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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Mînzatu
on behalf of the European Commission
(18.7.2025)

Directive 2005/36/EC¹ aims to facilitate the cross-border recognition of qualifications for access to regulated professions including medical specialties, while ensuring patient safety.

The Directive includes specific rules on recognition of qualifications for general practitioners, who benefit from the most advantageous, automatic recognition rules covering all Member States. Conversely, the automatic recognition rules for specialist doctors cover only those Member States that choose to notify a specialty to the Commission. Classifying family medicine as specialised medicine would not improve the situation for family doctors who wish to pursue their careers in other EU Member States.

Directive 2005/36/EC sets out the minimum training requirements for specific training in general medical practice. Only those who completed such training and obtained the corresponding national qualifications, can benefit from automatic recognition. The Directive respects the responsibility of Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems. Within the framework of the Directive, Member States can autonomously decide on the scope and duration of education programme for family doctors, considering organisation and needs of their healthcare systems.

The Commission maintains a constant dialogue with Member States through its expert group, including on matters of mobility of family doctors and the application of Directive 2005/36/EC. As referred to in the Union of Skills², building on the Implementation Report of the Professional Qualifications Directive, the Commission will consider actions to further facilitate, expand and modernise recognition processes for regulated professions.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2005/36/oj/eng>.

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CaELEX%3A52025DC0090>.