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<b>Title:</b>	<b>Extraordinary degrees under the new Professional Qualifications Directive 2013/055/EU</b>		
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The European Directive 2013/55/UE

The new directive of professional qualifications of the European Union (EU) which Spain must necessarily apply before January 2016, opens a legal route for an extraordinary "degree" for Spanish medical specialists without an official title (in Spain known as "mestos") something for what they have been fighting in vain for years. The Directive 2013/55/UE amends the previous standard, Directive 2005, with a new Article 27.2, that urges all EU states to recognize specialist qualifications awarded in Italy, even when the training in question does not meet all the requirements of Article 25 of the EU directive 2005.

*(21) in Article 27, the following paragraph is inserted:*

*'2a. Member States shall recognise the qualifications of specialised doctors awarded in Italy, and listed in points 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 of Annex V, to doctors who started their specialist training after 31 December 1983 and before 1 January 1991, despite the training concerned not satisfying all the training requirements set out in Article 25, if the qualification is accompanied by a certificate issued by the competent Italian authorities stating that the doctor concerned has effectively and lawfully been engaged, in Italy, in the activities of a medical specialist in the same specialist area concerned, for at least seven consecutive years during the 10 years preceding the award of the certificate.'*

The only requirement for "mestos" titles to be recognized, both in Italy and in the rest of the EU according to the new Article 27.2, is that the request for recognition has to be accompanied by a certificate from the Italian Government to the effect that the doctor in question has practiced in Italy effectively and lawfully the activities of a medical specialist in the same specialist area concerned, for at least seven consecutive years during the 10 years preceding the award of the certificate.

In summary, professional experience would supply the lack of academic requirements. In Spain many "mestos" have 15 up to 30 years of proven experience. Italy rose to the European Commission a request for a special recognition, while in Spain such request was rejected. In Italy it has not only been accepted but also granted valid throughout the EU.

The European Commission objected to open a third special titling process in Spain for the Spanish "mestos" (after 1994 and 1999) claiming that contravene Article 25 of the 2005 directive, that now it is interpreted in a much more flexible way for Italy. The Spanish "mestos" always claimed that the refusal was motivated because the request of the Spanish Government was badly formulated.

The new Article 27.5 of the Directive can open other legal means and it is legitimate for the Spanish “mestos” to try to take advantage, as all Community policies, not only this one, try to harmonize the processes in the EU. The Spanish “mestos” henceforth begin a campaign to claim the Government's approval of a royal decree regulating the professional and employment status of the “mestos”, precisely in order to harmonize regulations between EU countries.

The origin of the “mestos” in Spain is located in the decades of the 70s, 80s and early 90s, when the enrollments in medical schools were not compensated by the proportional increase in the number of graduates that the system needed. Thus, between 1980 and 2005 at least 149,493 medical students were graduated, while the system only offered 94,084 positions for specialist training. The 37 percent of graduates in that period could not access. They could only access to a diploma. This situation can be repeated since this year there were 11,696 graduates and there are only 6,149 positions for specialist training.