technology engineers
- mining engineers

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the questionnaire was designed to be as extensive as possible
amongst other items, there was the question as to which was
preferable: a *common training framework* or *common training
test*

and whether academic instruction may be replaced with other
educational paths

all in all, 42 of the states and professional representatives
responded:

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Country	Civil and Environmental Engineer	Electrotechnology Engineer	Mechanical and Industrial Engineer	Geodetic Surveyor	Mining Engineer
AUSTRIA					
BELGIUM					
BULGARIA					
CROATIA					
CYPRUS					
CZECH REPUBLIC					
DENMARK					
ESTONIA					
FINLAND					
FRANCE					
GERMANY					
GREECE					
HUNGARY					
ICELAND					
IRELAND					
ITALY					
LATVIA					
LIECHTENSTEIN					
LITHUANIA					
LUXEMBOURG					
MALTA					
NETHERLANDS					
NORWAY					
POLAND					
PORTUGAL					
ROMANIA					
SLOVAKIA					
SLOVENIA					
SPAIN					
SWEDEN					
SWITZERLAND					
UN. KINGDOM					

	questionnaire submitted and validated
	questionnaire submitted
	<u>no answer</u> received

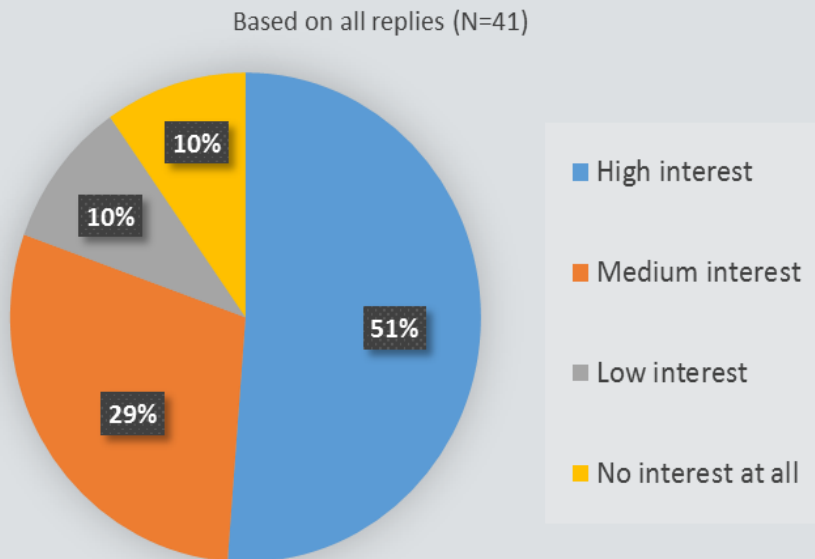
on the topics of *CTP yes/no* and *CTF or CTT* we received the following responses

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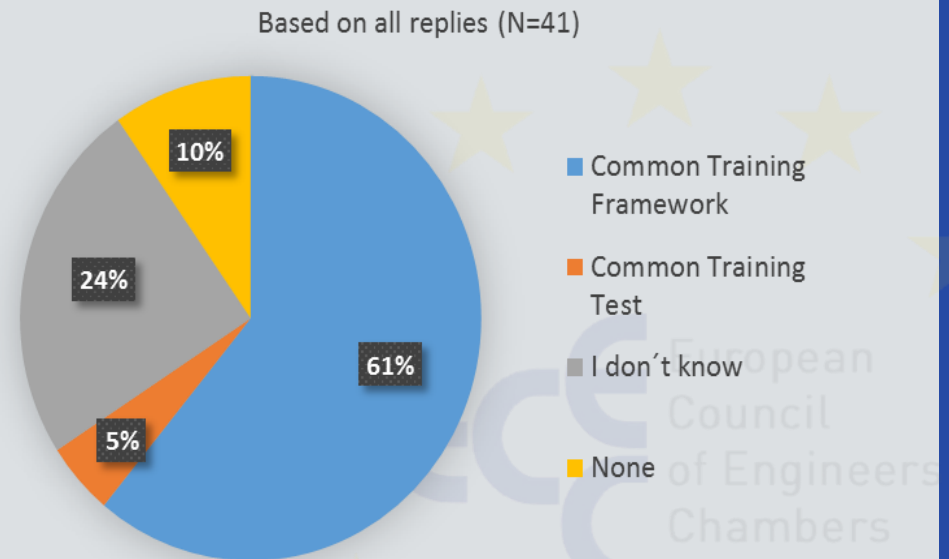
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The results for national and European engineering organisations in detail

- Has the concept of Common Training Principles for Engineers been of interest for your organisation yet?



- Which approach would you prefer?



