

Construction Forum

Position

“Directive on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources” (COM/2008/19/final)

Background

The European Commission recently adopted the draft directive on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources COM(2008)19final. The impact of this document is very important, since it sets a European binding target for an overall 20% share of renewable energy by 2020 and provides the Commission with a control power through intermediary targets. The overall 20% target must, indeed, be translated into national binding targets by each member State, which will be fixed taking 2005 as the starting year for calculation.

In each MS this quantitative objective will be mandatory and will be met through the establishment of a national action plan fixing sectoral targets and indicating the way forward. Concerning construction craft and SMEs, an article of the Directive is particularly important: Article 13 deals with training and certification of renewable energy equipment installers.

General comments

The UEAPME Construction Forum supports the Commission initiative to foster the use of renewable energies in the European Union through binding targets both at national and European level. On the training of installers, it welcomes the fact that the draft directive takes into account the importance of upgrading installers' skills and knowledge. Installers will indeed contribute significantly to reach this ambitious target using their already advanced specialist knowledge.

Building owners will require intelligent, energy efficient and safe installations for their houses. Building technology often consists of a combination of systems, techniques and technologies. For this, building owners will need the professional guidance, technical advice and sales services of the large community of experienced and trained construction crafts and SMEs throughout Europe, which need to become “energy advisers”.

In order to ensure a real implementation of the directive and increase the potential of renewable energy sources, the UEAPME Construction Forum considers that information and training actions, financial incentives for professionals and users must also be introduced:

- Actions among construction enterprises: awareness plans, information and training plans must be developed so that construction crafts and SMEs are fully knowledgeable about the legislation, can effectively advise the clients and carry out the necessary works for the installation of renewable energy systems.
- Actions among consumers: awareness and information campaigns for users; tax incentive policies (namely reduced VAT rates on building renovation works).

Specific points

Recital 28 – Mutual recognition of professional qualifications in sectors with regulated access

Recital 28 of the draft directive foresees to supersede directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications in sectors with regulated access. This document comprehensively outlines the system of the recognition of professional qualifications and sets out under which circumstances service providers can gain access to regulated professions in other Member States within the framework of cross-border services.

For this reason, the UEAPME Construction Forum supports amendments 241, 242, 243 and 244 to the Commission proposal. These amendments, tabled by Jorgo Chatzimarkakis, Werner Langen, Herbert Reul - Robert Goebbels and Anja Weisgerber MEPs, state that the abovementioned directive should continue to govern the recognition of professional qualifications also concerning the installers of renewable energy systems.

Proposal for a directive
Amendment 241
Recital 28

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
<p>(28) A coordinated approach is needed to develop training and appropriate certification should be made available to small scale renewable energy equipment installers in order to avoid market distortions and to ensure high quality products and service provision for consumers. National certification schemes should be mutually recognised by Member States and should therefore be based on minimum harmonised principles, taking into account European technology standards, and existing training and qualification regimes for renewable energy equipment installers. Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications should continue to <i>apply to issues not governed by this Directive, such as the recognition of professional qualifications of installers not certified in one Member State.</i></p>	<p>(28) A coordinated approach is needed to develop training and appropriate certification should be made available to small scale renewable energy equipment installers in order to avoid market distortions and to ensure high quality products and service provision for consumers. National certification schemes should be mutually recognised by Member States and should therefore be based on minimum harmonised principles, taking into account European technology standards, and existing training and qualification regimes for renewable energy equipment installers. Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications should continue to <i>govern the recognition of professional qualifications for regulated professions. In so far as entering or exercising the profession of installer is regulated, the preconditions for recognition of professional qualifications are laid down in Directive 2005/36/EC; these preconditions should also apply to installers certified in a Member State.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Justification</i></p> <p>Directive 2005/36/EC governs recognition of professional qualifications for regulated professions. It must continue to apply to installers who have voluntarily had themselves certified in accordance with the Directive on renewable energies. The installation of equipment using renewable energies constitutes only part of the work of, for example, heating engineers. Certification to exercise part of the work of a regulated profession cannot imply a right to exercise the whole profession. The legal basis for matters relating to the recognition of professional qualifications is Art. 47 of the EC Treaty.</p>	

Article 13, paragraph 3 and Annex IV – Certification of installers

The UEAPME Construction Forum is deeply concerned by the measures introduced by article 13, paragraph 3 and Annex IV of the draft directive which do not take into account the existing national systems of vocational training and qualification. Indeed, according to article 13, paragraph 3, Member States shall develop certification systems for installers of small-scale biomass boilers and stoves, solar photovoltaic and solar thermal systems. In addition, every Member State is asked to recognise the certification awarded by other Members States in accordance to these criteria.

