



EUROPE REGION

World Confederation  
for Physical Therapy

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# **Report of the EU Matters Working Group of the ER-WCPT for the period 2010-2012**

**ADOPTED at the  
General Meeting 17-19 May 2012  
St. Julians, Malta**

## **REPORT OF THE EU MATTERS WORKING GROUP OF THE ER-WCPT FOR THE PERIOD 2010-2012**

### **European Region of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) European Union Matters WG**

#### **Introduction**

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As Chairman of the EU Matters working group, I would like to thank all members of the group for the appreciated work delivered at this General Meeting. Also, I would like to thank the General Secretary, the Member Organisations and the members of the EU Matters Working Group for their efforts of sustaining the important work.

The main objectives of the EU Working Group are to maintain a high profile and to be a permanent observatory to new and changing regulations and issues related to the physiotherapy profession within the European Region of the WCPT (ER-WCPT). Fostering for cooperation with the European Commission and Parliament is vital in a continuously expanding European region.

#### **Members**

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The members of the EU Matters WG appointed in June 2010:

- Roland Craps, First Vice Chairman of the European Region of WCPT as Chairman of the EU Matters Working Group, Belgium
- Reinhard Beirkircher, Austria
- Anna Kukka, Finland
- Francis Hebting, France
- Hans Krijgsman, the Netherlands
- Natalie Beswetherick, UK

The General Secretary of the Europe Region of the WCPT worked with the group and attended all its meetings. Residing in the same country as the chairman of the EU Matters WG was an advantage for communication and for attending the increased meetings organised in Brussels.

#### **Terms of Reference and activities**

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The EU Matters WG established a working plan for implementation of the recommended actions and activities approved by the General Meeting in Berlin in 2010 within the timescale and with the aim to present the reports and results at the

next General Meeting in Malta 2012. Four meetings were held during the period 2010-2012.

The EU WG members agreed the activities and the distribution of responsibilities as follows:

**1. EU Legislation related to the profession of physiotherapy and the users of its services**

- 1.1. Continue following up the implementation of the Directive on Recognition of Professional qualifications  
Lead: Natalie Beswetherick / Helper: Hans Krijgsman and David Gorria
- 1.2. Monitor developments of the Directive on Patients Right in Cross Border  
Lead: Anna Kukka / Helper: David Gorria
- 1.3. Follow up the developments of e-Health legislation at EU level  
Lead: Hans Krijgsman / Helper: Roland Craps
- 1.4. Providing general information about the enlargement of the EU  
Lead: Roland Craps / Helper: David Gorria

**2. EU Policy related to the profession of physiotherapy and the users of its services.**

- 2.1. European Health Workforce  
Lead: Roland Craps / Helper: David Gorria
- 2.2. Monitor the implementation of the Migration Policy at national level  
Lead: Francis Hebting / Helper: Roland Craps

**3. Development of information resources and policies**

- 3.1. Develop resources/policies for approval at the General Meeting / Info Tool  
Lead: Hans Krijgsman / Helper: Natalie Beswetherick and David Gorria
- 3.2. Identify and disseminate other sources of information relevant to MOs on EU matters (Monitor migration of PTs in the EU )  
Lead: Roland Craps
- 3.3. Update of the ER-WCPT website – EU Matters button  
Lead: All WG members
- 3.4. Monitor developments in electronic patient record keeping in collaboration with the PI WG

Lead: Roland Craps / Helper: Hans Krijgsman

#### **4. Liaisons with health professionals and organisations at EU level**

Lead: Roland Craps / Helper: David Gorria

- 4.1. European Health Policy Forum
- 4.2. EPHA
- 4.3. Be proactive with the EU by providing material from the ER-WCPT.

#### **5. Liaisons with health other WGs in the ER-WCPT**

- 5.1. ER-WCPT Glossary of terms

Lead: All WG members

- 5.2. Collaboration with the PI WG in the Keep active / Keep healthy document.

Lead: Natalie Beswetherick / Helpers: all WG members

- 5.3. Revise the Health Policy Statement of the ER-WCPT in collaboration with the PI WG. Recognising the role of physiotherapy in public health and the 2020 EU strategy

Lead: Anna Kukka / Francis Hebling.

