

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001710/24
to the Commission
Carolina Morace (The Left)
(13 September 2024)**

Subject: Recognition in Italy of the professional profile of graduate optometrists in line with EU standards

In Italy, one can study Optics and Optometry at degree level, and under Law No 3 of 11 January 2018, graduates in Optics and Optometry have to register as health professionals.

The ESCO framework classifies optometrists as health professionals at European level, while Directive 2005/36/EC, as revised in 2013, promotes the mutual recognition of professional qualifications among Member States to facilitate professional mobility.

Besides this, the ET 2020 strategy encourages cooperation among Member States to improve the quality of vocational education and training, including the objective of creating common skills and qualifications frameworks to facilitate the mobility and recognition of healthcare professionals, including optometrists.

In the light of the growing demand for eye care due to an ageing population and the increase in chronic vision-related conditions, it is vital to bolster the primary eye care sector by enabling qualified optometrists to enter this field, in line with the recommendations of the 2020 Osnabrück Declaration on durable and high-quality vocational education and training.

Can the Commission say what has been done to encourage the Italian Government to create a specific professional profile for graduate optometrists, along the same lines as for their graduate colleagues elsewhere in Europe?

Submitted: 13.9.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Vestager on behalf of the European Commission
(31 October 2024)**

The Commission fully respects the responsibility of Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education and training systems, in line with Articles 165 ⁽¹⁾ and 166 ⁽²⁾ of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

It is also for Member States to decide, within the limits of EU law, and in particular with respect to principles of proportionality and non-discrimination, if and how to regulate professions on their territory.

As a result of this, the regulation of the profession of optometrist may differ across the EU. Directive 2005/36/EC ⁽³⁾ requires the recognition of qualifications obtained in another Member State even if the level of qualification between the host and home Member State are different ⁽⁴⁾. For the profession of optometrists, it is the so-called general system of recognition under Directive 2005/36/EC that applies ⁽⁵⁾.

The European classification of skills and occupation framework is a non-binding classification system, and Member States remain competent to define occupational profiles that are relevant at national level.

The classification of optometrists as health professionals is in line with the classification of optometrist at the international level in the International Standard Classification of Occupations classification.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12008E165>

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12016E166>

⁽³⁾ Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications. The directive applies when a professional wishes to pursue a profession which is regulated in a host Member State. The directive does not apply in relation to professions which are not regulated in a host Member State.

⁽⁴⁾ In Article 11, the directive prescribes different levels of qualifications. Access to a regulated profession in a host Member State may only be refused when qualifications of a professional are classified in the lowest level of qualification, when the host Member State requires the highest level of qualification.

⁽⁵⁾ See Chapter I of Title III of Directive 2005/36/EC.