

Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons (AFMP)

Recognition of professional qualifications: Switzerland and the EU prepare for digitalisation

SERI has been responsible for coordinating the recognition of foreign qualifications in Switzerland since the entry into force of the AFMP in 2002. SERI is currently working with the federal authorities, the cantons and the European Union (EU) to prepare an amendment to Annex III AFMP. The aim is to follow the evolution of EU legislation to prevent Swiss companies and citizens from being treated less favourably than their European competitors. On the agenda: online administrative cooperation, an alert mechanism and an electronic recognition procedure.

ALL ABOUT IMI
– THE INTERNAL MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEM

THE EUROPEAN SINGLE MARKET CREATES GREAT OPPORTUNITIES. FOR CITIZENS AND BUSINESSES TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE SINGLE MARKET, COMPETENT AUTHORITIES IN EU MEMBER STATES HAVE TO WORK TOGETHER.

IMI IS A MULTILINGUAL ONLINE TOOL THAT HELPS COMPETENT AUTHORITIES TO COOPERATE ACROSS BORDERS.

• A SINGLE MARKET STORY

• CHALLENGE

• SOLUTION

• EASY TO USE

• END RESULT

• FEATURES

- NO SOFTWARE NEEDED
- SECURE AND DATA PROTECTION FRIENDLY
- MULTILINGUAL DIRECTORY OF AUTHORITIES
- PRE-TRANSLATED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
- TRACKING MECHANISM
- ONE-TO-ONE
- ONE-TO-MANY
- SPECIFIC DIRECTORIES
- IMI-COORDINATOR NETWORK

• NUMBERS

- 7000 AUTHORITIES
- 1000+ REQUESTS
- 90% OF REQUESTS ANSWERED WITHIN 2 WEEKS

• DIFFERENT AREAS

- PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS
- SERVICES
- POSTING OF WORKERS
- EASY TO ADAPT
- TOOLBOX

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The IMI is an Internet platform designed to accelerate administrative cooperation and facilitate day-to-day exchanges of information. Using this online system, the authorities are able to easily identify their counterparts in other countries.

The first discussions with the EU on updating the AFMP were initiated in early 2014. However, in that same year, a majority of Swiss voters and cantons adopted the popular initiative 'Against Mass Immigration'. The EU responded by freezing negotiations with SERI on this issue. Preparatory work only resumed in 2017, but should soon be completed.

Internal Market Information System (IMI)

Switzerland is able to implement various innovations thanks to the Internal Market Information System (IMI), which links all competent authorities within the EU. The IMI is an Internet platform designed to accelerate administrative cooperation and facilitate day-to-day exchanges of information. Using this online system, the authorities are able to easily identify their counterparts in other countries. The platform includes not only pre-translated

questions and answers but also uses an automatic translation tool built into the system.

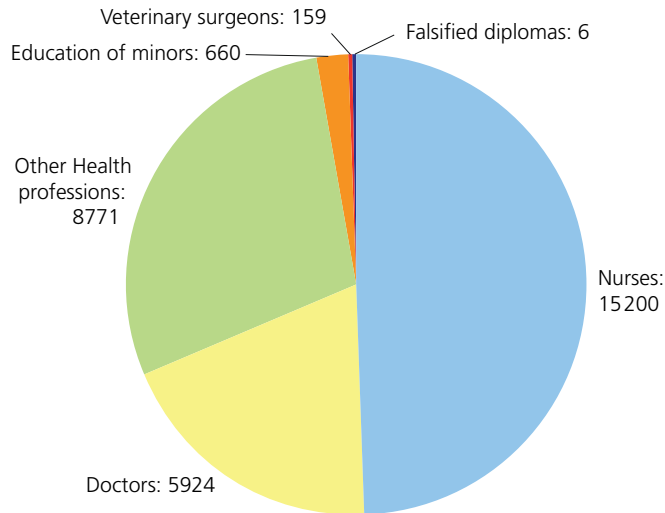
The IMI hosts several modules relating to the recognition of professional qualifications.

Online administrative cooperation

The relevant authorities in Switzerland will be able to contact national authorities in EU member states more easily to obtain information regarding ongoing requests

Alerts in the area of professional qualifications

(between December 2016 and September 2018; Total number 30720)



Statistics of alerts issued in the EU show the importance of the mechanism.
Source: EU, see also http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/imi-net/statistics/index_fr.htm

for recognition of foreign qualifications. As things currently stand, if SERI wishes to check the validity of a foreign qualification of an individual wishing to carry out a professional activity in Switzerland, it must first find the competent authority, send an e-mail or call, without any guarantee of a receiving a prompt reply. With the IMI, the request is sent via the internet directly to the right person pre-registered in the system. A 'ticket' follow-up ensures that the reply is received as soon as possible.

European Professional Card (EPC)

The EPC is an electronic procedure used for the recognition of professional qualifications. The same principles used for 'paper'-based recognition also apply here but the entire process is handled online. No more waiting in line, no more stamping of papers and no more need to send voluminous documentation by post. The electronic certificate obtained via the EPC online procedure has the same value as the 'standard' recognition procedure. Currently, the simplified recognition procedure applies to the following professions: physiotherapists, general care nurses, real estate agents, pharmacists and mountain guides.

Alert mechanism

The alert mechanism allows the competent authorities to find out if qualification holders wishing to work in the field of health and education of minors are subject to any restrictions or have had their licences or credentials revoked. Currently, a doctor who has been banned from practising their profession in their country of origin is able to circumvent this obstacle by coming to Switzerland. With the alert mechanism, such cases are communicated online in real time throughout the EU.

State of progress

SERI is currently in the process of drafting the texts required for the consultation procedure. The exchange of highly personal data electronically and abroad (alert mechanism) requires the elaboration of a new legal basis at federal level. The cantons will also have to pass corresponding legislation.

Work with the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Directors of Education (EDK), the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Directors of Public Health (CMPH), the Conference of the Cantonal Governments of Switzerland (CCG), as well as with relevant authorities such as the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) or the Swiss Red Cross (SRC) is therefore essential.

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Further information

www.sbfi.admin.ch/diploma

Binnenmarkt-Informationssystem (EU):

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/imi-net/index_de.htm