At the meeting in St. Julians (Malta), September 2011, some responsibilities were revised and several tasks have been reappointed between the members of the group.

#### **Meetings**

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The first meeting of the EU Working Group was held in Brussels, Belgium, on 17-18 September 2010. The venue was the secretariat of the ER-WCPT.

Other meetings took place on

- 18 and 19 February 2011 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.
- 9 and 11 September 2011, joint meeting of all Working Groups in St. Julians, Malta
- 10 September 2011 in St. Julians, Malta
- 20 and 21 January 2012 in London, UK.

## Activities

### 1. EU Legislation related to the profession of physiotherapy and the users of its services

#### 1.1 Continue following up the implementation of the Directive on Recognition of Professional qualifications

Responsible: Natalie Beswetherick, Hans Krijgsman, Roland Craps and David Gorría

Following the recommendation approved at the 2010 GM on this matter, the EU WG members agreed to continue following up the implementation and evaluation of the Directive on Recognition of Professional Qualifications.

A dedicated report, entitled: **“Information Paper on the Directive on Recognition of Professional Qualifications”** has been prepared for the MOs to be presented for information at the 2012 GM

#### 1.2 Monitor developments of the Directive on Patients Right in Cross Border

Responsible: Anna Kukka

For the period 2010 – 2012, and according to the recommendation approved at the 2010 GM on this matter, the EU WG members agreed to continue following up the developments of the draft Directive on Patients Rights in Cross Border Health care. The WG was informed about the activities developed by the WG previously on this matter and also about political problems within the EU to reaching a political agreement on a common position.

The WG agreed to review all the information gathered and developed on this matter and be alert to react when new political developments would take place at EU level.

The EU Presidency negotiated with the European Parliament on the Cross-border Healthcare Directive and reached an agreement. The Directive on Patients' Rights in Cross-border Healthcare has been approved on 19 January 2011.

Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, Mr. John Dalli, stated that a questions and answers document on the Directive which clarified the benefits had been developed in all EU languages. The WG agreed to inform the MOs about it by sending the link to the questions and answers and the final text of the Directive.

The Directive should be implemented from August 2011 by the EU countries within the next 30 months after its approval. The WG would follow up the implementation phase and possible implications for physiotherapists. The MOs have been informed about the approval of this Directive on 23 February 2011 and the information was put on the ER-WCPT website.

On 4 October 2011, the EU Commission presented a Video on Patients' Rights in Cross-border Healthcare available in all EU official languages.

The European Commission adopted on 22 December 2011 a decision establishing an eHealth Network, as foreseen by the Directive (2011/24/EU) on Patients' Rights in Cross-border Healthcare. For the first time the EU legislation includes provisions on eHealth with clear objectives to find modern, innovative solutions for providing better and safer healthcare for all Europeans.

Source, last consulted 19/02/2012:

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-  
//EP//TEXT+TA+20110119+ITEMS+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN#sdocta1](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+20110119+ITEMS+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN#sdocta1)

### 1.3 Follow up the developments of e-Health legislation at EU level

Responsible: Hans Krijgsman and Roland Craps

The responsible persons would discuss about which information on this matter is relevant for physiotherapists. Information should be gathered and presented to the Member Organisations. As a starting point, it was also agreed that information would be focused on patients cross border, inter-operability and patients' safety and records.

The EU WG discussed this matter and agreed to recommend to the ER-WCPT Executive Committee to have a discussion session at the 2012 GM on the following topic: "Are we using new technologies to improve the care provided to patients?".

Natalie Beswetherick and Hans Krijgsman prepared a presentation for this discussion session.

See: [http://ec.europa.eu/health/ehealth/policy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/health/ehealth/policy/index_en.htm)

#### 1.4 Providing general information about the enlargement of the EU

Responsible: the General Secretary and Roland Craps

The EU WG agreed not to continue mapping information on the enlargement on a dedicated report since more accurate information can be found on the website of the EU Commission.

Information: [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/index_en.htm)

## **2. EU Policy related to the profession of physiotherapy and the users of its services**

### **2.1 European Health Workforce**

Responsible: Roland Craps and Anna Kukka (as of September 2011)

A Ministerial Conference on the EU Health Workforce took place on 9 - 10 September 2010, in Brussels, Belgium. The two day Conference was organised by the Belgian Presidency of the EU and entitled: Investing in Europe's health workforce of tomorrow: scope for innovation and collaboration. Roland Craps attended it.

