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<Commission>{PETI}Committee on Petitions</Commission>

<Date>{28/04/2023}28.4.2023</Date>

<TitreType>NOTICE TO MEMBERS</TitreType>

Subject: <TITRE>Petition No 0821/2022 by Helga Widder (Austrian), on behalf of ESAAT - European Society of Animal Assisted Therapy, on the standardisation of the profession ‘expert in animal-assisted therapy’</TITRE>

1. Summary of petition

The petitioner calls for the creation of a European vocational profile for training in the profession ‘expert in animal-assisted therapy’ by way of analogy to the guidelines and standards set by ESAAT (European Society for Animal Assisted Therapy), which have proved their worth for many decades. The petitioner claims that various professions working in psychosocial settings have been using animal-assisted therapies for over 30 years. According to the petitioner, there is research to prove the manifold positive impacts of animals on humans. Among other things, animal-based therapies and treatments boast shorter durations, faster recoveries and improved patient buy-in. The petitioner points out that there are currently no uniform legal regulations, guidelines or limits specifying how, when, where and with whom animals can be used. In her opinion, binding guidelines on such matters are required as a matter of urgency.

2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 9 December 2022. Information requested from Commission under Rule 227(6).

3. Commission reply, received on 28 April 2023

The EU Member States are responsible for the content of teaching and organisation of their education systems as well as of their vocational training policy, in line with Articles 165 and 166 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The EU supports and supplements Member States’ action if necessary but does not have the competence to harmonise educational systems.

It is also in principle the competence of the Member States to set the requirements for the access and pursuit of regulated professions in their territory. Directive 2005/36/EC, as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU[[2]](#footnote-2) (“the Directive”), contains rules and procedures to facilitate the access of EU nationals to regulated professions when they hold professional qualifications obtained in a different EU Member State that allow them to pursue the same profession there. Regulated professions within the meaning of the Directive are those professions where access to professional activities or to the use of a professional title is subject to possession of specific professional qualifications. The Directive provi des for a possibility to develop Common Training Frameworks with the goal of facilitating free movement for professions the access to which is regulated on the national level.

The Commission services are not aware of major mobility problems of professionals in the area of animal-assisted therapy, or of any major restrictions with regard to the access to such professional activities resulting from national regulation.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Conclusion

While the EU can facilitate cross-border mobility of professionals or take measures supporting or supplementing the measures of the Member States, the content of teaching and organisation of education systems as well as of their vocational training policy is Member States’ competence, within the boundaries set by EU law.

1. [EUR-Lex - 12012E/TXT - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012E%2FTXT) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02005L0036-20211210> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Information based on notifications from the EU Member States to the Regulated Professions Database: <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regprof/professions/generic> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)