

MINUTES OF A MEETING

TO COMPARE QUALIFICATIONS BETWEEN ICE AND PIIB

**Held at the PIIB, Warsaw, Poland
on Thursday, 5th July at 10.00am.**

Present: Professor Radomski, Vice President Polish Chamber of Civil Engineers (PIIB)
Professor Stolarski, Secretary General Polish Society of Civil Engineers (PZITB) (in part)
Mr David Howell, Chairman ICE European Sub Committee
Ms Melissa Pearce, ICE Area Manager Europe
Ms Rebecca Webster, ICE International Membership Senior Executive

Attachments:

1. Stages to ICE Membership, Guide to the European Diplomat route and ICE Member Attributes (English and Polish versions)
2. PIIB rules and regulations on proceedings for the recognition of professional qualifications

1. Introduction

Mr Richard Burleigh, ICE Country Representative for Poland, and Mr Jerzy Szerszen opened the meeting by introducing the two sides and then left both groups to compare their membership processes. Ms Webster provided a document in English and Polish (Attachment 1) which contained the general ICE membership process and guidance notes to the European Diplomat Route tailored to Polish applicants including guidance on the Attributes required by candidates to meet ICE membership criteria. This document was used as the basis for the discussions.

Professor Stolarski explained that PZITB membership is open, whereas PIIB is the licensing body which has requirements for membership. The content of this discussion would therefore be based on comparison between PIIB and ICE.

It was agreed that the stages to membership for both PIIB and ICE are comparable. Both require an educational base followed by a period of training/experience, which is subject to assessment before membership is awarded.

2. Educational Base

It appears that the educational base for both countries is very similar. A four year degree course in Poland appears to be the equivalent of a BEng and a five year degree course is roughly equivalent to a MEng. It was confirmed that PIIB members will ordinarily meet the academic requirements for ICE Chartered Engineer or Incorporated Engineer as the majority of Civil engineering courses in Poland are listed on the FEANI index. Professor Radomski was asked to advise ICE of any qualifications accepted by PIIB which are not listed on the FEANI index.

ACTION: Professor Radomski

3. Professional Experience (Initial professional development)

It was established that Polish civil engineers need to have one years site experience and then two/three years experience in a design office before they can apply to become a Member of the PIIB. The tasks they have undertaken are listed and signed off by a supervisor. PIIB assessment is based on submission of this signed documentation of their experience and a written exam. There are three or four examination sessions per year. Professor Radomski agreed to provide ICE with details of PIIB's required experience in English so that a more in depth comparison of the two organisations' requirements can be undertaken further to this meeting.

Action: Professor Radomski

All ICE Membership documents (3000 series) were provided to Professor Radomski. In particular document 3005 Development Objectives was highlighted as it is used by ICE applicants to record their experience and to demonstrate that they have attained the required levels (to be signed off by a supervising civil engineer). ICE assessment additionally requires a presentation and face to face interview, as well as the written examination.

4. Applications under the European Directive 2005/36

Both PIIB and ICE have published guidance on their websites for European Union applicants in line with the European Directive on recognition of professional qualifications (Attachment 3: PIIB guidance note). ICE refers to this as the "European Diplomat route", in order to distinguish it from the other application routes for ICE membership. Currently three Members of the PIIB have successfully passed the European Diplomat Route and there are three pending applications. One English Member of ICE has successfully become a Member of the PIIB and one is under consideration.

Other ways to apply for ICE membership were outlined to Professor Radomski, and it was agreed that the European Diplomat route was the most convenient and easiest route for applications by PIIB members. It was noted that, as the profession is regulated in Poland, any Polish applications from non-PIIB members would not be accepted by ICE under the European Diplomat route.

• Applications to ICE

ICE has tailored its European Diplomat route guidance specifically for Polish applicants, as it is anticipated that a growing number of Polish civil engineers will be seeking work in the UK and it is keen to promote ICE membership for these individuals. PIIB is supportive of this and is keen to assist its members to gain ICE membership.

All European Diplomat applicants must provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that they meet the ICE Member Attributes (see Appendix A to Attachment 1). This evidence needs to be more than a statement that a role or task has been undertaken but rather practical examples of how the Attribute had been achieved are required. For example: the "ability to engage in the creative and innovative development of engineering technology..." needs to be demonstrated by describing a role in a project where the applicant has used their own creativity.

There were initial problems with some applications to ICE from PIIB members because the applicant had not provided sufficient information to assess whether they meet the required Attributes. Professor Radomski appreciated the need for the

applicant to provide evidence and to demonstrate fully how they meet the Attributes, and will advise PIIB members accordingly. As both sides now understand the process better, it is expected that there will be fewer misunderstandings in the future.

- **Applications to PIIB**

ICE members applying to PIIB are required to confirm that they have completed “vocational practice in compliance with the requirements of Building Law, in making designs or at a construction site”.

ICE requested a detailed list of the Building Law requirements for PIIB membership, as these are not stipulated for UK civil engineers. These will enable ICE to assist its members with applications for PIIB, and should also be taken into consideration in the comparison between the required experience for PIIB / ICE membership.

ACTION: Professor Radomski

5. Comparison of the Civil Engineering Industry in Each Country

Ms Pearce presented Professor Radomski with a book produced by ECCE which contained comparisons between Poland and the UK on various subjects to do with civil engineering processes, including education and the acquiring of experience. This could be referred to in the future to get a better understanding of any similarities or differences between the two systems.

6. Communication between Organisations

It was agreed that all communication between the two organisations should go through Professor Radomski and Ms Pearce. They could then forward the query on to the relevant person. Membership queries can be forwarded directly to Ms Webster.

7. Assistance for People Applying to Membership

Professor Radomski underlined PIIB’s willingness to provide support and guidance to its members on the process of applying to ICE. It was felt that it would also be helpful if there were a contact person in the UK specifically for Polish applicants.

It was explained that many UK companies will have ICE members who act as Supervising Civil Engineers (SCEs) for those on ICE training schemes and ICE has Membership Development Officers (MDOs) for each UK region who can provide advice and guidance to any applicant. The possibility of identifying a PIIB Member who has become an ICE member through the European Diplomat Route who could act as a mentor, or a similar role, for any future Polish applicants was suggested.

Action: Ms Webster

It was noted that Mr Jerzy Szerszen intended to become a Member of ICE using the European Diplomat Route and that this would be a good example for other Polish civil engineers.

It was felt that it would not be appropriate for the Institution of Polish Engineers in Great Britain to act as a link between the two countries, or advisor to applicants, as their organisation was not set up to play this type of role.

8. Website for Poland

It was explained that there is the intention to create an ICE Poland website in the future, once a Local Association has been set up in Poland. This could contain links to the PIIB's website and translated versions of relevant documents.

Future Action: Ms Pearce and Mr Burleigh

9. Conclusion

It was agreed that there was no necessity for a signed document to be produced for the October deadline when the European Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications must be implemented. However, there is the possibility that some document can be signed once the two countries have examined each others processes, to reaffirm the conclusions that are drawn. The relevance of such a document can be discussed at the end of the comparison exercise. Such a statement would add further definition to the principles already agreed in the Co-Operation Agreement but would not imply any automatic entitlement to membership of each others respective organisations.

Both parties felt that this had been a very successful and positive meeting. Professor Radomski discussed the fact that many civil engineers from Poland were going to work abroad. He expressed the view that this was a product of globalisation and a fact that had been accepted. Their aim was to make it easier for their Members to be accepted as well educated, highly trained civil engineers when they travel abroad. Both parties were confident that they could work towards making the process of application for membership easier for civil engineers from either country.