

# The Internal Market Information System IMI

Connecting administrations.  
Building trust.  
Delivering the benefits of  
the single market.



# What is IMI?

A Portuguese doctor applied for a job in our local hospital. I don't know if she is qualified because her diploma is in Portuguese.

I have asked my Norwegian colleagues if an electrician who is providing his services here is established in Norway. When can I expect a reply?



A German construction company will build a new shopping centre in our city. I'm not sure if the crane they brought has passed all the necessary technical checks in Germany.

An Estonian baker would like to open a bakery in our region. How can I find out if he has the required professional experience?

IMI is designed to help European administrations get answers to questions like these. It is a multilingual electronic tool that makes it easier and faster for them to cooperate, reducing the costs caused by delays. Better service to citizens and businesses helps them make the most of the possibilities of the single market.

# How can IMI help you?

If you work for a national, regional or local authority, you may ...

- ... need information from an authority in another country, but you are not sure whom to contact.
  - ▶ IMI puts you in touch with the right partner authority.
- ... know whom to contact, but you and your counterpart do not speak the same language.
  - ▶ IMI provides you with standard sets of pre-translated questions and answers. For some languages, machine translation of free text is available.
- ... wonder how long it will take until you receive a reply.
  - ▶ IMI tracks the progress of your request. By checking in IMI, you can follow all stages the request goes through. In the IMI pilot phase, 75 % of all requests were answered within two weeks.
- ... disagree with your counterpart about the type of information you really need.
  - ▶ You can turn to your regional or national IMI coordinator, who will intervene if necessary.

# How does IMI work?

IMI is an IT-based information network that is accessible via the Internet. You do not need to install any additional software.

With the help of the IMI multilingual search function, you identify your partner authority in another country.

You create a request by selecting standard questions in your own language. You can also type in free text and attach documents.

You send the request to your partner authority.

Your partner authority receives the request in its own language.

By checking in IMI, you can track the progress of your request.

Your partner authority replies to you in its own language.

You receive the reply in your language.

# Which areas does IMI cover?

IMI is designed as a flexible system that can be used for administrative cooperation called for by all sorts of internal market legislation.

- A start was made with the **directive on the recognition of professional qualifications**<sup>1</sup>.

▶ Currently, IMI covers 11 professions:

Accountants  
Architects  
Dentists  
Doctors  
Midwives  
Nurses



Radiographers  
Pharmacists  
Physiotherapists  
Secondary school teachers  
Veterinary surgeons



If the regulated profession you represent does not appear in this list, you can ask for it to be included in IMI.

- The **services directive**<sup>2</sup> obliges authorities in different countries to assist each other. IMI is used to facilitate this cooperation.
- ▶ The services directive applies to a wide range of economic activities. Competent authorities will be able to use IMI for all of them by the beginning of 2010.
- In the future, IMI will be expanded to encompass further legislative areas.

<sup>1</sup>. Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications (OJ L 255, 30.9.2005, p. 22).

<sup>2</sup>. Directive 2006/123/EC on services in the internal market (OJ L 376, 27.12.2006, p. 36).

# How can my authority register for IMI?

You may need access to IMI, if you:

- ✓ work for a national, regional or local administration (for example a ministry, a municipality or a government agency) or for a professional organisation;
- ✓ are located in the European Economic Area<sup>1</sup>; and
- ✓ deal with those pieces of internal market legislation that IMI supports.

To find out more about registering, please contact your national IMI coordinator. You can find their contact details on the IMI website:

**[http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/imi-net/contact\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/imi-net/contact_en.html)**

## What about data protection?

Authorities using IMI have to respect EU and national data protection laws. A European Commission recommendation that is available on the IMI website contains IMI-specific data protection guidelines. It is important to note that IMI is data protection friendly because:

- it does not create a permanent database or register of personal data;
- personal data contained in information exchanges is deleted at the latest six months after the closure of the exchange; and
- only authorities directly involved in an information exchange have access to personal data.

1. The European Economic Area consists of all EU countries as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

# Feedback from IMI users

'IMI has made communication much easier because we can ask questions in our local language and the other competent authorities can read the request in their own language. Cooperation is much closer than it was before.'

Dr András Zsigmond  
Office of Health Authorisation and Administrative Procedures, Hungary



'Sign up today! IMI is extremely simple to use and you won't regret your decision.'

Nicola Brienza  
Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, United Kingdom

'It is wonderful. In the past, we sometimes had to wait for three months to receive an answer to our requests from some countries. With IMI, it is two days. Also, in some countries you had to go through five or even ten different administrations. Now you contact one person. That's all.'

Dr Jackie Ahr  
National Professional Order of Doctors, France



To find out more, visit the IMI website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/imi-net](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/imi-net)

For any problems with IMI that cannot be resolved locally,  
the European Commission has set up an IMI helpdesk:

[Imi-helpdesk@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Imi-helpdesk@ec.europa.eu)

Tel. +32 22955470

