

CED Position

Recognition of Dental Professional Qualifications acquired in Third Countries

NOVEMBER 2023

Council of European Dentists

President Dr Freddie Sloth-Lisbjerg
Transparency register: 4885579968-84
Numéro d'entreprise: 0480.222.749

Avenue de Cortenbergh 89 /6
B-1000 Brussels

T +32 (0)2 736 34 29

ced@cedentists.eu
www.cedentists.eu

I - INTRODUCTION

The Council of European Dentists (CED) is a European not-for-profit association which represents over 340,000 dentists across Europe. The association was established in 1961 and is now composed of 33 national dental associations from 31 European countries. The CED is committed to upholding the highest standards of dental care across the European Union (EU). One key aspect of maintaining these standards is the recognition of dental qualifications acquired in third countries. In this policy paper, the CED highlights the importance of subjecting third country qualifications to rigorous scrutiny by Member States (MS) to ensure they meet the minimum training requirements set forth in the Professional Qualifications Directive (PQD) within the EU. The paper also addresses the need for a clear position on language requirements in the recognition process.

II - BACKGROUND

[Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications](#)¹ (Professional Qualifications Directive) does not prohibit Member States from recognizing the professional qualifications acquired outside the EU by third country nationals. However, it is imperative that such recognition aligns with the minimum training conditions established for certain professions, including dentistry.

By third country nationals we mean any person who is not a citizen of the European Union and who is not a person enjoying the European Union [right to free movement](#)², as defined in the [Schengen Borders Code](#)³ (such as family members of an EU national exercising his or her right to free movement within the EU, people with long-term resident status, individuals with single permit to work in a Member State, holders of an EU blue card, seasonal workers and refugees).

III - EVIDENCE FROM CED QUESTIONNAIRE

Results obtained from the CED Questionnaire on the recognition of dental qualifications of third country nationals in the European Union conducted in spring 2023 have provided crucial insights into the recognition processes in CED member countries. Twenty-three countries⁴ responded to four questions of the survey (Annex 1) with the following findings:

1. Recognition of Qualifications for Dentists from Third Countries:

¹ Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32005L0036>

² https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylum-and-migration-glossary/glossary/right-free-movement_en

³ Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on a Union Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code): <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32016R0399>

⁴ 23 countries: AT= Austria; BE= Belgium; HR= Croatia; CY= Cyprus; CZ= Czech Republic; DE= Germany; DK= Denmark; EE= Estonia; FI= Finland; FR= France; GR= Greece; HU= Hungary; IE= Ireland; IT= Italy; LT= Lithuania; MT= Malta; NL= Netherlands; NO= Norway; PL= Poland; PT= Portugal; SK= Slovakia; SE= Sweden; CH= Switzerland.

- **YES:** 17 Member States assess whether the training completed by third country national dentists satisfies the minimum training requirements under the PQD.
- **NO:** 2 countries do not include an assessment of whether the training completed by third country nationals satisfies the minimum training requirements under the PQD.
- **OTHER:** 4 Member States employ alternative methods or have variations in their recognition process.

2. Recognition of Qualifications for EU/EEA/Swiss Dentists from Third Countries:

- **YES:** 16 Member States assess whether the training completed by EU/EEA/Swiss nationals in a third country satisfies the minimum training requirements under the PQD.
- **NO:** 4 Member States do not conduct such assessments.
- **OTHER:** 3 Member States employ alternative methods or have variations in their recognition process.

3. Simplified or Expedited Recognition Process for Unqualified Qualifications:

- **YES:** 4 Member States have a simplified or expedited recognition process even when the minimum training requirements of the PQD are not satisfied.
- **NO:** 17 Member States do not have such a process.
- **OTHER:** 2 Member States employ alternative methods or have variations in their recognition process.

4. Language Test/Condition for Dentists from Third Countries:

- **YES:** 20 Member States require dentists who received their dental degree outside an EEA country or Switzerland to pass/prove a language test/condition before being authorized to practice the profession.
- **NO:** 1 Member State does not have such a requirement.
- **OTHER:** 2 Member States employ alternative language-related conditions.

IV - CED POSITION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Rigorous Scrutiny of Third Country Qualifications: The CED urges all EU Member States to rigorously scrutinize the dental qualifications acquired in third countries, to ensure that they meet or exceed the minimum training requirements as stipulated in the PQD. This is crucial in maintaining the highest standards of dental care and ensuring the safety of patients across the EU.

