



Position Paper

Towards a Europe-wide definition of professional qualifications in hematology

The Professional Qualifications Directive 2005/36/EC, modernized in 2013, facilitates the mobility of health professionals by allowing for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications. Yet, great disparities remain as to how medical specialties are organized, the content of specialist training and procedures to ensure hematologists remain fit-to-practise. This undermines free movement by professionals within the EU as well as patient safety and equal standards of care.

Fully aware of these disparities, the European Hematology Association (EHA) has developed a training program that promotes harmonization and excellence in education and training among all Member States. EHA also strives to improve the current regulatory framework. Therefore, EHA would like to call upon the Member States and the European Commission to tackle the following issues:

1. Disparities in training requirements: an obstacle to a Europe-wide definition of hematology and to professional mobility
2. Strengthen Continuous Professional Development of hematologists to ensure patient safety



1. Disparities in training requirements: an obstacle to a Europe-wide definition of hematology and to professional mobility

Annex V, point 5.1.3 of the Professional Qualifications Directive specifies the minimum training period required for the automatic cross-border recognition as a qualified general hematologist (three years) and biological hematologist (four years). Given the wide scope of the hematology discipline and topics covered, EHA believes this minimum training requirement is clearly not enough to allow professionals to gain sufficient knowledge to properly treat patients with hematological diseases. EHA therefore calls for an extension of this minimum training duration to at least five years (or three when previous training includes two years of internal medicine). As automatic recognition can only be granted when the destination Member State has opted in, EHA also urges Member States who have not yet done so, to take the necessary steps for the inclusion of these specialties into Annex V.

Furthermore, EHA would like to point out the fact that although specialist training programs render the same nominal qualifications, their content differs greatly between and within Member States. This leads to a significant variation in the knowledge and experience of hematologists across the EU. In order to overcome such variations EHA developed the European Hematology Curriculum, which describes the minimum recommended level of skills and competences a junior specialist in hematology should attain. The Curriculum is supported by 27 national societies of hematology and has been updated on a regular basis since 2004. EHA encourages national educational and health bodies to make use of this tool in the development of training programs in order to ensure more coherence among national standards throughout the EU.

EHA calls upon Member States to amend Annex V, point 5.1.3, of the Professional Qualifications Directive (2005/36/EC) to extend to five years the minimum training period required for automatic recognition of hematologists' qualifications, and to ensure hematology is recognized as a medical specialty in all countries.

It also calls for a harmonization of hematologists' skills and competences by integrating the recommendations of the European Hematology Curriculum into national training programs.



2. Strengthen Continuous Professional Development of hematologists to ensure patient safety

To protect the safety of patients and ensure the highest standards of care, hematologists must remain up-to-date and fit-to-practise. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is a key instrument to achieve this. As CPD requirements are determined by Member States, there is currently significant disparity across Europe and health professions, with coexisting mandatory and voluntary systems. Moreover CPD is not always required for revalidation of the professional license.

EHA believes that revalidation of health professionals should depend on CPD, as a prerequisite for maintaining a safe and effective practice and keeping abreast of professional developments. However, CPD should not only be a duty but also a right; support for optimal access is therefore essential.

The modernized Professional Qualifications Directive introduced a requirement for Member States to encourage CPD and report to the Commission what measures have been taken. In light of this new provision, EHA invites Member States to enable all hematologists to pursue CPD by addressing recognized barriers such as a lack of time, human or financial resources.

EHA invites Member States to make revalidation of professional licenses dependent on CPD. To enable all hematologists to make use of CPD, obstacles such as lack of time, human and financial resources must be addressed.



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About EHA

The European Hematology Association (EHA) is a not-for-profit membership organization that promotes excellence in patient care, research and education in hematology. EHA's Annual Congress is attended by some 10,000 delegates. The association also publishes Haematologica, Europe's primary hematology journal. Being the leading hematology organization in Europe, EHA represents the interests of the discipline, its clinicians and its scientists in Europe.

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