

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2087/03
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to the Commission

Subject: Recognition of Finnish engineering qualifications in certain Mediterranean countries

Finnish engineers have had practical difficulties in carrying on their occupation in most Mediterranean countries. Problems have arisen in Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Cyprus. The difficulties regarding exercise of the profession stem either from legislation or from procedural practice in the countries concerned. As a result of these systems Finnish engineers have been directly or indirectly prevented from working in the above-mentioned Mediterranean countries and have encountered difficulties in that respect.

The problems have to do with the fact that the professional associations in the countries concerned have been given the right to decide who should be allowed to use the professional title in question. For its part, the professional association in such a country will not admit members other than home nationals. In practice, recognition of Finnish engineering qualifications is thus withheld, or, for other reasons, only nationals of the particular country or those who have qualified in that country are considered suitable to carry on the occupation of engineer.

Article 39 of the EC Treaty guarantees freedom of movement for workers and prohibits any discrimination to which workers from Member States might be subjected on the grounds of nationality when entering into a contract of employment or as regards pay and other working conditions. The failure to recognise the qualifications held by nationals of another Member State leads in practice to discrimination on the labour market.

What will the Commission do to eliminate the indirect discrimination based on nationality which Finnish engineers suffer in the Mediterranean countries referred to above?