EU Member States are facing common challenges in ensuring and maintaining an adequate workforce to meet the changing and growing health needs. Due to this reason the Belgian Presidency of the EU Council has decided to draw political priority, in the field of health, to the need to invest in sufficient, motivated and well-skilled health professionals. For this reason, the Presidency organised the conference on this subject, to further raise the awareness for the problem and to support the European Commission's efforts in developing a coordinated approach in supporting national and regional policies in this area. National policies and regulations need to be adapted to evolving patient and health system needs in order to ensure the health systems supply with sufficient and adequately skilled health professionals.

The WG agreed to review all the information gathered at the conference and be alert to follow up and react to further developments on this issue.

Link to the website of the conference with all the presentations:

<http://www.health.belgium.be/eportal/Aboutus/eutrio/health/europehealthworkforce/index.htm?fodnlang=en>

Anna Kukka prepared a report on the responses from the stakeholders to the consultation on the Green paper on the European Workforce for Health Care.

Link to the Green Paper:

[http://ec.europa.eu/health/workforce/green\\_paper/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/health/workforce/green_paper/index_en.htm)

(Last consulted: 19/02/2012)

On 18 April 2012, the Commission adopted a Communication "[Towards a job rich recovery](#)", which sets out a range of measures to encourage employment and strengthen economic growth in Europe. It also identifies healthcare as one of three key sectors with a high employment potential and includes an [Action Plan for the EU health workforce](#) (SWD(2012)93 final. See also [IP /2012/380](#)).

Healthcare is highly labour intensive and one of the largest sectors in the EU, accounting for about 17 million or 8% of all jobs in the EU.

The main challenges described are:

- An ageing workforce (retirement)
- Demanding working conditions
  - o Long working hours
  - o Stress
  - o Inadequate work-life balance
  - o Burnout and dissatisfaction
- Relatively low pay (in some health occupations)
- New care patterns (increasing number of chronic conditions of the elderly)
- Rise in new technology (needing new skills and competencies)
- Competition with other career choices

Budget constraints are putting health expenditures under strong pressure and often lead to fundamental reforms. Despite the economic downturn, the sector continues to grow. With an ageing population and the rising demand, healthcare remains a key driver for jobs with an estimated 8 million job openings between 2010-2020.

The rising shortage could lead to a shortfall of 15% of care not covered in 2020. This could lead to even more bad working conditions and could have a negative impact on patient safety and quality of care.

The report mentions specifically an estimated shortage of 150.000 dentists, pharmacists and physiotherapists (13,5 %).

The Action Plan for the EU Healthcare Workforce is the feedback from the Green Paper consultation in 2010 that collected 200 responses, including the response from the ER-WCPT. The plan aims to assist Member States to tackle these challenges and sets out actions to foster European cooperation and share good practice helping to improve health workforce planning and forecasting, to anticipate future skill needs, to improve the recruitment and retention of health professionals while mitigating the negative effects of migration on health systems.

Several actions are under development and a 3 year EU Joint action will be launched by the end of 2012, grouping Member States and professional organisations. The Commission aims to share good practice between, also taking into consideration of the WHO Global Code

([http://www.who.int/hrh/migration/code/WHO\\_global\\_code\\_of\\_practice\\_EN.pdf](http://www.who.int/hrh/migration/code/WHO_global_code_of_practice_EN.pdf)), that aims to reduce the negative effects of migration flows in countries suffering from a lack of qualified workers.

Report: Roland Craps, 5/5/2012

The EU Matters WG recommends following up EU developments on this matter during the next period.

## 2.2 Monitor the implementation of the Migration Policy at national level

Responsible: Francis Hebting and Roland Craps

The WG was informed about the actions undertaken of the previous years on this matter:

- A report on the implementation of the Migration Policy for Physiotherapists in the European Region was presented at the 2008 GM.
- A revised Migration Policy for Physiotherapists in the European Region was presented at the 2010 GM.
- Two articles of case studies describing how Member Organisations used it in a positive way were developed during the period 2008 - 2010. These case studies were disseminated to the Member Organisations in order to explain how/why the Migration Policy can be used by them.

