Welder's electronic passport

An electronic passport that proves a welder’s competence and qualifications, wherever they work in Europe.

EUREKA project E! 2774 FACTORY WELDERS’ PASSPORT has created an online passport that enables skilled welders to move and work freely throughout Europe.

"The Factory Welders' Passport is a harmonisation of EWF (European Welders Federation) skills and training certificates that allows for the accreditation of welding related personnel, wherever they work in Europe," says Erik Engh, manager of the Norwegian lead partner, Quality Management Software AS.

"It ensures that appropriate workers can be recruited for a given job, saving time and money for all involved, and it will do away with the current costly situation where workers arrive at a site and spend up to a week 'on hold' until documentation has been verified," says Engh.

Previous attempts at harmonisation have been discontinued because of the high implementation costs. Examples include a booklet containing reduced copies of the welder's certificates that could be updated with new information on a regular basis, and a card with a microchip that could store the welder's data. The passport developed by this EUREKA project is like a credit card and carries the welder's details so that any prospective employer can access a central European database to validate a potential employee's certificates and qualifications. Such validation is essential as the welding skills required vary according to each type of work, from welding plates and pipes to working on offshore oil rigs or at nuclear installations.

EUREKA made the breakthrough possible. "It made it very easy to get started. It's possible to build a project from ideas, then to bring in partners with the experience and technical ability needed to create a product ready for the market," says Engh.

Dr Klaus Wichardt, Managing Director of the Austrian project partner, Schweisstechnische Zentralanstalt, led the team that specified the passport's format. He believes that it will have three key benefits: "The scheme will facilitate the EU policy of free movement of workers and have benefits for all involved. It will maintain quality control of the skills and competence of the workers, and generate long-term cost reductions for the whole industry, especially in the areas of training and administration."

Saving millions of euro

The Factory Welder's Passport also solves a problem that has cost the welding industry millions of euro – the investigative work to check whether a certificate issued by an accredited body in one country is the equivalent of another from a different country. "The passport solves this problem by creating a common foundation for the interpretation of the standards involved, so that the electronic transfer of information can take place in a common data format," explains Engh.

"Both the Norwegian National Institute of Technology, the major accredited body in this market and the Aker Group, the largest industrial group in Norway, have already implemented the system for their daily operations."

EUREKA Participating countries
Norway, Austria, Serbia, Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, United Kingdom, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovak Republic, Italy
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