

European Commission Call for evidence: EU Single Market Strategy

Response by the European Federation of Geologists (EFG)

January 2025

The European Federation of Geologists (EFG) aims to report on barriers geologists face in exercising their profession within the Single Market. Geologists play a vital role for sustainable development, supporting EU competitiveness and UN goals (EFG, 2024).

Traditionally, the profession requires a high level of mobility. According to the EFG Employment Survey 2024, 22 % of respondents stay less than 4 years at the same place before relocating for work. 22% of those who regularly relocate move to other European countries and 29% at the international level. Mobility needs are expected to rise to compensate for skill shortages, as identified in the Draghi report.

EFG advocates for the mutual recognition of qualifications and free movement across Europe since the 1990s and the European Geologist (EurGeol) title was established as a quality benchmark (Clifford, 2002, Fernández-Fuentes, 2020).

1. Barriers to Mobility

However, the profession does not benefit from a harmonised regulation. The automatic recognition of professional qualifications (Directive 2005/36/EC) is not available to geologists, increasing administrative complexity. Geologists seeking to work in a different EU country must navigate the general system of recognition. However, this pathway is not available to recent graduates who enter the job market.

In EU countries where the geology profession is not regulated, there exists a significant risk of individuals without appropriate qualifications practising as geologists. Unregulated practices can lead to substandard work, creating reputational risks for the profession and potential harm to the public and environment, putting at risk Europe's competitiveness goals.

On the other hand, when geologists seek employment across borders, they may encounter challenges in obtaining de facto recognition of their qualifications, creating hurdles for highly skilled professionals (Clifford, 2002).

This underscores the need for the harmonisation of recognition processes across the EU, in line with the 2024 Letta report which called for academic and professional recognition to be expedited.

Finally, members of the EFG community also experience difficulties regarding the taxation for cross-border commuting or short-term contracts.

2. Proposed Measures

EFG calls for the following:

- Update Directive 2005/36/EC: Enhance the mobility of geologists to fill skill gaps and boost competitiveness by including the Geologist profession in Directive 2005/36/EC, ensuring automatic recognition of qualifications. Based on its long-standing existence as a voluntary professional card, and demonstrated mobility needs, the EurGeol title should be formalised as an official European Professional Card to accelerate cross-border skills deployment.
- Ensure safety, security, and sustainability: Implement rigorous ethical, environmental, and professional standards for geologists, using recognised diploma levels and certifications like EurGeol as a benchmark under EU directives (CRMA, NZIA, Soil Health Act).

- Invest in geology education: Strengthen education from the tertiary level to Lifelong Learning (LLL) through targeted public funding, supported by applied research partnerships with industry, to ensure Europe's workforce is equipped with the skills needed to meet competitiveness objectives.

3. How EFG Can Support

EFG stands ready to work with the European institutions to ensure timely and effective translation of European policies into national action:

- Common Training Framework: EFG can act facilitate the development of a Common Training Framework (CTF) for geologists as recommended in exchanges with DG GROW, using outcomes of the EuroAges project, an EQF pilot which defined learning outcomes for the 1st, 2nd and 4th qualification level.
- EurGeol Expert Database: The title guarantees the highest professional standards, ensuring that expertise can be mobilised where needed.
- EFG Academy: EFG and our members' academies offer training for evolving market needs, supporting LLL in line with the CTF.

4. References

Clifford, John A., The European Geologist professional title, European Geologist journal, issue 14, 2002, <https://eurogeologists.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/EGM-14.pdf>

European Federation of Geologists, Policy Manifesto, 2024, https://eurogeologists.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/EFG_Policy_Manifesto_2024.pdf

Fernandez Fuentes, I., Correia, V., Neumann, M., The importance of professional regulation of geoscientists and their role in a fast-changing world, in Di Capua, G., Bobrowsky, P. T., Kieffer, S. W. and Palinkas, C. (eds) Geoethics: Status and Future Perspectives. Geological Society, London, Special Publications, 508 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1144/SP508-2020-26>

Please scan the QR code to access all references:



About EFG:

The European Federation of Geologists (EFG) is the largest and most influential network of geoscience professionals across the Council of Europe countries, with 27 national associations representing a direct membership of approximately 50,000 individuals. EFG collaborates extensively with leading geoscience organisations worldwide, including in Australia, the USA, Canada and South Africa, indirectly reaching over 150,000 experts.

