

CED STATEMENT- update

SPECIALIST DENTISTS

November 2023

INTRODUCTION

The Council of European Dentists (CED)¹ aims to promote high standards on oral healthcare and dentistry with effective patient-safety centred professional practice, and to contribute to safeguarding the protection of public health. With this resolution the CED wishes to clarify the difference between the general dental practitioner or dentist and the specialist dentist not only to help policy-makers at national and EU level in understanding how the dental community sees their scope of activity, but also to improve health literacy and patient empowerment. The field of dentistry in Europe has been increasingly specialized, with more focus on specialized dental training and practice.

EUROPEAN LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (“the Directive”)² regulates the conditions of admission to and the minimum duration of specialist dental training (Article 35 paragraphs 1 and 2). Two dental specialties are automatically recognised in those Member States where they exist: orthodontics and oral surgery (point 5.3.3 of Annex V).

Pursuant to Article 35, admission to specialist dental training is contingent upon completion and validation of basic dental training referred to in Article 34, or possession of the documents referred to in Articles 23 and 37 of the Directive (i.e., evidence of formal qualifications as dental practitioner or as doctor as the case may be), which imply that the person in question has acquired suitable clinical experience on patients under appropriate supervision.

Furthermore, the minimum duration of specialist dental training is defined as being at least equal to three years of a full-time theoretical and practical instruction, and shall consist of at least 3000 hours, involving the personal participation of the dental practitioner.

The Directive does not establish the content of the training, that is to say a study programme or a minimum set of knowledge, skills and competences for the two automatically recognised specialties. This role remains the responsibility of national competent authorities or bodies.

Hence, evidence of formal qualification as dental practitioner or dentist is awarded upon graduation from a university, a higher institute providing training recognised as being of an equivalent level or under the supervision of a university, while the evidence of formal qualification as specialised dentist is awarded upon completion of additional post-graduate training from a university centre, a treatment teaching and research centre or, where appropriate, in a health establishment approved for that purpose by competent authorities or bodies.

In 2013, the Directive was amended introducing a possibility for dental specialties to acquire automatic mutual recognition via the use of common training frameworks. European dentists oppose the development of CTFs in dentistry, as Directive 2005/36/EC already foresees an effective mechanism for automatic recognition of new dental specialties and thus facilitates the

¹ The CED is a European not-for-profit association representing over 340,000 dental practitioners across Europe through 33 national dental associations and chambers in 31 European countries. Established in 1961 to advise the European Commission on matters relating to the dental profession. The CED is registered in the Transparency Register with the ID number 4885579968-84.

² [Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications](#) as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications and Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012 on administrative cooperation through the Internal Market Information System (“the IMI Regulation”).

mobility of dental practitioners while ensuring high quality of specialist dental care³.

SPECIALIST DENTISTS' SCOPE OF ACTIVITY

The main difference between the scope of activity of the general dental practitioner or dentist and the specialist dentist is that due to the additional and specific training received, the specialist dentist is more likely to perform the activities related to the specialty in question on a daily basis.

Indeed, having undergone basic dental training, the general dental practitioner or dentist is qualified to carry out all acts performed by the specialist dentist, as far as these acts are included in the dental curriculum. They both prevent, diagnose and treat any problematic or pathological condition that affects the teeth, mouth, jaws and adjoining tissues, and they both work independently and autonomously from any other general or specialised medical profession, being the leader of the dental team⁴.

The general dental practitioner or dentist may refer a patient to a specialist dentist if he/she considers that is appropriate or necessary.

STATEMENTS

The CED supports the fact that Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications fully respects the responsibility of Member States to define the content of specialist dental training.

The CED stresses that the general dental practitioner or dentist is qualified to carry out all acts performed by the specialist dentist and must not be forbidden to perform any of the activities of the specialist dentist.

The CED acknowledges the increasing specialization of dentistry in Europe and recognises that the general dental practitioner or dentist may refer a patient to a specialist dentist if he/she considers that is appropriate or necessary.

Unanimously adopted at the CED General Meeting in November 2023

³ [CED Statement on Common Training Principles under Directive 2005/36/EC](#), unanimously adopted by the CED General Meeting on 29 May 2015.

⁴ [CED Resolution on the dental team relationship with patients](#), unanimously adopted by the CED General Meeting on 29 May 2015.