

# FACTS AND FIGURES

## Mobility of doctors and recognition of medical qualifications



### 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](http://www.bigregister.nl)
  - UK, List of registered medical practitioners: [www.gmc-uk.org/doctors/register/LRMP.asp](http://www.gmc-uk.org/doctors/register/LRMP.asp)
  - France, Annuaire: [www.conseil-national.medecin.fr/annuaire](http://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.