2. Consistent Recognition Process: The CED recommends that EU Member States establish standardized recognition processes for dental qualifications obtained in third countries. These processes should prioritize assessing whether the training aligns with the PQD's minimum training requirements. This standardization will help create a level playing field and foster confidence in the quality of care provided by recognized dental professionals.

3. Simplified or Expedited Recognition Process: Member States that employ simplified or expedited recognition processes for qualifications that do not meet PQD requirements should review these processes and align them with EU standards to ensure patient safety and the quality of dental care.

4. Clear Language Requirements: Recognizing the importance of effective communication between dentists and patients, as well as between dentists and other healthcare professionals, the CED encourages Member States to establish clear language requirements for dentists seeking recognition. Language proficiency should be evaluated as part of the recognition process, ensuring that dental professionals can provide safe and effective care to patients.

V - CONCLUSION

The Council of European Dentists emphasizes the importance of ensuring that dental qualifications acquired in third countries are rigorously scrutinized to guarantee they meet the minimum training requirements set forth in the PQD. The CED believes that this approach is vital in maintaining the high quality of dental care and patient safety across the EU. Additionally, establishing consistent recognition processes, reviewing simplified or expedited processes, and enforcing clear language requirements will contribute to the overall quality of dental care provided within the European Union.

This policy paper serves as a valuable tool for the CED in its educational and advocacy activities on both the European and national levels, promoting the welfare of patients and the integrity of the dental profession across the EU.

.....

Unanimously adopted at the CED General Meeting in November 2023

Annex 1: Questions and Results of the CED Questionnaire on the recognition of dental qualifications of third country nationals in the European Union

Question 1:

In your country, does the process of recognition of qualifications of dentists who are **third country nationals and received their dental degree in a third country** include an assessment whether the training they completed satisfies the minimum training requirements under the PQD?

- a) YES: 17 (AT, BE, HR, CY, CZ, DE, EE, FI, GR, HU, IE, IT, LT, NL, NO, PT, SK)
- b) NO: 2 (FR, CH)
- c) DON'T KNOW: 0
- d) OTHER: 4 (PL, SE, DK, MT)

From the specific conditions, in Poland, in November and December 2020 amendments to the law on the professions of physician and dentist were adopted regarding the possibility to exercise the dental profession in Poland by holders of non-EU dental diplomas without the need to have the diploma recognized as equivalent to a Polish diploma and without the need to pass the Polish language exam. To be granted authorization to work in Poland on basis of these new regulations, the dentist must apply to the Minister of Health for a decision allowing the dentist to work in Poland. This decision will also specify the limited scope of medical activities that the given dentist will be entitled to carry out in Poland, period of validity (not longer than 5 years) and indicate the concrete healthcare facility where the doctor can work. There are specific conditions that need to be met in order to be granted this decision.

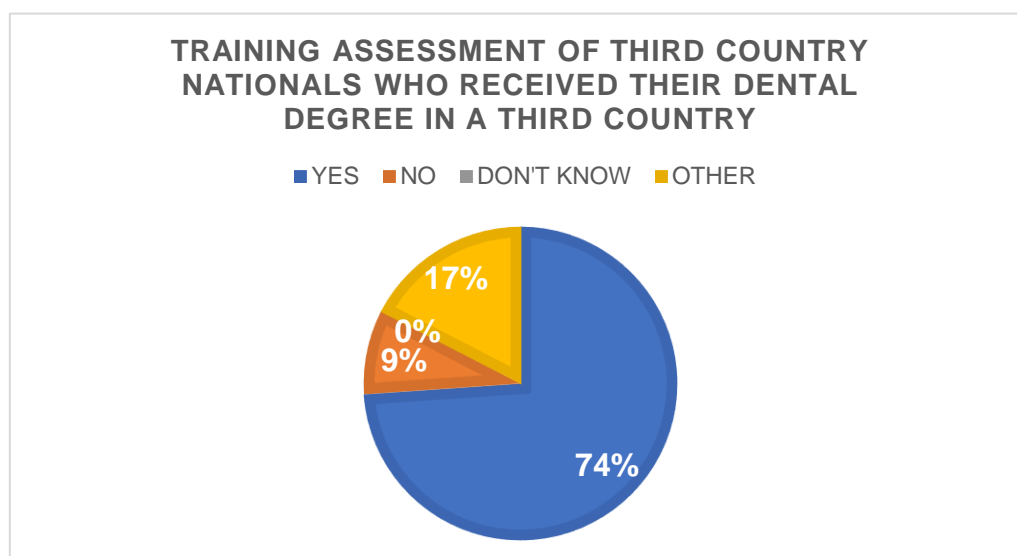
In Sweden, there are different ways to obtain a Swedish dental license if the diploma comes from a third country. One can do a proficiency test combined with a period of clinical on-the-job training. Another way is to study a complementary year at a Swedish dental university programme.

