

Application procedure for recognition of a foreign diploma with a view to access and exercise the profession of physiotherapy in Belgium

The aim of this document is to improve the comprehension and accessibility concerning migration for any foreign physiotherapists wishing to work in the Belgian healthcare system. To work in Belgium it is essential to have knowledge of either or both of the languages spoken in Belgium: Dutch or French.

Last revision: 20 May 2015

Recognition for practice in Belgium is granted on the basis of education and diploma in the applicant's home State.

The following information has been published on the website of the FSP on 07/10/2014. Please note that there may be problems reaching this website. There is an English button on the top left of the web page.

Physiotherapists

The Health FPS is responsible for the various administrative aspects related to the profession of physiotherapist. It is the preferred contact body for:

- monitoring [the access to and practice of the profession of Physiotherapist](#)
- the [Advisory Councils and Recognition Commissions](#)
- the [professional recognition of foreign diplomas](#)

Here you can also find the contact information for the [professional organisations](#).

Be aware that Axxon is the only recognised professional organisation and also the WCPT Member Organisation !!

For all information on the education and training required to become a Physiotherapist, please refer to the websites of the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium (www.enseignement.be and www.vlaanderen.be).

Access and practice of the profession

The 6th state reform

Since the 1st of July 2014 the Flemish Community, the Federation Wallonia-Brussels and the German-speaking Community now deliver the **recognitions** to health practitioners. During a **transitional period**, the Federal Public Service (Ministry of Health) still manages this mandate.

However, the **FPS will continue to issue visas**. The standards and the recognition of the placements for training and training masters for doctors, dentists and hospital pharmacists are still managed by the FPS. The follow-up of training is now conducted by the communities.

To practice physiotherapy, one must satisfy the following conditions:

- be the holder of a recognition granted by the Health Minister (Application for Recognition as Physiotherapist (Dutch - French). This recognition may be granted solely to the holder of a university diploma in Physiotherapy or a non-university higher education diploma in Physiotherapy for a full-time course of minimum four academic years.
- received (and maintained) a licence from the FPS Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment.

If you want to know more about the legal provisions, click on the “Legislation” section in the right-hand column. **(Attention: the link on the English page does NOT work! The document is only available in the Dutch or French version).**

http://www.health.belgium.be/filestore/19093576_NL/formulier%20dienstverrichting%20kinesitherapeut.pdf

Federal Public Service (FPS) Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment
Eurostation II
Place Victor Horta, 40 box 10
1060 Brussels
Belgium
Contact Center: +32 (0)2 524.97.97

International Mobility

The International Mobility Cell for Health Care Professions is primarily responsible for the **professional recognition** of foreign diplomas. First, we must make an initial distinction between these foreign diplomas:

- Diplomas obtained within the European Economic Area (EEA = European Union + Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) and in Switzerland. Application of EU Directives 2005/36/EC concerning the recognition of professional qualifications. These Directives are only applicable to the citizens of the Member States of the European Economic Area and Switzerland or equivalent countries.
- All other foreign diplomas
- Special case of Article 49 bis §1 and §2 of Royal Decree No. 78 (Non-EEA citizens with a diploma which is academically equivalent to a Belgian diploma)
- Performance of services

Subsequently, we must also make a distinction between recognition with a view to **practicing a certain profession** (professional recognition), and **purely academic recognition**

(equivalence). Within the present legal structures, professional recognition is only possible within the framework of the European Legal Order. Besides allowing one to practice a profession, the purely academic recognition can also provide: access to other trainings, a teaching position...

In general, we can say that **professional recognitions** fall under the competence of the **Federal Government** (our department for health professions) and **equivalence** falls under the competence of the Communities (www.ond.vlaanderen.be and www.enseignement.be).

We provide information and issue various certificates, such as EC/EU/EEA Equivalence Certificates [\[Dutch\]](#) [\[French\]](#), to health professionals who want to practice their profession abroad.

Recognition of diplomas obtained within the EEA or in Switzerland

Applications for recognition of the Physiotherapy diploma are handled directly by the International Mobility Cell of Health Professions.

[Application Form EC/EU/EEA Recognition](#) [\[Dutch\]](#) [\[French\]](#)

Recognition of diplomas obtained outside the EEA

Here, our role is usually limited to providing information and references. It is the Communities

(<http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/naric/> and

<http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=24833&navi=2088>) which are competent for most of these diplomas.

Special case

Article 49 bis §1 and §2 of Royal Decree No. 78

This Article concerns health professionals who do not have the nationality of a Member State of the European Economic Area or of Switzerland, whose foreign diploma has been declared academically equivalent by either the French or the Flemish Community, and who want to practice their profession in Belgium.

For more information about the procedure to be followed, please refer to: [Circular 49 bis](#) [\[Dutch\]](#) [\[French\]](#)

Article 49 bis §3 of Royal Decree No. 78

Non-European citizens who have a diploma issued by a Member State of the EU which is accordance with Directive 2005/36/EC, are declared equivalent to European citizens with respect to the handling of their application for professional recognition.

Notification of the decision

After the advice of the Commission for Recognition for Physiotherapy is given, the Minister of Public Health will decide about the application for recognition.

The secretariat of the Commission for Recognition for Physiotherapists will inform the applicant within the determined period.

At the same time of the delivery of the recognition, a **VISUM** will also be delivered to the applicant. This allows to practice, unless the VISUM is revoked by the Provincial (Regional) Medical Commissions (these are the local disciplinary chambers).

The recognition by the Ministry of Public Health is transferred to the RIZIV on request.

The RIZIV (Rijksinstituut voor Ziekte- en Invaliditeitsverzekering) is part of the Ministry for Social Affairs or, translated: the National Institute for Sickness- and Invalidity Insurance, the competent authority for reimbursement in healthcare.

Once the **RIZIV-recognition** is obtained, all formalities which concern this recognition must be undertaken directly with the RIZIV-administration.

After having obtained recognition and for service delivery in private practice and treatments administered in the nomenclature settings I and II, if appropriate, a “declaration of honour” has to be sent by Recorded Delivery to the services of the RIZIV. For further information, please contact Axxon (www.axxon.be).

Temporary provision of services

This procedure concerns European health professionals who are authorised to practice their profession in a Member State of the EEA and who want to practice their profession in Belgium during a very short period. Please contact the Cell directly.

Councils and commissions

Federal Council on Physiotherapy

The task of the Federal Council on Physiotherapy is to advise the Health Minister, as well as the governments of the Communities.

Code of Conduct for Physiotherapists

- http://www.health.belgium.be/filestore/18094779/GEDRAGSREGELS%20NRAAD%20KINE%20NL_18094779_nl.DOC (Dutch)

- http://www.health.belgium.be/filestore/18094779_FR/GEDRAGSREGELS%20NRAAD%20KINE%20FR_18094779_fr.DOC (French)

Recognition Commission

The Chambers of the Recognition Commission are entrusted with the following tasks:

- giving a reasoned opinion to the Minister of Health on the applications for recognition as physiotherapist;
- giving a reasoned opinion to the Minister and the Federal Council on the applications for recognition by which the physiotherapist is authorised to
 - o carry a particular professional title
 - o lay claim to a particular professional qualification.

The Recognition Commission or each Chamber may send a memorandum to the Federal Council at any time with its advice or remarks on general or special matters concerning the practice of physiotherapy.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is composed by representatives from different categories of health professionals. The Commission holds plenary meetings and different working groups.

The Commission examines the need of supply of doctors, dentists, physiotherapists, nurses, midwives and speech therapists.

Last updated on 18/05/2015 by Roland Craps, International Relations Officer of Axxon