



Answer to a call for evidence

European Construction Industry Federation

Brussels, 27/02/2026

Building Solutions together: our mission, your future

Skills Portability Initiative

FIEC, the European Construction Industry Federation, welcomes the Skills Portability Initiative which will be presented in the framework of the Fair Labour Mobility Package in the second half of 2026.

FIEC **supports the overall objectives** of the initiative, to ensure that qualifications and skills are portable across borders in the EU and to make the EU a more attractive place for talent. If FIEC acknowledges that limited portability of skills and qualifications can hinder labour mobility, **other barriers remain** and needs to be addressed. This is in particular the case of existing administrative burden, language barrier, the housing shortage as well as the lack of services available (transport, childcare, ...), social security coordination, etc. **While the skills portability initiative can encourage labour mobility, it will not be the only solution.**

In the construction sector strong and well established **vocational education and training systems** have been developed at national level. These systems, as well as the training content and the skills acquired, vary from one Member State to another. Regulated professions are also very different from one country to another. While regulated professions exist in the construction industry and have been proved useful where they have been developed, their diversity make them hardly comparable. In addition, the **social partners** have often developed and promoted high standards to improve the functioning of the construction labour market and to monitor compliance with applicable regulations and collective agreements. This is why there are also other types of regulation in the construction industry, such as those linked to specific tasks and based on collective agreements or national law. This is the case for example for workers handling asbestos or scaffolders.

FIEC would like to underline that while improved transparency and portability of skills and qualifications can facilitate labour mobility, they must not be interpreted as automatically granting access to self-employment or to the exercise of regulated construction activities in another Member State. As underlined, in several Member States, **access to certain construction activities is subject to specific national requirements which serve essential public interest objectives, notably consumer protection, occupational safety and health, quality assurance, and the training of future skilled workers.**

Any EU-level initiative on skills portability should therefore **fully respect Member States' competence to maintain such requirements and/or to regulate certain professions and**

FIEC is the European Construction Industry Federation, which through its 32 national member associations in 27 countries (24 EU countries, Norway, Switzerland, and Ukraine) represents construction companies of all sizes, i.e., small, and medium-sized enterprises and "global players", carrying out all forms of building and civil engineering activities.

should clearly distinguish between skills recognition for employment purposes and national rules governing market access and self-employment.

Against this background, FIEC supports the Skills Portability Initiative but has some remarks on the policy options envisaged by the European Commission.

Action 1: A potential legislative proposal to facilitate worker mobility through improved transparency of skills and qualifications, and digitalisation

Under this Action, several measures are envisaged to improve and foster existing systems such as the **National Qualifications Framework (NQF)** and the **European Qualifications Framework (EQF)**. Ensuring that skills and qualifications are more transparent and comparable would be valuable. **FIEC supports a EU wide promotion and information campaign** to inform employers, education and training institutions and individuals about the NQFs and their benefits.

In addition, even though **micro-credentials** remain under-developed in the construction industry, they may prove useful, especially to certify upskilling or reskilling of workers. Therefore, promote their use in increasing visibility and comparability within the EU would be appreciated. They could be in particular useful for recognition of competences that are requested by public authorities to perform certain tasks which require specific training (e.g. asbestos removal). These national regulations should be designed in a way that a worker from another country can have his or her qualification recognised, even though small differences in application between countries can exist.

FIEC also welcomes the potential use of the **EU Digital Identity Wallet** for individuals to hold their qualification and skills credentials digitally and to easily recognise these cross-border. However, the potential and efficiency of such tool would only be fully realised if Member States implement and promote its use on a large scale. It should also be user friendly, to ensure that workers and employers adopt it.

Overall, the construction industry could benefit from this action if it increases transparency and facilitates processes for mobile workers and employers. Furthermore, it could help to **reduce skills mismatches**. Indeed, the Skills Portability Initiative can ensure that workers are offered the right jobs in creating more transparency around skills and qualifications.

Action 2: Potential measures to facilitate modernise and expand recognition processes for regulated professions

FIEC takes good note of the intention of the European Commission to support the implementation of Directive 2005/36/EC on the **recognition of professional qualifications**. This Directive has provided Member States with the means to recognise regulated professions. However, these tools have not been widely used.

With the Skills Portability Initiative, the European Commission wants to **expand the automatic recognition of regulated profession** (used for nurse, midwives, architects, ...) and to further develop the **common training framework** which allows the recognition of professional qualifications required for entering a regulated profession. **FIEC recognises that these tools can help to facilitate recognition processes for regulated professions**. But in the construction sector, regulated professions vary from one country to another, and even from one region to another (e.g. in Belgium), and similar regulated professions have different definitions and scope. Previous FIEC's projects highlighted the difficulty to agree on a common definition and/or a common training framework. **It seems rather difficult to use these tools for**

construction professions at this stage because of the differences between national systems.

While FIEC does not support any suppression of regulated profession at EU level, FIEC would welcome any initiative that would streamline the different administrative processes around recognition of qualification.

Action 3: A potential legislative proposal for common rules to simplify procedures for the recognition of qualifications and skills of third country nationals

The recognition of qualifications and validation of skills gained in non-EU countries can facilitate labour migration and integration of migrants workers in the society. Facilitating the recognition of qualification of third country nationals would also support and complement other European initiatives such as the EU Talent Pool.

In this regards, FIEC stresses that any initiative should have **an equal focus on academic and vocational qualifications** in the recognition of third country nationals' qualifications and skills.

FIEC supports coordinated measures at EU level, involving the Member States and the relevant stakeholders as well as the social partners, to **harmonise national instruments for the recognition of skills of third country nationals**. FIEC recommends to foster the use of digitalisation, to increase transparency and have more supports for counselling and guidance during the recognition process. **Administrative burdens and costs for employers in the recruitment and recognition process should be limited.**

It is also necessary to recall **the importance of skills acquired informally in working life**. They should be taken into account in the recognition of qualifications of third country nationals in order to open up access to the European labour market also for the formally unqualified with proven specialist practical experience, in compliance with the rules and requirements set out by the individual national systems.



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