In Denmark, applicants who are third-country nationals must comply with national standards for authorization to obtain the Danish authorization.

And in Malta, if one works in public sector, they can get temporary registration which does not allow them to work in the private sector - if they get permanent registration, they need to satisfy minimum training - however after a certain number of years of temporary registration, they may get automatic permanent registration.

In Switzerland, if third country nationals have a recognition from another EU country (Brazil -> Portugal -> Switzerland) they will be recognised automatically.

In France, there is a language assessment test for the mandatory inscription to National Chamber of Dentists. There is an assessment of their knowledge (exams) to check if their knowledge is equivalent to the one required in France.



Question 2:

In your country, does the process of recognition of qualifications of dentists who are **European Union (EU) or the European Economic Area (EEA: EU plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway), and Switzerland nationals and received their dental degree in a third country** include an assessment whether the training they completed satisfies the minimum training requirements under the PQD?

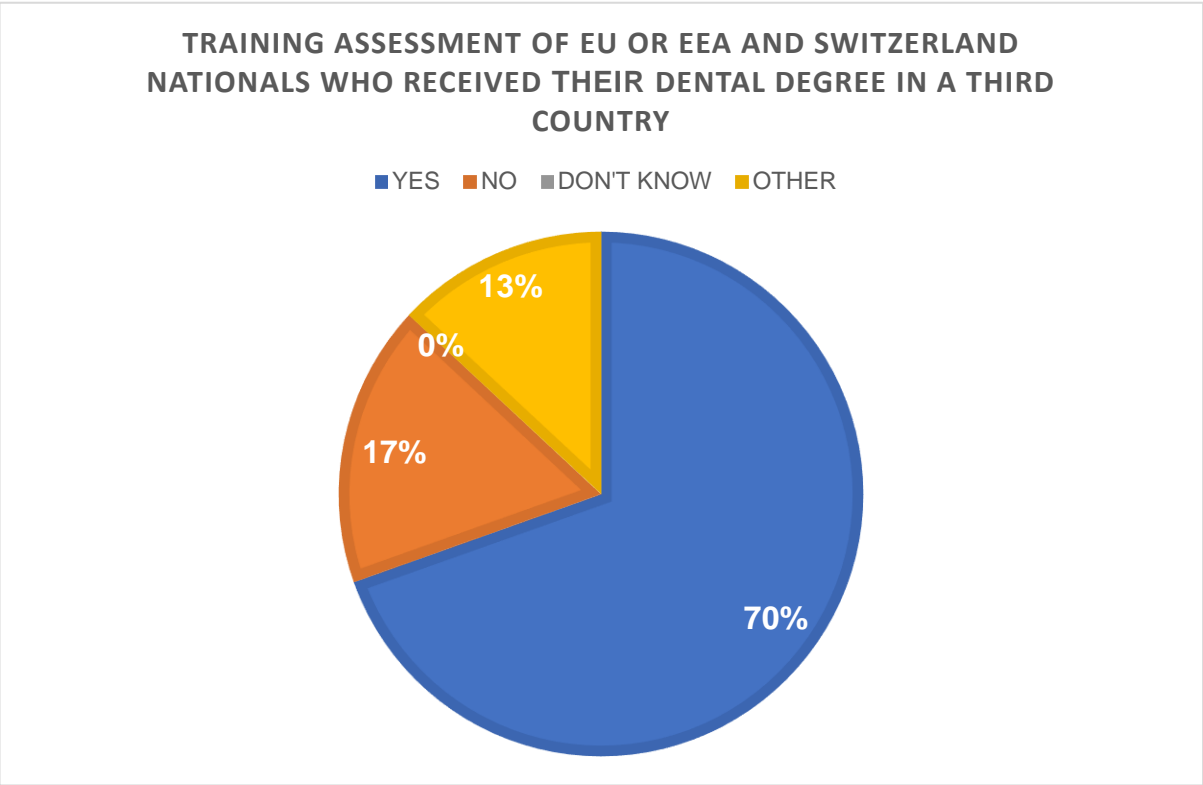
- a) YES: 16 (AT, BE, HR, CY, CZ, DE, EE, FI, GR, HU, IE, IT, LT, NO, PT, SK)
- b) NO: 4 (FR, NL, MT, CH)
- c) DON'T KNOW: 0
- d) OTHER: 3 (PL, SE, DK)

To specify, in Poland, the simplified access to the profession, applies to holders of non-EU dental diplomas, regardless of their nationality.

