



*European Communities
Commission
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January 29, 1975

THE MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF DIPLOMAS
AND THE EDUCATION OF MIGRANT WORKERS' CHILDREN

The following is an extract from the reply given by Guido Brunner, the new Commissioner responsible for research, science and education, to an oral question in the European Parliament on 13th January 1975.

Right of establishment for the professions

"The first question which has been put to me today concerns the freedom of establishment of self-employed persons. Freedom of establishment and freedom to provide services are already established facts in the Community, as borne out by the two judgments delivered by the European Court of Justice in June and December last year. Articles 52, 59 and 60 of the E.E.C. Treaty directly confer certain rights on nationals of Community countries. As matters stand at the moment, a member of a liberal profession in the Community is entitled to seek redress if he is hindered in the practice of his profession in another Member State solely on the grounds of his nationality or place of residence. This is only right and proper, since freedom of establishment and freedom to provide services are cornerstones of our Community.

Professional mobility in perspective

I believe that what is needed today is for Governments and professional organisations in Europe to show that they are confident that the doctors, lawyers, architects and engineers trained in their countries are good enough to stand up to "competitors" from other Community countries. Let us not panic over this; there will be no mass emigration of, for example, doctors. After all, the lines along which medicine is organised in the nine Member States are not all that different. Another fear which is equally unfounded is that the quality of the services provided by the professions in any given country could suffer as a result of the influx from outside. Although freedom of establishment and freedom to provide services already exist, the European Court of Justice has nevertheless given a ruling to the effect that Community directives are still necessary in order that legislation facilitating the actual use of such freedom can be introduced in the Member States. In concrete terms, this means that there should first of all be mutual recognition of professional qualifications (i.e. diplomas and certificates) and; secondly, steps should be taken to coordinate the legal and administrative provisions setting out professional training conditions: for example, minimum training periods. As regards these directives, any attempt at legislative 'perfectionism' would be quite misplaced. The Ministers of Education meeting within the Council acknowledged in one of their resolutions of 6th June 1974 that the training courses offered in the various Member States were broadly comparable.

Accordingly, the Ministers decided that, as far as possible, the directives should avoid laying down detailed training requirements. The Commission has complied with this decision in every instance.

The Advisory Committees

In addition to directives, which apply to all Member States, there is another way in which steps can be taken to ensure equally high professional standards throughout the Community, and that is by Advisory Committees, as envisaged by the Ministers of Education. Such Committees have an additional advantage, in that the representatives of the professions concerned (who are at the same time experts in the field and thus directly involved) will be given a say in moulding the future of Europe as far as their own field is concerned. They need have no fears that bureaucrats in Brussels or elsewhere want to press on with European unification without consulting them.

What has the Community done so far ?

What are we to make of the achievements to date and how do we see the task of the Community authorities ? The task of the Commission is to draw the necessary conclusions from the two judgments which I have referred to and then make the appropriate changes in the proposed directives on the mutual recognition of diplomas and the coordination of legal and administrative provisions, some of which have already been before the Council for quite some time. The occupations concerned are lawyers, architects, civil engineers, nurses and midwives. This work is now very nearly complete.

The doctors' case

It is the task of the Council of Ministers to adopt the directives for which all the necessary preliminaries have been completed. I am referring to the directives concerning doctors. In this area our goal is in sight and the Commission has already proposed that an Advisory Committee on the training of doctors be set up. I would like to emphasise that the aim of this Committee will be to ensure a high standard of training in the Community. Furthermore the Committee will submit appropriate proposals to the Commission, if it considers that any specific measures are needed to further this end. Already there is a consensus of opinion among eight members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives. These eight members are agreed that freedom of establishment for doctors and freedom to engage in professional activities (with all the provisos contained in the proposed regulation) will be of value to the population at large, and will also serve the clearly appreciated interests of the doctors. Although it is not my intention to mention any country by name, I nevertheless confidently hope that the Governments in Brussels will forget whatever misgivings it may have. Particularly in a country where there are sufficient indigenous doctors, it should be possible to recognise the opportunities opened up by securing -- in economic terms -- a larger market for this supply.

Architects are next

I am aware that in the case of doctors we are engaged on a pioneering venture. For this reason it is particularly important that we should make rapid progress. The regulations relating to doctors will provide a basis of experience which will be useful as far as other professions are concerned, as will the activities of the Advisory Committees.

Even at this stage I can inform you that plans are already in hand for setting up such a Committee for architects.

The Education of migrant workers' children

On 6th June 1974 the Ministers of Education adopted a resolution on cooperation in the field of education. They drew up a list of priorities. I should like to deal in particular with one of these, not only because the Commission is already responsible for it under the E.E.C. Treaty, but also because it is a problem which should be troubling all our consciences today, and which will cause us a real headache tomorrow, if it is left unsolved. The problem is that of the education and training of migrant workers and their children. Families from the remotest rural areas who previously had never been further than the local market town set out to look for work in the big cities, in the overcrowded industrial areas. They go abroad, and not only do they have to adapt themselves to entirely new dimensions but they also have to cope with a foreign language. Some of their children come with them from the homeland ; others are born in the host country. These children have a much harder time than they would have had at home. They have a harder time than their new school friends ; for they are faced with the further problem of their identity, their understanding of themselves : Where do they belong ? What is their own language ? What do they take to be their own culture ? If we do not help these children to overcome these extra difficulties, in a few years we shall have a group of pariahs, a national minority on the fringes of or even outside our society. An educational problem will then have become a problem for the police and for the health authorities, and it will be our fault. We must not let it come to this. The children who are growing up now in our countries should feel the benefits of European unification.

Tackling the problems

The following are therefore necessary:

- special reception and crash-courses must be provided to help the children of migrant workers to adapt to their new language and school environment,
- additional courses must be given to help the children to retain their mother tongue and the culture of their own country (during normal school hours),
- teachers from the countries of origin must be employed and all teachers who are responsible for these children must be specially trained,
- there must be social workers to help the children (outside school hours);
- foreign and local children must have equal opportunity to obtain educational grants.

I am pleased that the resources of the European Social Fund can be used for the education of the children of migrant workers, thanks to a decision taken by the Council of Ministers last June. The further education of teachers and social workers can also be promoted by the Social Fund. But much more must be done and it must be done quickly. The Commission will, therefore state as soon as possible what it thinks the next steps should be.