

**Professor Dr Frank Ulrich Montgomery**

President of the CPME (Standing Committee of European Doctors)  
Rue Guimard 15  
B-140  
Brussels  
Belgium

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Dear Professor Montgomery

**Recognition of professional qualifications**

As you all are too aware, and with thanks for your assistance to date in mitigating the effects, Brexit will impact severely on our respective members' professional mobility and ability to deliver high-quality healthcare to patients across Europe.

Unfortunately, and despite our best efforts to prevent such a disastrous outcome, there remains a genuine risk that the UK could leave the EU without a withdrawal agreement in place.

Anticipating the impact that this will have on EEA (European Economic Area) qualified doctors seeking to work in the UK, our government has recently adopted the *European Qualifications (Health and Social Care Professions) (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018* which:

*'makes provision for recognition of European qualifications and diplomas that fall under the "automatic regime" in the Directive (doctors, dental practitioners, pharmacists, general care nurses and midwives) issued by relevant European States (defined in the Regulations as an EEA State or Switzerland), as qualifications that are acceptable for the purposes of registration as a health care professional, unless a particular qualification or diploma has been designated not so. Provisions have also been made in respect of other European qualifications that fall under the "general systems" process (which also falls under the Directive), taking them out of that process, and providing them to be qualifications enabling registration as a health care professional where they are assessed to be comparable to the equivalent UK qualification.*

In short, and in the event of a no deal Brexit, the UK will continue to accept the vast majority of EEA qualifications that are listed in Annex V of the Professional Qualifications Directive on exit day as sufficient evidence of knowledge, skills and experience for entry onto the UK's medical register. This will last for a period of two years when the system will be reviewed by Government

Whilst this is extremely welcome news for EEA qualified doctors, and by extension our NHS (National Health Service), we are extremely concerned by what a no deal scenario means for the future of the 4434<sup>1</sup> EU nationals currently studying medicine in the UK who will be treated as "third country nationals" should



they seek to return home to work. Indeed, all UK qualified doctors will find themselves in the same disadvantageous position should they seek to practise in one of the EEA member states should a no deal Brexit come to pass.

In practice, and as we've been advised anecdotally, this could mean that highly skilled doctors like [Torben Heinsohn](#) a medical student at Oxford University and one of approximately 300 Germans studying medicine in the UK, risk being "put at the bottom of the pile" when seeking to return home.

Indeed, we have been already been contacted by several CPME members enquiring as to what we could do jointly to resolve this situation.

Unsurprisingly perhaps, Ireland is in the vanguard of such planning with its Minister of Education and Skills advising<sup>ii</sup> its Parliament that:

*In the No Deal context...my Department is leading work to ensure, in as far as possible, the provision of arrangements with the UK to recognise professional qualifications. As part of this process, my Department is encouraging contacts and dialogue between regulatory bodies in Ireland and the UK to facilitate the continued recognition of qualifications, including the development of protocols for transferring personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).*

As any EU country can unilaterally amend its "third country route" – what the UK will become in the event of a no deal Brexit – to accept UK qualifications, we believe that the CPME's support could be vital in convincing member states and their medical competent authorities across Europe to take this course of action and facilitate the timely registration of UK qualified doctors/EU citizens seeking to practise in continental Europe. In addition to helping promote professional mobility across Europe, it is quite simply the humane course of action to take; students, be they EEA or UK nationals, who took up places in British medical schools in good faith pre-Brexit do not deserve to be penalised due to politicians' capriciousness.

Yours sincerely



**Chaand Nagpaul CBE**  
BMA council chair

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<sup>i</sup> HESA Student Record 2016/17

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2019-01-22/199/?highlight%5B0%5D=qualifications>