

ROYAL COLLEGE OF NURSING BRIEFING

TRIALOGUE AGREEMENT ON PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS DIRECTIVE JUNE 2013

The three key institutions of the European Union

Modernising minimum standards for nurse education (article 31)

The directive now contains a number of competences for nurses in general care in addition to the knowledge and skills. These include independently diagnosing nursing care, planning, organising and implementing nursing care as well as assuring the quality of and evaluating nursing care.

The directive also allows for the updating of a key annex in the directive to further develop the content of nurse education and expand on the competences defined in the directive. This will be done using implementing acts with expert input. The RCN has worked closely with EFN on preparing for the development of wider competences in the Annex and supported insertion in the directive of a limited number of competences to reinforce nurses' autonomous role in planning, delivering and evaluating care.

Whereas the directive previously stated that those entering nurse education must have completed at least 10 years of general education, the RCN had pushed for the minimum to be "12 years or equivalent" which was not accepted by a number of member states. The compromise approved does now provide two options:

- 10 years general education giving access to vocational training,
- and 12 years giving access to university or high education.

Both of these need to meet the same standards in terms of duration, knowledge, skills and competences.

The minimum length of training has also changed from 4,600 hours OR three years to 4,600 hours AND three years, although in the UK the Nursing and Midwifery Council already specifies both. The years can now additionally be expressed with equivalent European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits.

Romanian nurses (article 33 and 60)

Previously there were specific conditions on acquired rights for a nursing title based on qualifications which existed in Romania prior to accession to the EU. Under the existing directive these nurses could gain automatic recognition but only if they had practised for five of the previous seven years before their application for recognition in another member state. This has now changed to three out of the last five years and the list of nursing titles benefiting from these acquired rights provisions have increased.

The Commission's first report on the application of the new directive will include a review of the special upgrading programmes for these nurses which Romania has promised to introduce to meet the standards in the directive. The review will assess whether the specific provisions requiring recent experience need to continue or not.

of the directive prior to them joining the EU, and their special acquired rights arrangements have now been removed from the directive.

Updating skills and continuing professional development (article 22)

There is now a specific reference to continuing professional development fld rights

Common Training Frameworks (article 49)

For professions not currently covered by the automatic recognition/common minimum standards of education arrangements, there is now an opportunity for them to introduce common training frameworks, if they are regulated in at least []TJ90.024 737.74 Tm[Co.024 8ac dm2(/89]Type/Pagination>BDC B1t(ition)-5)]T78a).