



General
Medical
Council

15 October 2010

Dear Mrs Fröhlinger

National experience reports for doctors and Berlin statement

Further to your letter sent in April 2010 and our initial response on 23 September, we are writing to inform you about the outcome of the informal network of European competent authorities responsible for the recognition of medical qualifications. We are pleased to report that to date 22 national experience reports¹ on the implementation of Directive 2005/36/EC on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications have been submitted to the European Commission by the network.

As you recall, in March 2010, the Bundesärztekammer, the Conseil National de l'Ordre des Médecins, and the General Medical Council (UK), were supported by the European Commission in coordinating an informal network of competent authorities responsible for the recognition of medical qualifications. The aim of the group was to discuss the implementation of the Directive in the EEA countries and aid the preparation of national implementation reports.

Over the past few months 28 competent authorities from 23 EEA countries held constructive plenary discussions in Paris (7 May), London (2 July) and Berlin (13 September). The meetings benefited from the European Commission's input as an observer and provided participants with an opportunity to suggest changes and clarifications to the questionnaire proposed by the Commission, share best practises, and experiences, and debate common concerns.

To facilitate discussion, the network coordinators set up a secure online platform, which served as a repository of information and helped competent authorities share their draft national reports. The platform was met with broad enthusiasm and competent authorities agreed to consider this tool in the future.

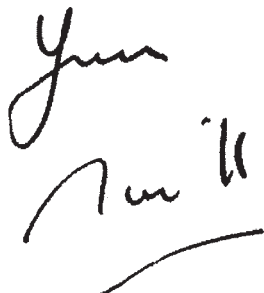
Overall the network agreed that the system of automatic recognition has facilitated the mobility of doctors and has agreed to continue to meet in the future, on an informal basis, to improve collaboration and understanding of medical education and training systems and recognition procedures across Europe.

¹ The following countries have responded to the European Commission questionnaire: Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Luxemburg, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the UK.

In the course of their deliberations, competent authorities have also identified parts of the legal framework that could benefit from further examination and clarification. In this context, the network discussed and agreed a joint statement, calling on the revision of the Directive to focus on areas that will support doctor mobility and cooperation amongst competent authorities while, at the same time, ensure that patient safety in Europe is not compromised. We are very pleased to report that to date 25 competent authorities from 23 EEA countries have officially endorsed the Berlin statement and we would like to bring this to your attention. We hope that the content of the statement will be considered by the Commission in its revision of the Directive.

We would like to thank the European Commission for their positive and constructive engagement with competent authorities over the past few months and look forward to receive feedback from discussions held at the Group of Coordinators meeting held on 27 September and to contributing further to the evaluation and revision of the Directive in the coming months.

Yours sincerely



Niall Dickson
Chief Executive and
Registrar

**General Medical
Council**



Prof Robert Nicodème
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**Conseil national de
l'Ordre des médecins**



Dr Frank-Ulrich Montgomery
Vice-President

Bundesärztekammer

cc. Jürgen Tiedje, An Baeyens

Berlin Statement
13 September 2010

European Commission's evaluation of Directive 2005/36/EC on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications

Since May 2010 the informal network of competent authorities for the recognition of professional qualifications for doctors has held a series of meetings to discuss and share their experiences with the implementation of Directive 2005/36/EC on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications.

The network has brought together 28 competent authorities from 23 member states to stimulate discussions and support the drafting of national experience reports on the Directive.

The network agrees that the system of automatic recognition provided by Directive 2005/36/EC has proven successful in facilitating the recognition of medical qualifications within the European Economic Area.

The network has also shown that with a high level of doctor mobility around Europe, competent authorities are keen to work cooperatively and collaboratively to contribute to safe healthcare in Europe, and declare their intention to continue their collaboration within the structures of the informal network. To enhance transparency within the recognition of professional qualifications competent authorities intend to work together voluntarily to create a repository of detailed information on the content of medical training for each specialty. This may include historical information of titles and name of documents.

Competent authorities see the Commission's current evaluation of Directive 2005/36/EC as a valuable opportunity to highlight a number of areas that would benefit from further examination to ensure that professional mobility is maintained and to enhance patient safety. We would like to express our appreciation of the open and co-operative approach undertaken by the Commission in the course of the evaluation process.

Further to our meetings and the exchange of experiences in relation to the evaluation of the Directive we call on the Commission to:

- Continue to facilitate the identification of competent authorities responsible for the recognition of qualifications for doctors; require competent authorities to be listed on the Internal Market Information system (IMI); oblige competent authorities to respond to all queries in an appropriate timeframe regardless of whether they are sent through IMI or through other means; develop and improve IMI to allow competent authorities to carry out primary source verification of documents.

- Examine in cooperation with the Competent Authorities appropriate competence assurance mechanisms (e.g. CPD/CME, revalidation, etc.) for doctors. This will enhance trust in the recognition of professional qualifications and ensure patient safety by allowing competent authorities to assure themselves that the doctors they register have kept their skills and competence up to date since the award of their medical qualifications.
- Consider including the Certificate of Current Professional Status / Certificate of Good Standing to the documents listed in Annex VII.
- Explore mechanisms, such as the alert mechanism provided for by the Services Directive, that will improve the exchange of information about doctors that has a bearing on patient safety in Europe and on professional competence. Facilitate the identification of competent authorities responsible for taking regulatory action against doctors¹ to ensure that only those doctors that are fit and safe to practise avail themselves of the benefits of freedom of movement within the EEA.
- Ensure that there is legal clarity about regulatory responsibility in instances of cross-border provision of services. This should also be considered in the light of developments in the field of telemedicine and remote diagnosis, where neither the patient nor the doctor physically moves.
- Provide clarification about the term 'temporary and occasional'; support competent authorities in developing a common framework that will assist them in dealing with recognition in cases of subsequent applications for temporary and occasional provision of services (e.g. seasonal mobility).
- Examine the language provisions in the Directive to address the concerns of competent authorities in relation to language proficiency of migrant doctors in the interest of patient safety.
- Examine within the course of the revision of the Directive the increasing occurrences of false documents and fraud and find means of combating these effectively.

Further information and concrete case studies and examples in support of this statement are contained in the national experience reports submitted by competent authorities to the European Commission in September 2010.

¹ For example, the removal of a licence to practise.

Competent authorities in support of the Berlin statement

Austria	Österreichische Ärztekammer
Cyprus	IATPIKO ΣΥΜΒΟΥΛΙΟ ΚΥΠΡΟΥ
Czech Republic	Ministerstvo zdravotnictví
Denmark	Sundhedsstyrelsen
Estonia	Tervisemet
Finland	Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden tutkimuskeskus ja valvontavirasto, Valvira
France	Conseil National de l'Ordre de Médecins Ministère de la Santé
Germany	Bundesärztekammer
Hungary	Egészségügyi Engedélyezési és Közigazgatási Hivatal
Ireland	Medical Council
Italy	Ministero del lavoro, della salute e delle politiche sociali
Latvia	Latvijas Ārstu biedrība
Lithuania	Sveikatos apsaugos ministerija
Luxembourg	Ministère de la Santé
Malta	Kunsill Mediku
The Netherlands	Koninklijke Nederlandsche Maatschappij tot bevordering der Geneeskunst Ministerie van Volksgezondheid Welzijn en Sport - BIG register
Norway	Statens autorisasjonskontor for helsepersonell
Portugal	Ordem dos Médicos
Romania	Colegiul Medicilor din Romania
Slovenia	Ministrstvo za zdravje
Spain	Ministerio de Sanidad y Política Social
Sweden	Socialstyrelsen
UK	General Medical Council