

EU twinning: 'Light'

Project for the Health Care Professionals' Competent Authorities on the Free Movement of Health Care Professionals

Joseph Busuttill BA(Hons), Dip Mangt St

Registrar, Pharmacy Council Malta
Email: pharmacy.council@gov.mt

Key words

Regulatory bodies, training, General System Directives, Sectoral Directive

On Thursday 29th May 2008 a Twinning 'light' Project was launched on "The Free Movement of Health Care Professionals" under the 2006 Transition Facility Programme for Malta. This project was signed with the Netherlands through the Dutch agency Vilans.

The twinning project is based upon receiving Twinning 'light' assistance from a Member State, in this case the Netherlands. A team of experts will be providing training and technical support to the Regulatory Bodies, those being the Pharmacy Council, the Medical Council, the Council for Nurses and Midwives, the Council for the Professions complementary to medicine and the Specialist Accreditation Committee and their respective staff (i.e. five Registrars, one Assistant Director and around sixty Council members) to discharge their duties competently and in

line with relevant EU directives. The three General Systems Directives concerned are 89/48/EEC, 99/42/EC and 92/51/EEC. In addition new Directive 2005/36/EC, which has been transposed into Maltese law, and is replacing the sectoral Directives 77/452, 77/453, 78/686, 78/687, 80/154, 80/155, 85/432, 85/433 and 93/16. This project will consist of a series of tasks to achieve the desired objectives, mainly in the form of an organisational review, production of manuals of procedures and training seminars together with assistance in the setting up of an Information Centre.

Assistance sought from a Member State

Malta is seeking assistance from the Netherlands to provide short-term experts (STEs) to deliver the necessary assistance in Malta.

The project has been subdivided into the following activities:

Activity 1: Provision of training and technical expertise to establish the human resource capacity to implement the relevant Directives

This is aimed to train Council members and Registrars on Directive 2005/36/EC and other relevant *acquis* in the field of free movement of health care professionals together with its implementation in the local health care system.

Activity outcome: Relevant health care professionals trained on the implementation of Directive 2005/36/EC.

Activity 2: Review of current Maltese administrative structures and procedures

This activity shall comprise a review of current Maltese administrative structures and procedures in relation to EU best practice in the area of mutual recognition of health care professionals. The review will be based on a comparative analysis between the national administrative structures of Malta and two other EU Member States.

Activity outcome: Recommendations on changes to the structures and administrative procedures of the Regulatory Councils and the national legislation in order to comply with Directive 2005/36/EC delivered.

Activity 3: Development of procedures and systems for the efficient implementation of the Directives

Assistance is required to develop the necessary procedures and systems in order to allow efficient implementation of the Directives. This will be done by means of a series of three discussion workshops in which the Registrars and Council members will work with the STEs to elaborate detailed Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) related to all regulated healthcare professionals in Malta.

The result will be the production of Standard Operating Procedures compiled

Table 1. Mandatory results and benchmarks of twinning 'light' project

1. Manuals of Standard Operating Procedures in line with EU Regulations produced for the five Regulatory Councils.
2. Recommendations on changes to the structures and administrative procedures of the Regulatory Councils and the national legislation in order to comply with Directive 2005/36/EC delivered.
3. An Information Centre on the free movement of healthcare professionals for use by EU nationals set up.
4. Relevant health care professionals trained on the implementation of Directive 2005/36/EC.

into manuals required for the competent function of each Council.

Activity outcome: Manuals of Standard Operating Procedures in line with EU Regulations produced for the five Regulatory Councils.

Activity 4: Assistance in the implementation of the requirements of the relevant Directives for the mutual recognition of qualifications for certain healthcare professionals

This activity aims to deliver assistance in the implementation of the requirements of the relevant Directives for the mutual recognition of qualifications for healthcare professionals in the following professions: pharmacist, medical doctor, dentist, general care nurse and midwife.

This will include advice on the setting up of an Information Centre for use by EU nationals on the free movement of healthcare professionals.

Activity outcome: An Information Centre on the free movement of healthcare professionals for use by EU nationals set up.

Activity 5: Dissemination of information on the results of implementation of the Directive

To inform and educate health care professionals on the results of implementation of the Directive, a 2-day seminar will be organised for all stakeholders who are mainly health care professionals (under the old **general** system). Participants from the different professional groups will take part in order to be informed and educated on the new systems in place.

Activity outcome: contributes to training on directive.

Activity 6: Dissemination of information on the results of implementation of the Directive

To inform and educate health care professionals on the results of implementation of the Directive, a 2-day seminar will be held for health care professionals under the old **sector-specific** Directives 77/452, 77/453, 78/686, 78/687, 80/154, 80/155, 85/432, 85/433 and 93/16.

This activity aims to disseminate knowledge on the new Directive and the systems in place to key representatives from the medical, dental, general care nursing, midwifery and pharmacy professions.

Activity outcome: contributes to training on directive

Activity 7: Study Visits

The Registrars will be visiting the relevant competent authorities in the Netherlands to gain first hand experience on the relevant systems adopted and the implementation of the directive from their end. The Registrars will also be attending a three day seminar in Maastricht on the free movement of Health Care Professionals.

Conclusion

This training has long been awaited and thus has been welcomed by all the Councils involved. This project will at least assist the Councils in their decision making process and is considered a step in the right direction for the Councils to gain more professional expertise in the field of the free movement of health care professionals.

One hopes that this project will reach its desired objectives and eventually also lead to further capacity building in the Councils themselves to enable them to function more autonomously and in a more professional manner.