

EN

E-002276/2026

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Mînzatu
on behalf of the European Commission
(22.7.2026)

Directive 2005/36/EC¹ sets minimum training requirements for accessing the profession of nurse responsible for general care across the EU. Under the Directive², bridges between different health professional careers paths can be set at national level for equivalent training in terms of content and level to the ones required for nurse training.

Health workforce shortages are a major challenge, requiring action in line with the division of competences in the EU. The organisation of education systems³ and the management of health services⁴, including adequate staffing, are Member States' responsibility.

EU acquis⁵ aims to facilitate mobility by ensuring recognition of EU professional qualifications⁷ and by harmonising minimum training requirements for five health professions⁸. Under the Directive, Member States may grant full or partial exemption on the basis of a case-by-case assessment via academic recognition to professionals wishing to change or evolve in their professional career path.

The upcoming Skills Portability Initiative⁹ aims, under its Actions 2 and 3, at modernising and speeding up the processes for recognition of professional qualifications for EU citizens and introducing common rules on recognition to attract talent from third countries¹⁰. An impact assessment will accompany those initiatives to quantify its impact, notably on the mobility of professionals and how it will be facilitated. However, under these initiatives, the Commission does not intend to modify any of the minimum training requirements for health professions which are provided under the Directive.

¹ Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications (latest consolidated version from 29 October 2025 available here: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02005L0036-20251029>).

² Article 31(3) of Directive 2005/36/EC.

³ Article 165(1) of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union.

⁴ Article 168(7) of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union.

⁵ Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications.

⁶ In addition, the Council Recommendation on micro-credentials lists recommendations how to issue, design and deliver micro-credentials (records of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning in formal, non-formal and informal learning).

⁷ Member States may grant full or partial exemption on the basis of individual assessment.

⁸ Doctors (and certain medical specialisations), dentists (and certain dental specialties), nurses responsible for general care, midwives and pharmacists under Directive 2005/36/EC.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-seeks-views-skills-portability-initiative-2025-12-05_en.