



EUROPEAN REGION

World Confederation
for Physical Therapy

Revised Migration Policy Statement of the European Region of the WCPT

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**REVISED MIGRATION POLICY STATEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN REGION OF THE
WCPT**

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

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1. Summary

In order to pursue and fulfil free migration for physiotherapists in all constituent countries of the European Region of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (ER-WCPT) a migration policy was first adopted at the General Meeting in May 2002, prepared by the EU Working Group of the ER-WCPT. That document was based on the Migration Policy adopted at the General Meeting of the SLCP, the former Standing Liaison Committee of physiotherapists in the EU in 1996.

In 2005 new EU legislation, relevant to EEA members (European Economic Area http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eea/), was introduced to create a simpler, quicker and more harmonious process for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications. In response to these changes the migration policy was revised by members of the EU Matters Working Group of the ER-WCPT, and the new version adopted by the ER-WCPT at the General Meeting in 2006.

The Migration Policy of the European Region of WCPT may be used as a framework for discussions with government authorities responsible for migration, Competent Authorities, higher education institutes, individual physiotherapists, and other interested parties. Member Organisations of the ER-WCPT are encouraged to translate and implement the policy at national level.

This document may be used in collaboration with the WCPT policy statement on Regulation

2. Preamble

2.1 According to its Charter, 'it is the priority of the ER-WCPT to facilitate free migration and the right of establishment of physiotherapists within the whole European Region ' (1). Member Organisations represent countries within and outside the European Economic Area. The ER-WCPT recognises that in addition to the generic aspects of this policy, some legislative requirements are specific to the EU.

2.2 With reference to EU legislation, the objective of free migration within the European Union is to ensure mobility of all workers. Council regulation (EEC) no. 1612/68 of 15th" October 1968 on the free movement of workers within the Community requires:

"The elimination of any discrimination based on nationality as regards employment, remuneration and other working conditions, access to accommodation and the worker's right to be joined by his/her family".

The same regulation also ensures that:

"Any national of a Member State is entitled to take up and engage in gainful employment on the territory of another Member State in conformity with the relevant regulations applicable to national workers. He is entitled to the same priority as the nationals of that Member State as regards access to available employment, and to the same assistance afforded by the employment offices in that State to their own national seeking employment. His recruitment may not be dependent on medical, occupational or other criteria which discriminate on the grounds of nationality".

3. The ER-WCPT Policy Context

- 3.1 The ER-WCPT reaffirms that the physiotherapy profession is one profession across the European Region and that the WCPT description of physiotherapy must be used as the basis of common professional activities (2)
- 3.2 Throughout the European Region protection of title and regulation of the physiotherapy profession should be established and maintained to uphold public safety, maintain professional standards of performance to ensure high standards of patient care and avoid misunderstanding and confusion with other professions.
- 3.3 ER-WCPT policy statements relevant to migration and to the recognition of professional qualifications are the revised Education Policy Statement (3) and the European Physiotherapy Benchmark Statement (4).

4. EU Legislation and the Physiotherapy Profession

- 4.1 All physiotherapists in the EU are subject to Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications, which came into force on 30th September 2005 (5) with a two-year period for national implementation. The Directive provides for a single General

System of recognition of higher education diplomas, which regulates post secondary professional education of at least three years duration.

- 4.2** Transparent registration procedures for both national and migrant physiotherapists should be formulated in accordance with Directive 2005/36/EEC, and also take account of the European Code of Conduct for regulators (6). A briefing paper: The Recognition of Professional Qualifications - a guide to Directive 2005/36/EC for Member Organisations, explaining key articles of the Directive as they apply to the physiotherapy profession in the EEA members can be found on the ER-WCPT website.[7]

5. Competent Authorities and Recognition of Professional Qualifications

- 5.1** Preliminary Recital 11 of the Directive requires Competent Authorities to accept basic physiotherapy education, as recognised in the migrant's Member State, as a basis for evaluation and migration.
- 5.2** In addition, Preliminary Recital 15 of the Directive requires Competent Authorities to take account of education, subsequent professional experience when evaluating physiotherapists
- 5.3** It is important to view physiotherapy education in terms of qualitative outcomes leading to proficiency across the full range of basic skills necessary for practice, rather than a quantitative approach to covering a finite list of subjects in the curriculum.
- 5.4** Physiotherapy education, recognized in the migrant's home state, may only become subject to additional requirements if there are substantial differences which could pose a risk to public health and safety. (Article 7.4 and 14)
- 5.5** Procedures should be established by Competent Authorities to enable the applicant to give further clarification about their application and to understand the appeals process should decisions be disputed.
- 5.6** To achieve maximum transparency of registration procedures, Member Organisations of the ER-WCPT should liaise, co-operate and exchange information with their respective Competent Authorities and Institutes of Higher Education at national and EEA levels.

- 5.7** The Member Organisations of the ER-WCPT should encourage and use the diploma supplement [8] as a means of harmonising the application process for registration throughout the EEA members

6. Information for Migrant Physiotherapists

- 6.1** There is an obligation for Member Organisations of the ER-WCPT to seek and distribute information about migration procedures in the interests of national physiotherapists wishing to migrate. Contact details for European physiotherapy regulators can be found on the ER-WCPT website [9].
- 6.2** Member Organisations of the ER-WCPT are encouraged to monitor workforce numbers of physiotherapists and influence their national authorities to ensure appropriate numbers of physiotherapists, adequate levels of service and high standards of patient care.
- 6.3** EU statistics on migration should be followed, analysed and action taken as appropriate by the ER-WCPT in collaboration with Member Organisations [10].
- 6.4** Resources are available for dealing with questions and difficulties with the process of application under the Directive such as breach of stated timescales for a response from the Competent Authority. [11, 12 and 13]

7. Links and cooperation between Institutes of Higher Education, Physiotherapy Associations and Competent Authorities

- 7.1** The ER-WCPT recognises that it is essential to have strong liaison between institutes of higher education and physiotherapy associations to address the development of professional education. Links should be established both nationally and at European level.
- 7.2** Educational institutions and ER-WCPT professional associations need to liaise closely with the Competent Authorities to support the implementation and regulation of migration procedures.

- 7.3** Both physiotherapists and educational institutions should be actively involved in assessing applicants' acceptable levels of ability and in formulating adaptation periods and aptitude tests.

8. Enlargement of the European Union

8.1 The ER-WCPT, in collaboration with the Member Organisations of the accession countries, will analyse their needs in relation to regulation, legislation and education, in advance of their Membership of the EU.

8.2 The ER-WCPT will take action to respond to requests for support in meeting these needs in order for the physiotherapists of the new EU countries and accession countries to the EU develop effective free migration procedures.

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<http://www.physio-europe.org/index.php?action=41>
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http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc1239_en.htm

9. European region of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy. ER-WCPT web page for European regulators

<http://www.physio-europe.org/index.php?action=42>

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/contactpoints/index.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eea/

10. EU Regulated Professions data - statistics on migration of physiotherapists

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/regprof/index.cfm?fuseaction=profession.regProf&profId=1250

11. The User Guide to Directive 2005/36/EC

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/future_en.htm

12. Citizen's signpost service

http://ec.europa.eu/citizensrights/front_end/index_en.htm

13. SOLVIT free online problem solving network which handles problems with poor application of internal market legislation

http://ec.europa.eu/solvit/site/index_en.htm