
Conference

Regulating health professions in a European perspective

Brussels, 17 November 2017

The access to and pursuit of health professions in Belgium has, since 1967, been regulated by Royal Decree No. 78. Over the years, this legal framework has become increasingly intertwined with the regulations governing conditions for reimbursement of the care provided. After 50 years, the legislation will now be revised to better reflect developing societal needs, new approaches to healthcare provision and new medical insights.

The new Belgian legal framework will take a more patient-centred approach, redefine the legal division of responsibilities between the different health professions and revise the underlying quality assurance frameworks. It also needs to adapt to the changed institutional constellation, with powers being shared across different policy levels. Not only did the Belgian 6th state reform transfer important aspects of the organization and supervision of health professions to the federated entities, EU rules also significantly determine the remaining scope for national regulation. The EU Directive on professional qualifications grants health professionals who are trained in one Member State the right to practice in any other Member State. Furthermore, although the regulation of health professions is a national prerogative, any condition to which the authorisation to practice is made subject needs to respect the principles of non-discrimination and proportionality. Finally, international trends of standardisation and accreditation are also likely to impact policy making in this field.

This conference will position the developments and reforms in Belgium within a broader European perspective. It will look at the experience of other EU Member States and explore in more detail how EU integration affects the organisation and regulation of health professions. We will more specifically discuss the impact of professional mobility on national workforce planning policies and how Member States can ensure quality and patient safety in a European and international context.

 *Follow the debate on Twitter: [#healthprofEU](#)*

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8.30-9.15 Registration and coffee

9.15-10.30 **Opening Session**

Welcome and introduction:

Regulating health professions in Belgium to ensure access and quality of healthcare

Tom Auwers, President of the executive board, Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment, Belgium

Jo De Cock, CEO, National Institute of Health and Disability Insurance (NIHDI), Belgium

Regulating health professions in the EU while ensuring free movement: rules and principles

Koen Lenaerts, President of the Court of Justice of the European Union and Professor of European Law at the KU Leuven, Belgium (*by video message*)

Trends in the medical health workforce in Europe

Gaetan Lafortune, Senior Health Economist, OECD Health Division, France

Q & A

10.30-11.00 Coffee break

11.00-13.00 **Regulating access to health professions in a European perspective**

Chair: **Pedro Facon**, Director-General Healthcare, Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment, Belgium

Health workforce planning in Belgium: steering national production while managing international flows

Brigitte Velkeniers, President of the Federal Planning Committee Medical Supply, Belgium

Potential obstacles to free movement for healthcare professionals

Kimberley van den Bergen, Consultant Health, Ecorys, the Netherlands

Panel discussion: Balancing professional mobility with the need to plan for the right numbers and skills

This panel will discuss how national health authorities can ensure the right quantity and quality of health professionals to meet future patients' needs within a context of free movement. While the Directive on professional qualifications determines the scope for regulating individual access to the medical profession, EU Member States organise national planning mechanisms to steer and control the production and supply of healthcare workers within their territory. To what extent can these measures be considered justified and proportional? What can and needs to be done to verify and ensure the competence and skills of healthcare providers trained in another Member State?

Facilitator: **Willy Palm**, Senior Advisor, European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, Belgium

- **Michel Devriese**, Past-President, Belgian Society for Dental Medicine, Belgium
- **Kitty Mohan**, President-Elect, European Junior Doctors, United Kingdom
- **Herwig Ostermann**, Executive Director, Austrian Public Health Institute, Austria
- **Brigitte Velkeniers**, President of the Federal Planning Committee Medical Supply, Belgium
- **Susan Williams**, Senior International Manager, Royal College of Nursing, United Kingdom
- **Bernhard Zaglmayer**, Legal and Policy Desk Officer, DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission

13.00-14.00 Lunch

14.00-16.00 **Regulating the quality of health professionals in a European perspective**

Chair: **Jo De Cock**, CEO, NIHDI, Belgium

Monitoring, measuring and enforcing the quality of healthcare in Belgium: past, present and future

Tom Goffin, Project Manager for the reform of health professions regulation, Belgium

Maintaining skills and ensuring fitness to practise in European countries

Martin Mc Kee, Professor of European Public Health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom

Panel discussion: Regulating health professionals or health services? How to ensure quality and patient safety?

This panel will discuss how regulatory frameworks for quality assurance in healthcare are changing to adapt to changing contexts and insights. An increasing focus on multidisciplinary, team-work and patient-centredness requires different approaches in defining and ensuring quality and safety. How should this be translated into regulation and/or statutory healthcare contracting? To what extent does European or international standardisation of health services provide an answer to these challenges?

Facilitator: **Bart Vanhercke**, Director, European Social Observatory (OSE), Belgium

- **Sarada Das**, Deputy Secretary General, Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME)
- **Janke de Groot**, Program leader Quality and Organisation of Care and Cure, Netherlands Institute for Health Services Research (NIVEL), the Netherlands
- **Margareta Haelterman**, Head of Department quality and patient safety, Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment, Belgium
- **Martin Mc Kee**, Professor of European Public Health, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom
- **Ayden Tajahmady**, Deputy Director of strategies, surveys and statistics, French National Health Insurance Fund (CNAMTS), France
- **Bernhard Zaglmayer**, Legal and Policy Desk Officer, DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission

16.00-16.15

Closure

Maggie De Block, Minister of Social Affairs and Public Health, Belgium

16.15-17.00

Reception

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