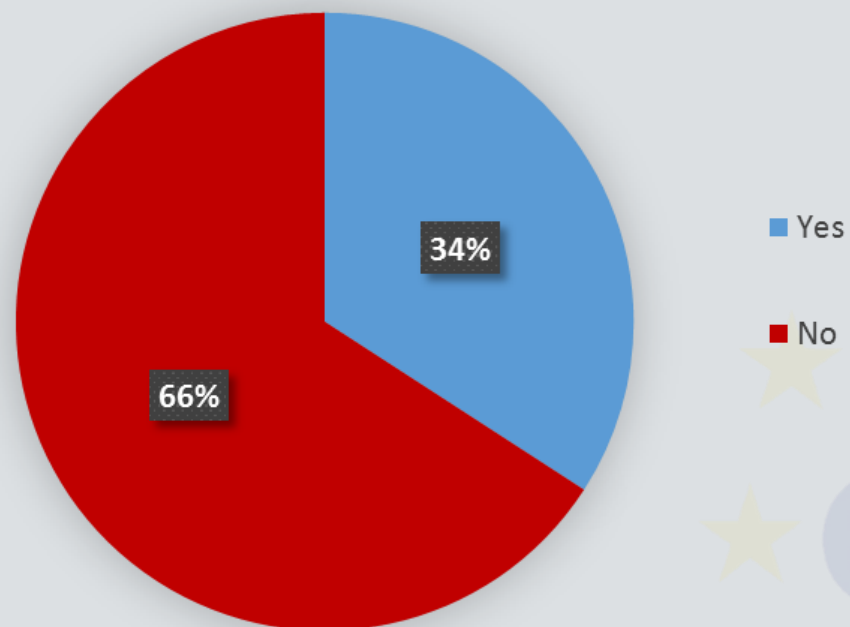
regarding the item “*it is possible or not to compensate for academic instruction requirements*“ the answers are summarised in the following slide

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Rate of Civil Engineering professions for which it is possible/not possible to compensate academic education requirements

Based on all replies (N=41)



the conclusions:

- a large majority supports the introduction of a general training framework
- a large majority supports the proposal involving 2 different educational levels
- the precise content of a common training framework differ greatly amongst the member states
- the proposed academic minimum criteria for Bachelor's/Master's degree levels were supported by a large majority

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- a large majority also supports the use of the “*EUR-ACE Framework standards and guidelines*”

The most significant divergences are as follows:

- the possibility of compensation for academic instruction ***no-go*** for the majority, an **absolute must** for the others (e.g. France, UK etc.)
- EU-wide access for CTF-recognised engineers is unrealistic today because of very different national regulations that then have to be adapted

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- **individual assessment:** in some countries, there is still a great desire for individual screening of qualifications by the host country; this is not compatible with the principle of automatic recognition
- **work practice:** the desires of the members vary between no requirement for work practice (e.g. Italy) and 1-3 or more years of practice

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The most controversial topic is that of '*compensation measures*':

- **NO**: in a large majority of the member states
- **YES**: the possibility of compensation for academic instruction is desired by a smaller number of member states
- **BUT**: the absence of the will for compensation is regarded as unlawful by the European

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result of the project:

- extensive information on the engineering profession / engineering education in the member states regarding the five professional groups examined
- extensive information on the positions of authorities and engineering organisations on general education frameworks
- currently no agreement on a common model is possible

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Recommendation of ECEC to the European Commission:

- Level 1: ***European Licenced Civil Engineer Master level:*** Master degree (EQF Level 7); minimum 300 ECTS and 2 years of post-graduate professional experience or professional examination (in the home country).
- Level 2: ***European Licenced Civil Engineer Bachelor level:*** Bachelor degree (EQF Level 6); minimum 180 ECTS and 2 years of post-graduate professional experience or professional examination (in the home country).

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we need an automatic recognition:

we have to trust the authorities of the member states!

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IN THE SHORT TERM: agreement on a CTF for civil engineers with sufficient majority of member states possible, but only without compensation possibility for academic instruction:

- the system has to allow automatic recognition!
- recognition has to be linked to both of the above-mentioned academic instruction levels!
- work practice: the duration should be agreed upon amongst the participating countries!

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IN THE LONG TERM: an agreement which allows compensation for academic compensation necessitates an exact definition of the term '*equivalence*', which currently does not exist

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the further steps

- the Commission is not bound to the proposals
- it seems as if the great divergences becoming evident in the project, especially those regarding the compensation measures, have also '*demotivated*' the Commission (risk of failure).
- we currently have no information on the further approach of the Commission

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but what is the reality?

how strong is the desire for mobility really?

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Italy is divided into 20 regions and 106 provinces that have similar and yet different laws

we have 7,998 local councils with just as many building regulations and – approximately – 400,000 bureaucrats who interpret all these norms in contradictory ways

I see mobility within my own country as being littered with far more barriers than the professional regulations of the member states could ever require!

Not to mentioned linguistic hurdles!

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this is why I believe that the barriers that stand in the way of this so glorified mobility are more of a legal (other laws and norms) and linguistic nature rather than barriers like access to the profession or recognition of professional qualifications

I can hardly imagine – without help of a resident engineer and without knowing your language – presenting a building project here in Skopje for authorisation, let alone being in a position to support it during the construction phase

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in Italy over the past 10 years:

an average of 70-80 applications for definitive degree recognition (which corresponds to one application for every 3,000 chartered engineers [there are 240,000 of us])

and there have been just 17 applications for temporary border-crossing work in all this 10-year period

more than half of the 80 applications are from Italian citizens who have studied or graduated abroad and wish to return home

however the data should be interpreted with caution

as only those engineers who work freelance abroad really need the recognition

this problem does not exist for all those who work for third parties (construction companies, engineering studios, companies) and do not have to sign projects or expert opinions themselves

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nevertheless an automatic recognition of professional qualifications has to be considered as essential in today's Europe

if political borders can no longer stop us and we can trade freely all over Europe, it appears to me more than legitimate to be able to choose a technician without restrictions

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there can, in my opinion, be no future in a Europe of different classes, where engineers from one member state are viewed with suspicion, just because their education took place in another country

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thank you for your attention

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