In order to continue monitoring the implementation of the Migration Policy at national level, the WG members agreed to reflect on this issue and agreed that the EU developments, such as the Directive of Recognition of Professional Qualifications, have overtaken the requirement for the EU WG to monitor the implementation of the ER-WCPT Migration Policy.

Nevertheless, the WG would continue monitoring migration of physiotherapists in the EU and the Directive 2005/36/EC.

### **3. Development of information resources and policies**

#### **3.1 Develop resources/policies for approval at the General Meeting / Info Tool**

Responsible: Hans Krijgsman and Natalie Beswetherick

At the 2010 GM, the EU WG presented for discussion an Info Tool with basic information from the EU and ER-WCPT. The MOs also received a one page survey about the value, needs and content of the tool. The results of the survey were presented to the WG members.

Taking into consideration the comments gathered from the MOs, the WG agreed:

- To finalise the list of information to be included in the Info Tool.
- To prepare the electronic support for the information tool. A PowerPoint short presentation and a pdf.

The info tool was published on the ER-WCPT website on 30 March 2011 and the ER-WCPT MOs were informed about it to be promoted among their members.

The Committee agreed that following the agreement that all current ER-WCPT documents and new ones were to be retitled according to the WCPT titles approved at the 2011 WCPT GM, the EC would need to agree where on the website these are to be sited with links to the Info Tool. This issue would be part of the recommendations to the GM in Malta 2012, together with the review and improvement as appropriate. The MOs would also be asked at the GM EU WG discussion about its use and value.

Link: <http://www.physio-europe.org/index.php?action=158>

#### **3.2 Identify and disseminate other sources of information relevant to MOs on EU matters (Monitor migration of PTs in the EU)**

Responsible: Roland Craps

It was reported that related to the migration statistics, collected by the EU Commission and based on information provided by the national authorities in each Member State, a presentation took place at the 2010 GM highlighting the following points:

- Value of the statistics: they are factual, not updated and not allow to conclude trends on migration neither about the migration process and possible compensation measures
- Informing MOs how to access the data and calculate the relevant statistics as they apply for their use.
- Role of the MOs should take on the responsibility and initiative to contact their national authorities to make sure the information about Physiotherapy as published on EU Commission website is accurate.

However, the MOs have recommended at the GM 2010 in Berlin to continue providing the statistics in an identical way.

The EU WG agreed to continue following up the Migration statistics collected every two years by the EU Commission. It was also noted that there is a link to the website of the EU Commission on the ER-WCPT website under the button 'Statistics':

[http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/qualifications/regprof/stats/dsp\\_stats.cfm?profId=1250](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/regprof/stats/dsp_stats.cfm?profId=1250)

The data have been retrieved and copied into Excel-files, showing the net migration per member state. The total amount of applications have been updated for the years 2008, 2009 and 2010 (preliminary data). The overall total migration from 1997 until 2010 has also been compared with other professionals, showing that physiotherapists occupy the 4<sup>th</sup> place overall, but that there is a downward trend in migration. There are quite a lot of competent authorities that don't provide the information on the website of the European Commission. This makes the information incomplete and quite difficult for interpretation.

### 3.3 Update of the ER-WCPT website – EU Matters button

Responsible David Gorriá and all members (from September 2011).

The EU Matters button was created on the on the ER-WCPT website during the last WG period and all approved documents from the 2010 GM have been posted and updated.

The EU WG members agreed to review the information on the regional website and agreed to bring suggestions and proposals. It was also agreed to review the website with physiotherapy students and with colleagues not familiar with the web in order to gather their comments for improvement.

The website has been reorganised by the General Secretary in November 2010.

The MOs have been requested to provide the annual update on 10 January 2011 and on 5 January 2012 by sending them an electronic message. There would be further assistance recommended to the EU WG members for the next period.

### 3.4 Monitor developments in electronic patient record keeping in collaboration with the PI WG

Responsible: Roland Craps and Francis Hebtng

The EU WG agreed to gather information from the MOs on electronic patient records. With the information gathered, the case studies would be prepared. The purpose of the case studies would be to inform MOs about good practices on this issue. The draft document would be sent for evaluation and/or collaboration to the Professional Issues Working Group.

