

**EUROPEAN REGION OF THE
WORLD CONFEDERATION
FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY**



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

**ADOPTED at the
General Meeting 25-27 May 2006
Šibenik, Croatia**

REVISED MIGRATION POLICY

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

CONTENTS

1. SUMMARY	3
2. PREAMBLE	3
3. THE ER-WCPT POLICY CONTEXT	3
4. EU LEGISLATION AND THE PHYSIOTHERAPY PROFESSION	4
5. COMPETENT AUTHORITIES AND RECOGNITION OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS	4
6. INFORMATION FOR MIGRANT PHYSIOTHERAPISTS	5
7. WORKFORCE	5
8. LINKS AND COOPERATION BETWEEN INSTITUTES OF HIGHER EDUCATION, PHYSIOTHERAPY ASSOCIATIONS AND COMPETENT AUTHORITIES	5
9. ENLARGEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION	5
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	6
REFERENCES	7
ANNEX 1 – TERMINOLOGY AND ABBREVIATIONS	8

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 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.

An explanation of terminology and abbreviations used can be found in annex 1.

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 Union/ European Economic Area (EU/EEA – see annex 1). 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 standard 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 (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. Implementation of Directive 2005/36/EC must be completed at the latest by 20th October 2007. Until then, the mechanisms of recognition of professional qualifications established by Directives EEC/89/48 and EEC/92/51 are still valid.
- 4.2 Transparent registration procedures for both national and migrant physiotherapists should be formulated in accordance with the EU Directives above, and also take account of the European Code of Conduct for regulators ⁶.

5. Competent Authorities and Recognition of Professional Qualifications

- 5.1 Competent Authorities should accept basic physiotherapy education, as recognised in the migrant's Member State, as a basis for evaluation and migration. To this effect a tool, which enables an easy comparison of education should be developed and adopted.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 The evaluation process for physiotherapists wishing to migrate should take account of qualifying education, subsequent professional experience and ongoing learning.
- 5.4 Physiotherapy education, recognized in the migrant's home state, should only become subject to additional requirements if there are substantial differences.
- 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.
- 5.6 To achieve maximum transparency of registration procedures, physiotherapy associations should liaise, co-operate and exchange information with their respective Competent Authorities at national and EU/EEA levels.
- 5.7 The Member Organisations of the ER-WCPT should encourage and use the diploma supplement ⁷.

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.

7. Workforce

- 7.1 Member Organisations of the ER-WCPT are encouraged to monitor workforce numbers of physiotherapists and influence their national authorities to ensure appropriate number of physiotherapists, adequate levels of service and high standards of patient care.
- 7.2 EU statistics on migration should be followed, analysed and action taken as appropriate by the ER-WCPT⁸.

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

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 Educational institutions and ER-WCPT professional associations need to liaise closely with the Competent Authorities to support the implementation and regulation of migration procedures.
- 8.3 Both physiotherapists and educational institutions should be actively involved in assessing applicants' acceptable levels of ability and in formulating adaptation periods and aptitude tests.

9. Enlargement of the European Union

- 9.1 The ER-WCPT, in collaboration with the physiotherapy associations of the accession countries, will identify and analyse their needs in relation to regulation, legislation and education, prior to the establishment of free migration of the enlarged EU.
- 9.2 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 to have the possibility of free migration.

Acknowledgements

The European Region of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (ER-WCPT) acknowledges the work of Elisabeth Haase and Joop Tanis as members of the EU Working Group and Julia Botteley, the former General Secretary of the ER-WCPT for their contribution to the draft of this document approved at the General Meeting in 2002.

For the revision of the document approved at the General Meeting in 2006, the work of Elisabeth Carrington, member of the EU working Group with contribution from Sigrún Knútsdóttir and Elisabeth Haase members of the EU Working Group is acknowledged.

11. References

1. Charter of the European Region of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy. Article 2.2:3. ER-WCPT - Revised May 2002.
<http://www.physio-europe.org/index.php?action=downloads&downloadarea=11>
2. World Confederation for Physical Therapy. Declarations of Principle and Position Statements. Description of Physiotherapy p28-31. ER-WCPT. Adopted 1999.
<http://www.wcpt.org/policies/principles/index.php>
3. European Region of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy. Education Policy Statement. ER-WCPT. Adopted May 2004.
<http://www.physio-europe.org/index.php?action=29>
4. European Region of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy. European Physiotherapy Benchmark Statement. ER-WCPT. Adopted June 2003.
<http://www.physio-europe.org/index.php?action=28>
5. Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7th September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications. Official Journal of the European Union, Vol. 48, 30th September, L 255/22- L225/142, 2005. http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2005/l_255/l_25520050930en00220142.pdf
6. European Commission. Internal Market and Services DG. Knowledge based Economy, Regulated Professions. Code of Conduct Approved by the Group of Coordinators for the General System of Recognition of Diplomas. Undated. (Accompanies Directives 89/48/EEC and 92/51/EEC)
http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/qualifications/docs/codeconduct/code_en.pdf
7. European Commission, Council of Europe, UNESCO. The Diploma Supplement.
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/rec_qual/recognition/diploma_en.html
Accessed 10-02-2006
8. EU Regulated Professions data - statistics on migration of physiotherapists
http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/qualifications/regprof/regprofs/dsp_regprofs.cfm?proflid=1250

Annex 1 – Terminology and Abbreviations

Competent Authority (EU definition)

Any authority or body empowered by a Member State specifically to issue or receive training diplomas and other documents or information and to receive the applications, and take the decisions, referred to in Directive.

Constituent countries of the ER-WCPT who are not Member States of the EU may use different terminology for authorities responsible for regulation.

European Economic Area (EEA)

Consists of states, which are members of the European Union (EU) and also Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway

Regulated Profession

Professional activity, access to which is subject to legislative procedures regarding the possession of specific professional qualifications