For these certification systems, binding criteria have been defined in Annex IV, which includes very precise and strict provisions concerning previous knowledge requirements and previous professional experience and temporary certification leading to compulsory recertification. We consider these plans to be highly alarming and wish to change them as they would not contribute to the aims of the directive and may cause additional obstacles and problems. It is evident that the wording of Annex IV does not take into any consideration the principle of vocational training (already alternating practical and theoretical training), which some MS efficiently use to ensure a high level of specialisation in the field of renewable energies. What must also be considered and stressed is that a sound vocational training programme, coupled with life-long learning, tackles the issue of quality installation and knowledge update, without the costly and burdensome obligation to obtain a new certification every time it expires. Some Member States already have a long tradition in alternating vocational education and training systems and a high quality of such qualifications and therefore certification systems. Linked to this, they offer numerous continuous training courses in this area. We thus regard additional certification procedures as seriously questioning the present dual vocational education systems and the high quality associated with them. In addition, this would lead to additional bureaucracy, increased costs and as a consequence a slow-down in SME involvement in new technologies or serious price increases for the clients.

This is why, the UEAPME Construction Forum demands that, in the Member States where systems are already efficiently in place, they should not be replaced by mandatory certification procedures. In line with this, the UEAPME Construction Forum demands that vocational training, qualification or certification be equally taken into consideration concerning installation of renewable energy systems.

In addition, when and if a MS decides to set up new certification schemes for installers of renewable energy systems, the criteria laid down in Annex IV may constitute an example or a reference, but not a binding requirement. In any case, Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications applies in order to recognise the qualifications of installers of renewable energy systems.

In light of the proposed amendments, the UEAPME Construction Forum supports amendment 714 by Vladimir Remek on article 13, paragraph 3 and amendments 1038, 1039 and 1040 by Herbert Reul, Robert Goebbels, Werner Langen and Jorgo Chatzimarkakis MEPs on Annex IV.

Amendment 714
Vladimir Remek
Proposal for a directive
Article 13 – paragraph 3

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
3. Member States shall develop certification schemes for installers of small-scale biomass boilers and stoves, solar photovoltaic and solar thermal systems and heat pumps. Those schemes shall be based on the criteria laid down in Annex IV. Each Member State shall recognise certification awarded by other Member States in accordance with these criteria.	3. Member States shall facilitate the emergence of certification schemes or equivalent qualification schemes for installers of small-scale biomass boilers and stoves, solar photovoltaic and solar thermal systems and heat pumps. Those schemes or equivalent qualification schemes may take into account the criteria laid down in Annex IV. Each Member State shall recognise certification awarded by other Member States in accordance with these

	criteria.
<p><i>Justification</i></p> <p><i>In the individual Member States there are already various certification and training schemes for installers of boilers and similar equipment. There is no need for requirements to be centralised, since there is mutual recognition of qualifications. As they strive to meet their legally binding target the Member States should not be burdened by yet more mandatory requirements; on the contrary, they should be given adequate flexibility to enable them to meet their target.</i></p>	

Amendment 1038
Proposal for a directive
Annex IV – introductory phrase

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
<p>The criteria <i>referred to in</i> Article 13(3) <i>shall be as follows:</i></p>	<p>The <i>following</i> criteria <i>shall apply solely to certification schemes under</i> Article 13(3):</p>
<p><i>Justification</i></p> <p>The certification of installers regulated in Annex IV is necessary only if there are no competent vocational qualification schemes in Member States. In the operators' view, apart from the fact that these qualifications are very demanding in content and time, further mandatory certification would only result in unnecessary additional bureaucratic obstruction. Where qualifications and their updating are required they can be provided by voluntary retraining in the marketplace.</p>	