In Sweden, regardless of the nationality, if the dental license is from the EU/EEA area it will be processed as such; if it is from a third country it will be processed as such. Those with a license from a third country, having converted it to an EU/EEA license and then want to convert it to a Swedish license must have worked as dentists in another EU/EEA country for at least 3 years.

In Denmark, the requirements for these applicants are the same as in the previous question. Except if their dental degree has been recognized in the EU or the EEA, and they have three years of work experience in the country that has recognized their dental degree. If so, they can apply for Danish authorization according to the PQD.

In France, there is a language assessment test for the mandatory inscription to National Chamber of Dentists. If the diploma has been recognised by another EU-EEA member state, and if the dentist has practised autonomously in that member state during at least 3 years, he or she can be authorized to work in France by a special commission.



Question 3:

Is there a simplified or expedited process of recognition of qualifications of dentists who are third country nationals and received their dental degree in a third country under which the minimum training requirements of the PQD are not satisfied?

- a) YES: 4 (DE, PL, SK, LT)
- b) NO: 17 (AT, BE, HR, CY, CZ, DK, EE, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, NO, PT, SE, CH)
- c) DON'T KNOW: 0
- d) OTHER: 2 (GR, MT: unclear)

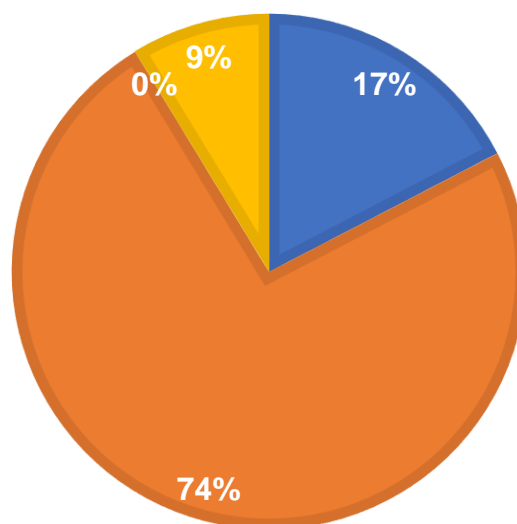
For Poland, the simplified access to the profession does not require to carry out the assessment of training in order to determine whether the training completed by the dentist outside the EU was in conformity with the minimal training requirements, as mentioned previously.

For Germany, dentists with training from third countries can apply for the so-called provisional professional licence for 2 years. For this purpose, it is usually sufficient to submit proof of a degree in dentistry without checking the equivalence. Within the 2 years, the licence to practise can then be sought with a review of equivalence. Ergo: Faster access to the profession. However, the necessary language skills are also a prerequisite here.

In Lithuania, In March 2022, the Ministry of Health simplified the process of recognizing the qualifications of Ukrainian dentists and oral care specialists in order to obtain a license and find a job. To obtain a license, a Ukrainian needs a document that he/she started learning the language. Proof of language proficiency will be required in 2 years after obtaining a license.

SIMPLIFIED OR EXPEDITED PROCESS OF RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS OF DENTISTS WHO ARE THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS AND RECEIVED THEIR DENTAL DEGREE IN A THIRD COUNTRY

■ YES ■ NO ■ DON'T KNOW ■ OTHER



Question 4:

Is there a language test/condition that dentists who received their dental degree outside an EEA country or Switzerland must pass/prove before being able to get the authorization to practice the profession in your country?

- a) YES: 20 (AT, BE, HR, CY, CZ, DE, DK, FI, FR, GR, HU, IE, IT, LT, NO, NL, PT, SK, SE, CH)
- b) NO: 1 (MT)
- c) DON'T KNOW: 0
- d) OTHER: 2 (PL, EE)

Only in Malta this is not mandatory.

In Poland, the simplified access to the profession does not require to provide any evidence (except a self-declaration of the dentist) of Polish language knowledge.

