



COMITÉ PERMANENT DES MÉDECINS EUROPÉENS
STANDING COMMITTEE OF EUROPEAN DOCTORS



European Junior Doctors
Association



Fédération Européenne
des Médecins Salariés
European Federation
of Salaried Doctors



Mr Michel Barnier
Chief Negotiator – Task Force for the Preparation and conduct of
the Negotiations with the United Kingdom under Article 50 TEU
Rue de la Loi 200
1040 Bruxelles
Belgique

7 February 2018

Brexit and the European Medical Profession: transition and the future relationship

Dear Mr Barnier

Further to our previous letters regarding Brexit's threat to the ongoing ability of the medical profession to provide high quality healthcare across the continent, we are writing to congratulate you on your role in helping to deliver the "sufficient progress" necessary for the negotiations to progress to the second phase related to transition and the framework for the future relationship.

Given the vital role that pan-European medical migration plays in delivering healthcare across Europe, we were particularly pleased to note the important developments relating to the rights of the 21,609ⁱ licensed doctors in the UK who gained their primary medical qualifications in another EEA (European Economic Area) state.

Whilst the ongoing recognition of their professional qualifications is welcome, we would request that priority be given during the next phase of negotiations to ensuring that the same certainty is provided to the thousands of medical students, studying outside their country of origin, who have yet to secure their professional qualifications. Expediting the resolution of this matter will not only remove much unnecessary anxiety amongst the medical student body but will play a key role in helping to ensure that health workforce planning across Europe is undertaken in the optimal conditions.

Researchⁱⁱ undertaken by our colleagues in the BMA (British Medical Association) indicates that a significant number – nearly half of those surveyed, of EEA qualified doctors working in the UK are considering leaving following the EU referendum result with over 1/5 considering leaving Europe entirely.

Supporting your previous assertion of the "great importance... the mutual recognition of professional qualifications (has) for the European health sector" we would also reiterate our belief that every effort to made to ensure that some form of such mutual recognition be maintained in the future relationship, alongside successful tools supporting its implementation, and securing patient safety, such as the alert mechanism.

Similarly, with medical research becoming increasingly integral to tackling the main current and future societal challenges, it is imperative that solutions, including the provision of clear long-term frameworks, are found to ensure that such medical academics pursue their research in Europe.

With regard to Ireland and Northern Ireland, there is much to be commended, not least the commitment to maintaining the CTA (Common Travel Area).

Notwithstanding such positive developments, and being cognisant of the political constraints under which both parties are operating, we believe that it is imperative that significant additional, practical detail about the future border arrangements be provided at the earliest possible opportunity.

Failure to provide such clarity may impact upon the recruitment and retention of doctors in the Irish border region with an attendant negative impact upon the provision of healthcare services throughout the island.

We recognise that this is merely “the end of the beginningⁱⁱⁱ” and look forward to continuing to share our expertise with the Article 50 Taskforce as we all seek to ensure that Brexit doesn’t threaten Europe’s health.

Yours sincerely



Dr Romuald Krajewski, UEMS President



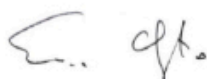
Dr José Santos, CEOM President



Dr Kitty Mohan, EJD President



Dr Aldo Lupo, UEMO President



Dr Enrico Reginato, FEMS President



Dr Jacques de Haller, CPME President



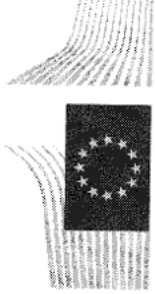
Dr Teuta Azizi, EMSA President

Dr João de Deus, AEMH President

ⁱ General Medical Council: Our data about doctors with a European primary medical qualification in 2017. Working paper 3- November 2017

ⁱⁱ <https://www.bma.org.uk/collective-voice/influence/europe/brexit/eu-survey>

ⁱⁱⁱ Sir Winston Churchill, “The End of the Beginning”, The Lord Mayor’s Luncheon, Mansion House, November 10, 1942



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Task Force for the Preparation and Conduct of the Negotiations with the United Kingdom under Article 50 of the TEU

Deputy Chief Negotiator

- 6 MARS 2018

Brussels,
tf50(2018)1155998

Dear Presidents,

Thank you for your letter to Mr Barnier of 7 February 2018 on "Brexit and the European Medical Profession: transition and the future relationship", which has retained his full attention. Mr Barnier has asked me to reply on his behalf.

You raised some issues in your letter that you wish to be addressed in the negotiations of the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom, namely: the possibility for mutual recognition of professional qualifications for doctors, the facilitation of medical research and border arrangements in between Ireland and Northern Ireland.

At its meeting of December 2017, the European Council announced that it would adopt additional guidelines in March 2018 as regards the framework for the future relationship. At the same time, it invited the Council and the Commission to continue internal preparatory discussions in that connection. We have indeed engaged in those internal preparatory discussions where, for instance, the question of mutual recognition of professional qualifications was addressed (cf. seminar on services that took place on 30 January 2018¹). In this context, let me underline the particular interdependence between the European Union rules on the recognition of professional qualifications and other European Union rules on e.g. freedom to provide services, freedom of establishment, free movement of persons generally or personal data protection (cf. your reference to the alert mechanism).

Dr Romuald Krajewski, UEMS President
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¹ Commission's slides available here: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/publications/slides-services_en
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Moreover, the mutual recognition of licences, authorisations or certificates in general presents particular difficulties², notably in the light of the integrity of the single market and the regulatory autonomy of the European Union, that should not be underestimated. So far, the European Union has not entered into a horizontal agreement on mutual recognition of professional qualifications with a third country (except for the three EFTA members of the European Economic Area and Switzerland, which all accept free movement of persons).

Concerning the possible participation of the United Kingdom as a third country in the research programmes of the European Union, I recall that the European Union has agreed with several third countries their possibility to take part in those research programmes, under different participating conditions. This will be a matter for further discussion, indeed. Concerning questions related to Ireland and Northern Ireland, allow me to refer you to the Joint Report of December 2017³.

Please also note that the Commission published on 7 February 2018 its views on possible transitional arrangements which would apply until the end of 2020. This should allow for the single market rules and the research programmes to continue applying in the United Kingdom until the end of the period.

Yours sincerely,



Sabine Weyand

² See also the Commission's slides on another seminar on regulatory issues that took place on 15 February: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/publications/slides-regulatory-issues_en

³ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/publications/joint-report-negotiators-european-union-and-united-kingdom-government-progress-during-phase-1-negotiations-under-article-50-teu-united-kingdoms-orderly-withdrawal-european-union_en