

**Question for written answer P-003701/2011
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Mirosław Piotrowski (ECR)

Subject: Failure to define 'medical laboratory technician' in the relevant EU directive

Lab technicians play a very important role in ensuring the quality of the health systems of all the EU Member States, with the main aim of EU policy being to ensure 'a high level of health protection' (Maastricht 1992, Amsterdam 1997).

Maintaining high educational standards for the profession of lab technician is firstly a way of ensuring that healthcare services keep pace with developments in contemporary medicine, and secondly a way of guaranteeing public health security and cutting the costs of treatment. Badly trained lab technicians mean erroneous diagnoses, costing people their lives and costing governments money.

There is currently no definition of 'laboratory technician' in the relevant EU directive, and yet the same skills are required of these technicians in all EU Member States (in 14 countries people who have qualified as medical laboratory technicians, doctors, pharmacists, biochemists, biologists and veterinarians are working as lab technicians). This means that there are no rules laying down training requirements for professional laboratory technicians. Bearing in mind how important this profession is for the health system in the EU, and the fact that medical lab technicians can move freely around the EU Member States, the descriptions of medical professions in the relevant EU directive should be extended to include that of medical laboratory technician.

Is the Commission currently working on adding the definition of 'medical laboratory technician' to the relevant EU directive? When is the Commission intending to do this?