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New round of talks for the EU-Canada negotiations on free trade agreement.

Canada and European Union officials held a third round of negotiations toward a Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), on the week of 19-23 April 2010 in Ottawa, Canada. The main objective is to reduce trade barriers between the two parties.



These negotiations began on the 6th of May 2009, in Prague, when Canadian and European leaders have announced the launch of talks. Prior to that date, Canada and the EU had released a joint report (which can be found on http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2009/march/tradoc_142470.pdf), with an agenda on negotiations on issues such as investment; regulatory cooperation; **intellectual property**; labour as well as **trade in goods and services**.

The bilateral meeting of April 2010 has discussed, among others, the issue of **labour mobility**, with emphasis on the freedom of movement for business persons and **professionals**, as well as on the **mutual recognition of professional qualifications**.

Canadian officials considered this part as a particularly challenging one to negotiate, given the existence of EU Directive on the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications (2005/36/EC). But they remained very optimistic on a future agreement. “What we want is the most ambitious trade agreement we have ever had”, Canadian federal Trade Minister Peter van Loan declared. “We are looking for something that is deeper and broader than any other agreements we have already contracted, and this is with the world’s largest economy”.

Future rounds are planned for July 12-16 2010 in Brussels and for this coming October in Ottawa. After these meetings, the parties will make a briefing of progress before any new rounds should begin.

It is interesting to remind that there are already several agreements on the mutual recognition of qualifications of an number of professions, such as that of nursing, between France and the Canadian Federate Province of Québec.

Professor Mario Monti* presents his report to President Barroso, “A new strategy for the Single Market: At the service of Europe’s Economy Strategy” – Suggestions on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications

* Mario Monti is the President of the Università Commerciale L. Bocconi in Milano, Italy, and former European Commissioner for the Internal Market, Financial Services and Financial Integration, Custom Rights and Taxes.

Requested by the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso in October 2009, the report recently submitted by Prof. Monti is aiming at exploring options and recommendations on a new strategy for the Single Market of the European Union.

The text covers all the possible fields of relevance to the Single Market, including that of the mutual recognition of professional qualifications.

Prof. Monti introduces the question by stating that *“a major obstacle standing in the way of enhanced cross-border labour mobility is the complexity of international recognition of professional qualifications”*, regretting somehow that the current automatic recognition of qualifications applies only to seven out of more than 800 professions! For the former Commissioner, the legal framework of the Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (2005/36/EC) needs to be clarified and strengthened. **He recommends that “The scope for automatic recognition of qualifications to new professions should be expanded to new sectors in addition to the seven professions today, targeting in particular new**



professions required for green and digital industries to facilitate the mobility of highly skilled workers”.

The study also insists on the importance of the development of a “European Skills and Competences Taxonomy”. Such a system could ensure that skills and competences of job seekers or the requirement of a job published in a job vacancy are understood in the same way everywhere in Europe and are easily transferable.

Professor Monti concludes with a number of very important recommendations:

- Remove tax obstacles to cross-border work;
- Extend automatic recognition of qualifications;
- Strengthen the transparency and recognition of qualifications and skills, developing national qualifications systems and establishing the European Skills and Competence Taxonomy system.

It is interesting to observe how the European Institutions, and the European Commission in particular, will put in use the results of this research. The final objective of the text being to provide guidelines for the “Europe 2020 strategy”, which aims to turn the European economy into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion.

To consult the report please go to: http://ec.europa.eu/bepa/expertises/visitor-programs/mario_monti/index_en.htm

<p>The Council of the European Union adopts rules to prevent injuries to Healthcare Workers.</p>

The Council of the European Union has adopted a Directive aimed at achieving the safest possible working environment for Healthcare Workers through prevention from sharps injuries ([7318/10](#) & [8491/10](#)).

Injuries caused by needles and other sharp instruments are one of the most common and serious risks to healthcare workers in Europe and represent a high cost for health systems and society in general. According to healthcare experts, such injuries occur more than 1million times per year, partly causing very serious consequences and sometimes leading to serious diseases.

The new Directive gives legal effect to a framework agreement concluded by the employers and the trade unions of the hospital and healthcare sector (HOSPEEM and EPSU) on the 17th of July 2009.

The Directive sets up an integrated approach to assessing and preventing risks and to training and informing workers. If a risk assessment reveals a risk of injury, the workers' exposure must be eliminated by taking measures such as implementing safe procedures for using and disposing of sharp medical instruments and disposing of contaminated waste, eliminating the unnecessary use of sharps and banning the practice of recapping.

Member States have three years in order to transpose the new Directive into national law.

To consult the whole text please go to :
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=PRES/10/112&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>