

Survey for EuroExec in March 2007 on the "EUR ING" title and the transferability of qualifications in Germany

Size of the study

The following questions were sent by e-mail to all members of the IET Germany Network. 24 replies were received, this being 4.4% of the total membership. Although this is less than 10%, the level at which a sample could be said to be truly representative, it still gives a flavour of the situation in Germany. Many thanks are due to all those who responded to the e-mail.

EUR ING

The question was posed: "The "Eur Ing" title: what experience have you had with it, particularly with German companies and authorities."

Respondents were unanimous that the "EUR ING" title is unknown in Germany. In response to a question by one of the respondents, a query was sent to the Regierung von Oberbayern (District Government of Upper Bavaria) asking whether the use of the "EUR ING" title was allowed in Bavaria. The reply dated 30 March 2007 stated that under the provisions of the Bavarian law on engineers the use of the designation "EUR ING" was not allowed, since the designation "EUR ING" was neither a university degree nor a professional designation according to the laws on engineers of the states of the Federal Republic of Germany. It merely documented that the acquired engineering qualifications satisfied FEANI's own internal criteria.

Transferability of qualifications

The question was posed: "Transferability of national qualifications between European countries: this does not concern titles, but rather the recognition of qualifications by employers and universities, etc. How have your qualifications been treated in Germany?"

In general large companies seem to have more difficulty dealing with foreign qualifications than small ones, although international companies usually had less difficulties than merely national ones. German companies were however happy for employees sent outside Germany on business to use titles and degrees that their

foreign customers recognised, British qualifications being well-known in the far-east, for example. In general employers were more flexible about foreign qualifications than universities and authorities, such as the tax office, pensions office and German Patent and Trademark Office (DPMA). The tax office and pensions office have on occasions not recognised study for a British BSc as professional development. The DPMA has apparently not recognised the foreign qualifications of trainee German patent attorneys.

Many respondents said that the CEng was recognised in Germany, the CEng being taken as equivalent to the German Diplom Ingenieur (Dipl. Ing.) degree, the usual qualification of German engineers. One respondent had an IEng title and had found that, at least in his case, the IEng was also taken as the equivalent of the Dipl. Ing. degree.

Those without CEng status typically had more difficulties. The British BSc, MSc and MEng degrees were understood in Germany, the combinations BSc+MSc and BSc+MEng having both been recognised as equivalent to a Dipl. Ing. Problems had however been encountered with BEng and BTech (Bachelor of Technology) degrees, these being less well known in Germany. Several respondents with BEng degrees reported this not being recognised as equivalent to a Dipl. Ing. In one case a BEng had been regarded as equivalent to a Dipl. Ing. (FH). This degree from a "Fachhochschule" (technical college) is more practice-orientated than a university degree and is less well paid than the usual Dipl. Ing. degree. Employers placed great importance on qualifications having been awarded by a university.

Several respondents made the point that work experience gradually became more important than qualifications over the course of one's career. Broadly speaking, having foreign qualifications was not a barrier to finding employment in Germany, but the recognition of qualifications did have an impact on the salary that employers were prepared to pay.

Looking to the future, several respondents mentioned that German universities were starting to offer Bachelors and Masters degrees, these being seen as less than a Dipl. Ing. The new German BA degrees were seen as less than a British BSc.

Concerns were expressed that in future British BSc, MSc and MEng degrees might be regarded as merely equivalent to the German Bachelors and Masters qualifications, which could make it more difficult to get British BSc, MSc and MEng degrees recognized as being equivalent to Dipl. Ing.

Alan Teale, 10th April 2007