

# STUDY TO IDENTIFY SECTORS OF INTEREST FOR POTENTIAL MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

## BACKGROUND

As part of the SEE 2020 Strategy, the SEE Governments have taken commitments to:

- Liberalise trade in services including facilitating the free movement of experts, professionals and skilled labour (Free Trade Area dimension of the SEE 2020 Integrated Growth Pillar)
- Increase equitable access to, and participation in, high quality education at all levels, aligned with measures that facilitate recognition of qualifications and thus support mobility in SEE (Education and Competences dimension of the SEE 2020 Smart Growth Pillar)
- Enhance overall labour mobility in the region (Employment dimension of the SEE 2020 Inclusive Growth pillar)

The multi-dimensional nature of these commitments requires that work undertaken by three SEE 2020 dimension coordinators needs to be well coordinated. Specifically:

- The work being undertaken by the CEFTA Sub-Committee on Trade in Services to meet Articles 26-29 of the Agreement on the gradual opening of the services market across the CEFTA region by reducing barriers in temporary movement of natural persons (GATS Mode 4)
- The Education Reform Initiative's (ERISEE) work on removing obstacles to increased mobility in the region
- The Social Agenda Working Group's (SAWG) roadmap to enhance overall labour mobility in the context of the SEE 2020 Strategy

Within this broad framework cooperation to facilitate recognition of professional qualifications as means to further the CEFTA led agenda in lib-

eralisation of services has been given priority. The three regional dimension coordinators have formed a Joint Working Group on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications (JWGMRPQ) under the auspices of RCC.

This Group will benefit from a detailed mapping and assessment study regarding the potential sectors where mutual recognition agreements may be concluded.

## OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the assignment is to conduct a mapping and assessment study, which will enable the JWGMRPQ to identify sectors and professions of mutual interest for the development of mutual recognition agreements of professional qualifications in South East Europe.

## ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

The study will map the existing data on mobility of professionals in the South East Europe. Based on the existing data, gaps in the collection of data will be identified. A methodology for (i) overcoming the data gaps that exist and (ii) allowing for an assessment of the relevance of sectors and professions for development of mutual recognition agreements of professional qualifications will be developed. Following the assessment, clear recommendations will be made as to the sectors and professions of mutual interest to the region for the development of mutual recognition agreements of professional qualifications. Furthermore, a recommendation on data collection and a system of monitoring the data on mobility of professionals for both short term and long terms stays in the SEE 2020 region will be developed.

It is expected that this study will be complemented by a mapping of the existing legislative and institutional framework for recognition of professional qualifications. This mapping will include identification of the roles and responsibilities of specific bodies in the sectors of interest and will assess the potential impact of MRAs on the SEE economies.

These studies should allow the JWGRPQ to prepare and agree on a roadmap for the negotiation of specific MRAs. In line with the envisaged schedule, the negotiations on specific MRAs could start in late 2016/early 2017.

## IMPACT ON CEFTA

The data and analysis gathered on sectors and professions of mutual interest will contribute to CEFTA's negotiations on liberalisation of trade in services. They will also benefit transparency objectives as they will provide much needed information on mobility of professionals in the region.

## SUMMARY PROJECT INFORMATION

Dates:	December 2015 - March 2016
Budget:	<i>n.a.</i>
Partners:	CEFTA, ERI SEE, RCC
Financiers:	RCC (RCC participants, EC and bilateral donors)
Beneficiaries:	Ministries responsible for trade, education and labour

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