FACTS AND FIGURES

Mobility of doctors and recognition of medical qualifications

ENMCA

Mobility, recognition and registration

- According to the European Commission (EC) regulated professions database, doctors are the most mobile profession in Europe (EC Commission)
- By 2020, the EC estimates there will be a shortage of 230,000 physicians across Europe. There are already severe shortages in Bulgaria, France, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Spain and the UK. (Action Plan)
- Registration procedures differ across the EU; in Spain, Poland, Italy and Greece doctors have their qualification recognised by a Ministry and are subsequently required to get a licence to practise with a regional office where they intend to practise. In the UK, France, Ireland and Norway, recognition and licences to practise are administered by one national regulator.
- Some countries make publically searchable registers available online:
  - Netherlands, BIG-register: www.bigregister.nl
  - UK, List of registered medical practitioners: www.gmc-uk.org/doctors/register/LRMP.asp
  - France, Annuaire: www.conseil-national.medecin.fr/annuaire

Medical education and training

- The minimum duration of basic medical training varies widely between Member States: it is 5½ years in Sweden, 6½ years in Finland and 7 years in Belgium.
- In Greece, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands, doctors are allowed to practice independently after completion of a medical degree. In France, doctors must complete their specialty training before being allowed to practice independently.
- The scope of practice between Member States can vary significantly. In some European countries, a general practitioner is responsible for treating children whereas in other countries they have no exposure to children. This can cause challenges when a doctor moves to practise in another Member State and the expectations placed on them might be different.
- The number of specialties across Europe significantly varies. The UK has the highest number of specialties at 61 and the Netherlands has the lowest at 33. (General Medical Council research). Directive 2005/36/EC currently includes 19 specialties under automatic recognition.
- In some countries there are no medical schools and limited facilities for postgraduate training. This means that students and junior doctors have to complete their training in another country.

How do doctors keep their skills up to date?

- Approaches to Continuous Professional Development (CPD) vary considerably across Europe: in countries such as Austria, France and Germany, CPD is compulsory. In Denmark, Estonia and Malta, it is voluntary.
- Under Directive 2005/36/EC, Member States are required to automatically register doctors who have not been practising medicine for any number of years. This gap poses a risk to patient safety - medicine is rapidly evolving and professionals need to keep their skills up to date.
- In some countries registration is granted for life, whereas in others it is assessed on an ongoing basis through regular reviews of a doctor's practise and their professional development.