Some drafts have been developed (Belgium, France) and it was the idea that these would be included in the ER-WCPT newsletter.

However, the EU Matters proposes to the EC to have a discussion session at the 2012 GM on the following topic: “*Are we using new technologies to improve the care provided to patients?*”. Natalie Beswetherick and Hans Krijgsman would prepare a presentation for this discussion session.

## 4. Liaisons with health professionals and organisations at EU level

### 4.1 And 4.2 European Health Policy Forum and European Public Health Alliance

Responsible: the General Secretary and Roland Craps

The General Secretary has followed and attended meetings reported of the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) and the European Health Forum (EHF). The Chairman of the EU WG has also attended the meetings of the EHF.

The renewal of the EHF membership is to be foreseen in 2013, and is part of the recommendations for the next period 2012-2014.

#### 4.3 Be proactive with the EU by proving material from the ER-WCPT.

Responsible: the General Secretary

The ER-WCPT has also provided comments to the following consultations:

- 23/05/2011 Online stakeholder consultation Health Security
- 09/06/2011 Future of the Public Health Program 2013

The WG also discussed how to be proactive by providing and making available information about the field of physiotherapy activities and agreed as follows:

- To ask the PI WG for an update of the regional website button named "Info4yourhealth". The button contains leaflets, promotional material and advertisement from the MOs on this issue.
- To ask the MOs to visit DG Health and Consumers of the European Commission website for health promotion videos produced in Europe. The website aimed to share ideas and best practice and to show what had been done in public health campaigns on issues such as addiction prevention, communicable diseases, cancer or nutrition and physical activity. Member Organisations have been asked to publish their material, if available, on the mentioned above website.

## 5. Liaisons with health other WGs in the ER-WCPT

### 5.1 ER-WCPT Glossary of terms

Responsible: Natalie Beswetherick and all WG members

The Education Matters WG presented at the 2010 GM a reviewed and updated ER-WCPT glossary of terms. The purpose of the regional glossary was to include the definitions needed for the regional documents. It was not created as a dictionary.

Since the glossary also covered EU Matters related definitions, the EU WG reviewed the document and presented them to the Education Matters WG for their consideration.

It was also noted that WCPT was developing a common glossary for use across all regions and the draft regional glossary has been aligned according to it.

#### 5.2 Collaboration with the PI WG in the Keep active / Keep healthy document.

Responsible: Natalie Beswetherick and all WG members

The Professional Issues WG presented for discussion at the 2010 GM a document entitled “Active and Healthy, the role of the Physical Therapist in Physical Activity”. The document outlined the role of physiotherapists in public health, health promotion and disease prevention.

The EU Matters WG collaborated with the PI WG by sending their comments on the document. The PI WG reviewed the document during the period 2010 – 2012 taking also into consideration the MOs’ comments gathered at the GM 010 and the joint WG meeting in Malta 2011.

#### 5.3 Revise the Health Policy Statement of the ER-WCPT in collaboration with the PI WG. Recognising the role of physiotherapy in public health and the 2020 EU strategy

Responsible: Anna Kukka and Francis Hebting

The EU WG revised the ER-WCPT Health Policy Statement taking into consideration the following matters:

- Raising awareness of the competence of the profession in making a contribution to the public health agenda.
- The 2020 EU Strategy when referring to health matters.

The responsible has been in contact the PI WG members, who have also been asked to review the policy. The revised version of the Health Policy Statement was circulated among the MOs for comments with a deadline fixed on 20 December 2011. The comments were reviewed and added to the document.

### **ER-WCPT Strategic Plan**

Lead: Natalie Beswetherick

The EU WG is pleased to present the ER-WCPT Strategic Plan to the 2012 GM. This document has been prepared with the collaboration of the other ER-WCPT WGs and also received the comments from the MOs.

### **Closing remarks**

The priority tasks of the EU Working Group in the period 2010-2012 were the intensive consultations on the evaluation and modernisation of the Directive for Professional Qualifications and the Steering Group on the European Professional Card, especially related to issues for physiotherapists at European level, the conferences organised by the Belgian and Polish Presidency and the participation in the continuous consultation process of the EU health strategy 2008 – 2013.

### **Roland Craps**

Chairman of the EU Matters Working Group of the European Region of the WCPT