

NEWS RELEASE

12th February 2004

Health Professions Council and AURE welcome European Parliament vote

Yesterday the European Parliament voted on the draft directive on the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) supported amendments that may require health and social care professionals to register with the relevant competent authorities when working in a host member state.

Responding to the vote, Matt Ball, convener of the Alliance of UK Health Regulators on Europe, said:

"We welcome the European Parliament's votes that will allow regulatory bodies to require health and social care professionals to be registered with them in order to practise.

"We were also pleased to note the commitment of MEPs to requiring member states to exchange information about the fitness to practise of professionals moving between States. This will provide better protection for patients from incompetent and unscrupulous individuals who wish to move from one jurisdiction to another.

"We are pleased that MEPs supported amendments that would require migrant professionals to demonstrate their language skills before registration. Yesterday's vote was good news for patients throughout the EU."

Professor Norma Brook, President of the Health Professions Council, said, "Regulation exists to protect the public, and we welcome yesterday's vote which furthers this aim whilst also recognising the standards of the professions. It is important that anyone practising a regulated profession in the UK must be registered with the appropriate body, and we will continue to support this."

Ends

Notes to editors:

1. The membership of the Alliance (AURE) is: General Medical Council, General Dental Council, General Optical Council, General Osteopathic Council, General Chiropractic Council, Health Professions Council, Nursing and Midwifery Council, Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, General Social Care Council and the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland.
2. The EU Directive on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications has not yet been enacted.

Rachel Tripp
Communications Officer
Health Professions Council
E-mail: rachel.tripp@hpc-uk.org
Website: www.hpc-uk.org
Tel: 020 7840 9760