

IChemE's commitment to the recognition of professional registration post-Brexit

The future direction of the UK's relationship with the other 27 European states is currently unclear; and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. Professionally-qualified IChemE members who work or provide services within the EU may be concerned about the impact that a hard Brexit may have on the standing of their professional registration.

Professional recognition is covered under the EU Professional Qualifications Directive (2005/36/EC as modernised by 2013/55/EU). A useful summary of the history of the development of the Directive and professional recognition within the EU is summarised at: <https://www.cairn.info/revue-journal-of-international-mobility-2016-1-page-43.htm>.

Engineering is considered to be a liberal profession, as it requires specialised training and has a degree of regulation, which varies significantly depending on the member state. Over the years, attempts have been made by the European Commission to explore whether common training principles could be agreed by the competent authorities (which includes Chartered bodies in the UK) to agree recognition systems that underpin professional mobility. It is a reality that unlike the UK, the competent authorities in a number of European member states struggle with the concept of assessing competence; preferring to utilise length of time spent in academic study in lieu. As a result of these fundamental differences in approach, the European engineering profession has been unable to agree the basis upon which a mobility framework should be based.

The current mobility arrangements for professional engineers therefore require host nations to develop an understanding of the respective education systems that are operated by the other member states. This will remain the case in a post-Brexit world.

IChemE will continue to support our members in applying their expertise and experience to make an influential contribution in solving major global challenges. We do this by awarding CEng and EUR ING registrations, which we are licensed to award on behalf of the Engineering Council and the European Federation of National Engineering Associations (FEANI), respectively. The UK has participated in the activities of FEANI (www.feani.org) since its formation in 1951. FEANI operates within the 33 countries that are members of the European Higher Education Area (www.ehea.info), so is not bounded by EU boundaries. UK Membership of FEANI will not be affected by Brexit.

Registration with the Engineering Council as a Chartered Engineer (CEng) or registration with FEANI as a European Engineer (EUR ING) is not dependent on place of residence, or location of study and work experience. We expect registrants who are already CEng or EUR ING to remain on the respective registers, with those wishing to become registered in the future also being able to do so providing they meet the required combination of education and experience requirements. More information is available at: <https://www.icheme.org/membership/professional-registrations/eur-ing/>.

In addition, the Engineering Council has been working with the British Standards Institution (BSI) to develop an internationally applicable Publicly Available Specification (PAS 525) for assessing the competence and commitment of engineering professionals. It is designed to be readily implemented by international professional engineering organisations. If the process set out in PAS 525 is adopted by a certain threshold of countries (yet to be defined) it can apply to become recognised as an ISO standard.

This development has the potential to significantly improve recognition of professional registration globally and standardise the assessment process. What's more, any organisation that assess engineers in accordance with UK-SPEC (such as IChemE) will automatically comply with PAS 525.

It is the Institution's view that regardless of the outcome of Brexit, it is unlikely that the recognition of professional qualifications will be significantly affected. IChemE has more than 37,000 members in around 100 countries. Formal recognition of competence, such as professional registration, sets individual professionals apart from engineers and technicians who are not registered. It confirms their proven knowledge, understanding and competence. The value of professional registration is known internationally and recognised as the gold standard.

We remain committed to our members regardless of where they live and work. We will continue to promote awareness and application of professional standards, and continued professional development, irrespective of the relationship between the UK and the EU. In addition, IChemE will retain a close working relationship with European organisations, such as EFCE, and through continued participation in relevant groups and networks within Europe.

It is our belief that wherever our members live and work in the EU, professional recognition for IChemE membership will not be significantly impacted.

Previous IChemE Statements

IChemE previously published a statement on mutual recognition of professional qualifications following the publication of the UK Government White Paper, *The Future Relationship Between the United Kingdom and the EU*, in July 2018.

Read it here: <https://www.icheme.org/about-us/press-releases/icheme-statement-on-mutual-recognition-of-professional-qualifications-after-eu-exit/>

EU REACH Regulation

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) have recently published guidance via the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) regarding the EU REACH Regulations. The guidance advises businesses (including trade associations, chemical manufacturers and 'downstream' users) on the actions they will need to take to prepare for the changes to the REACH regulations in the event of a 'no deal' Brexit.

If the UK leaves the EU on 29 March without a deal, UK businesses that import chemicals from the EU will have to register chemicals to a new UK regulatory system (UK REACH). UK REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) will replace EU REACH and will have new requirements for businesses to demonstrate how a chemical can be safely used, without risk to human health or the environment.

Read the guidance here: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/brexit/reach.htm>

Jon Prichard

Chief Executive

24 January 2019