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**NINE OF EUROPE'S PREMIER ACCOUNTANCY BODIES TAKE SIGNIFICANT
STEP TOWARDS THE HARMONISATION OF THEIR QUALIFICATIONS**

Nine of Europe's premier accountancy Institutes have taken a significant further step towards harmonising their qualifications for membership while ensuring that those qualifications remain high quality and meet changing public expectations and the demands of clients and employers. A rigorous self-assessment process by each Institute and a detailed review by teams from other Institutes have confirmed that the Institutes' qualifications have reached a high degree of consistency required by the Common Content project and that each Institute has met the requirements for its continued membership of the project.

Announcing the results, Dominique Ledouble, Chairman of the Common Content Steering Group, said: "The incorporation of Common Content requirements into nine of Europe's premier professional accountancy qualifications will benefit the public, the users of accountancy services, those who train and employ professional accountants and the accountants themselves. It results in a new generation of accountants whose international knowledge and professional experience have been assessed using a common high-quality syllabus. These accountants will enjoy improved cross-border career opportunities. It will be easier for them to become members of participating institutes in other countries."

Common Content qualifications focus on the five service areas of professional accountants: assurance and related services; performance measurement and reporting; strategic and business management; financial management; taxation and legal services.

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Common Content qualifications include a very significant common content, which is common to all the qualifications and which meets or exceeds relevant international, European Union and national requirements. The national content in each qualification is limited to tax rules and other country-specific requirements.

The qualifications and Institutes currently within the Common Content project are:

Qualification	Institute(s)
Expert-comptable	Conseil Supérieur de l'Ordre des Experts-Comptables (France)
Wirtschaftsprüfer	Wirtschaftsprüferkammer and Institut der Wirtschaftsprüfer (Germany)
Chartered Accountant	Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland
Dottori Commercialisti Esperto contabile	Consiglio Nazionale dei Dottori Commercialisti ed Esperti Contabili (Italy)
Ragioniere Commercialista	
Registeraccountant	Koninklijk Nederlands Instituut van Registeraccountants (Netherlands)
Associate Chartered Accountant	Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
Chartered Accountant	Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland

Dominique Ledouble explained: "This achievements of the Project are a direct result of six years collaboration between the nine Institutes. The efforts have engendered a spirit of mutual trust that forms the basis for the continuation of the Institutes' cooperative efforts on the project. We now want to extend the Project to other national Institutes which share the same philosophy and whose qualifications meet Common Content requirements. We will look to expand first in other EU Member States that are currently not represented in the project as well as in countries outside the EU."

The nine Institutes intend to agree a shared work programme for the next three years for the Project. As well as the extension of the Project to other countries, the programme will include the continuing evolution of Common Content requirements.

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Notes to Editors:

Common Content Project

The Common Content project was set up in 2001 by premier accountancy bodies in seven countries to unify, as far as possible, their national professional entry-level qualifications, while ensuring that those qualifications remain high quality and meet changing public expectations and the demands of clients and employers.

The following institutes are currently participating in the Common Content project:

France	Compagnie Nationale des Commissaires aux Comptes (CNCC) Conseil Supérieur de l'Ordre des Experts-Comptables (OEC)
Germany	Institut der Wirtschaftsprüfer (IDW) Wirtschaftsprüferkammer (WPK)
Ireland	Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland (ICAI)
Italy	Consiglio Nazionale dei Dottori Commercialisti ed Esperti Contabili (CNDCEC)
The Netherlands	Koninklijk Nederlands Instituut van Registeraccountants (NIVRA)
United Kingdom	Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland (ICAS)

Further information about the project is available at www.commoncontent.com.