

EN

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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Mînzatu
on behalf of the European Commission
(23.3.2026)

The Commission explores various policy initiatives to attract and retain doctors, including from outside the EU, to mitigate the shortages on the labour market.

Medical professional qualifications are subject to the most advantageous recognition regime envisaged by Directive 2005/36/EC¹ ('Professional Qualifications Directive'), i.e., the automatic system. This includes doctors with basic training, general practitioners and specialist doctors. The application process for doctors is usually easier and takes less time than a typical process for other professions covered by the so-called general system. Nevertheless, the Commission is exploring potential measures to accelerate recognition procedures for doctors. Under Action 2 of the Skills Portability Initiative², a forthcoming policy initiative within the Fair Labour Mobility package³, the Commission is considering measures – including through digitalisation – to modernise procedures for recognition of qualifications to access regulated professions, including medical professions.

In addition, within Action 3 of the Skills Portability Initiative⁴, one of the options being assessed is a legislative proposal for common rules to simplify procedures for the recognition of qualifications and skills of third-country nationals. The upcoming EU Talent Pool⁵ will also facilitate recruitment of jobseekers outside the EU, including doctors.

The recruitment and professional integration of doctors and ensuring access to postgraduate training and specialisation pathways remain responsibility of Member States⁶. The objective of the Commission initiatives is to remove administrative barriers for the fair mobility of doctors while safeguarding public health objectives.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02005L0036-20251029>.

² https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/15894-Skills-portability-action-2-facilitating-modernising-and-expanding-recognition-processes-for-regulated-professions_en complemented by https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/15892-Skills-portability-action-1-facilitating-worker-mobility-across-the-EU-through-skills-transparency-and-digitalisation_en, particularly as regards utilising digital credentials.

³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/15553-Fair-labour-mobility-package_en.

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/15893-Skills-portability-action-3-simplifying-the-recognition-of-qualifications-and-skills-of-third-country-nationals_en.

⁵ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-promoting-our-european-way-of-life/file-eu-talent-pool>.

⁶ The Member States competences include the definition of health policy, the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care as well as the organisation of education systems.