

## **Establishing a common platform for SLT in the EU**

As we all know the profession of SLT is subject to a regime of "mutual recognition", according to which each Member State remains competent to regulate (or not) the profession on its territory, whereas it shall in principle recognise the qualifications acquired in the other Member State.

Given the absence of harmonisation and the differences which may therefore exist between the qualifications in the various Member States (in terms of duration and/or content of training), the Directive (2005/36/EC of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications) allows Member States to require a compensation measure from the migrant (an aptitude test or an adaptation period) (ref. Art. 14).

As CPLoL has shown in the 'Survey of Legal Regulations', published on [cplol.org](http://cplol.org), these measures are multifarious – and may be difficult to understand and keep track of.

Therefore, the new Directive has introduced a new concept – 'common platform' – that opens up the possibility to waive the compensatory measures and thus facilitate the free movement of professionals, on the one hand by simplifying the case-by-case assessment of individual applications by the competent national authorities and, on the other hand, by providing increased legal security to the migrant concerning the outcome of his/her application.

A 'common platform' is defined as *"a set of criteria of professional qualifications which are suitable for compensating for substantial differences which have been identified between the training requirements existing in the various Member States for a given profession"*.

The Directive also describes the procedure(s) of how to achieve the adoption of the common platform by the European Commission. The first stage of this procedure, and the prerequisite for presenting a platform to the Commission, is to compile a precise inventory on the existing situations in the different Member States as to level of qualification, areas of activities of the profession, and the content of the training.

A considerable part of this work already has been carried out by the Education Commission of CPLoL. It probably needs updating, though.

Once the precise inventory has been compiled, the platform can be established. It is emphasised that the purpose of the platform cannot in any way be to force national authorities to modify nor to harmonise their national legislation (art. 15(4) of the directive). The purpose of the platform is to "predefine" the qualification criteria able to overcome the differences between the various national training courses so as to obviate the need for any compensatory measure.

The third stage is the very adoption of the platform. The procedure for the adoption is set out in Art. 15(2) of the Directive. It includes consultation of the Member States and discussion of the platform within a Group of Experts, etc.

In October 2005 the General Assembly of CPLoL adopted the Plan of projects 2005-2007, of which "establishing CPLoL as a professional platform in Europe" was the first on the list. It is beyond doubt that, at that time, neither the Executive Committee nor the General Assembly had the full comprehension of the concept 'common platform' as it is now described in the Directive.

That is why the Executive Committee wants the members of CPLoL to re-consider if we do want to establish a 'common platform' for SLT as defined in Art. 15 of the Directive 2005/36/EC of 7 September 2005.

Consequently, the E.C. wants a vote at the Extraordinary General Assembly in Athens, on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2006, on the following text:

*The General Assembly of CPLoL, gathered in Athens on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2006, wants to establish a 'common platform' for the profession of speech and language therapy / orthophonie / logopaedics, as defined in paragraph 1 of art. 15 in the Directive 2005/36/EF of 7<sup>th</sup> September 2005.*

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For the full text of the Directive, which has been voted for and came into effect October 2005, please visit [http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/RECH\\_naturel.do?](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/RECH_naturel.do?) . Then, choose "directive", year "2005", number "36". You can read the directive in your own language.

For further explanation of the provision on common platforms see [http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal\\_market/qualifications/docs/future/platforms\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/qualifications/docs/future/platforms_en.pdf) .