

# European Family Businesses response to the Skills Portability Initiative

European Family Businesses (EFB) would like to thank the European Commission for the opportunity to comment on the Skills Portability Initiative. For family businesses nurturing employees, helping them to develop their skills and cultivate entrepreneurial education is crucial. Therefore, we welcome the support of the Commission in facilitating, modernising and expanding recognition of regulated professions across the EU. Additionally, simplifying the recognition of qualifications and skills of third-country nationals will help to promote fair labour mobility and deepen our single market.

**Information is key to increasing the recognition of qualifications in regulated professions.**

While the competence for regulating regulated professions remains with Member States, we feel it is important – in order to increase recognition and trust – that an EU wide information campaign that brings awareness of the EU Qualifications Framework (EQF) programmes and how these relate to the National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) is launched. This information could have a positive impact for employers, individuals, education and training institutions. Moreover, highlighting best practises with the emphasis on transparency and comparability of skills and qualifications (including micro-credentials) across different Member States could help to increase trust in qualifications obtained in different Member States. In addition, the communication efforts should encourage national authorities to alert business owners every year of any changes to the EQF and NQF systems. This would increase the longevity and reliability of the information provided.

**Voluntary guidance for non-regulated professions could help identify skills on a sector by sector basis.**

With regards to non-regulated professions, the development of voluntary guidelines taking into account how to recognise qualifications in different sectors could help clarify and effectively create an overarching non-legislative process to simplify skills recognition. **Clear definitions and guidance would be essential here.**

Recognising qualifications and skills of third-country nationals could play a role in closing Europe's skills gap.

The proposal within the Commission's call for evidence *to establish an approved list of qualifications or providers from third countries that meet minimum training requirements for selected priority regulated professions in the EU* could help *third-country nationals holding these approved qualifications to benefit from a more automatic recognition* of their skills and qualifications. This could perhaps be conducted through the EFQ. Furthermore, communication with third countries, to establish the approved providers and qualifications could facilitate the process of recognition.

Digitalisation plays an important role in facilitating the recognition of qualifications.

Digitalisation of qualifications is key, not only for employers but for perspective employees too. Enabling the dissemination of qualifications and skills credentials digitally will help to facilitate the recognition of qualifications across borders. Interoperability of digital credentials across borders is vital, however, this is likely something that Member States would tackle on a national level. A wider use of Europass could help to facilitate the recognition of qualifications across borders.

To increase labour mobility, there needs to be not only better recognition of qualifications but also better coordination of social security systems.

The recognition of qualifications combined with a better coordination of social security systems would help increase labour mobility of individuals who work across different Member States in the EU. The stalled revision of **Regulation 883/2004** of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the coordination of social security systems creates uncertainty surrounding the coordination of family benefits. To improve labour mobility this topic should be raised higher in the upcoming agenda discussions. Moreover, the challenge related to coordination of social security systems could perhaps be addressed via a wider use of the EU Digital Identity Wallet (EUDI) across Member States. This could also help with the Commission's agenda to further digitalise without added administrative burden.

Avoiding duplication is vital to ensuring practical applicability and reduction of administrative burden.

Since the Commission is working on several policy proposals that may, to some extent, overlap with measures that may result from the Skills Portability Initiative, it is important that the interoperability of policies both existing and new, work together in a cohesive manner. Therefore, we suggest that any relevant measures under ESSPASS, the 28<sup>th</sup> regime for innovative companies and the Quality Jobs Act are carefully considered to avoid duplication. If the interplay between these upcoming legislative proposals take one another into account, the desired outcomes will endorse the simplification agenda from the beginning.

As always, EFB remains open to discuss the topic at hand further and offer insights from Europe's family businesses.

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*European Family Businesses (EFB) is a federation of national family businesses associations. Our aim is to make political decision makers aware of the contribution of family businesses to society at large and to promote policies that are conducive to long term entrepreneurship. Our members represent turnover in excess of one trillion Euro, 10% of European GDP.*