

Regulators of Oral Healthcare Professionals – A manifesto for the new 2024/2029 EU mandate

FEDCAR represents 15 dental regulators and competent authorities which are administrative or professional in nature.

Its advocacy to the EU legislators and institutions covers issues relating to the mobility and supervision of dental care professionals, and public safety matters for dental patients.

A responsibility for free movement

Healthcare professionals are among the most mobile professions in the internal market. European legislation has minimized obstacles to mobility by entrusting competent authorities with the task of recognizing professional qualifications acquired in other Member States. We call on the EU institutions to ensure that national competent authorities have all the necessary means to fulfil their mandate, and in particular the alert mechanism for professional sanctions and false diplomas, which is still not functional in all states.



A quality training in a European Education Space

The free movement of healthcare professionals relies on the competent authorities' trust in the quality of recognized qualifications. In order to protect patients, authorities regulating the dental professions need to be able to have confidence in the quality of the education provided to all practising dentists, regardless of their European or non-European origin. The minimum dental training set out in the Professional Qualifications Directive is not enough on its own to ensure that all new graduates receive a sufficient level of theoretical, practical and clinical training to enable them to practice safely. We therefore call on the European Union to develop its welcome initiatives on the "European Joint Diploma" and on quality assurance in higher education.



A European Strategy for the Healthcare Professionals

In its report on the State of Health in the EU published in December 2023, the European Commission noted that every country is facing problems relating to its healthcare workforce, including for those responsible for oral health. These problems range from violence and aggression towards these professionals, to problems of clinical training, recruitment, retention or ageing practitioners. The 'Health Union' cannot become reality without a European strategy on the healthcare workforce as envisaged in 2024 by the Council. FEDCAR welcomes this coming Strategy and calls for the practitioners in charge of dental care in clinics and hospitals to be part of it.



An Access to Oral Healthcare

FEDCAR is aware that access to healthcare and oral care varies across the 27 Member States. Medical deserts criss-cross the EU, while oral diseases and conditions are the most widespread non-communicable diseases in Europe. We take note of the EU's commitments in the Charter of Fundamental Rights to health protection, as well as the States' commitments in the WHO to a global strategy on oral health. We support the objective that all European citizens should have access to healthcare, in particular oral healthcare.



Dental practitioners are the 5th most mobile profession in Europe.



About 44,100 alerts relating to a professional sanction applied to healthcare practitioners were shared in the EU between 2016 and 2019. In 2021 just 100 concerned dental professionals. Only a dozen countries participate in the European alert mechanism for dentistry.



The EU regulates how approximately 5,500 qualifications obtained in one member state are recognised in other Member States. Dentistry is one of only 7 professions where this process is automatic.



In the EU, only 4.8% of citizens consider that cost is an obstacle in accessing basic oral healthcare. However, this estimate increases considerably for the population with the lowest income, and exceeds 15% in some countries.