



**World
Physiotherapy**
Europe region

Glossary of terms specific to the Europe Region

Advocacy & EU Matters Working Group (A&EUMWG)

NOTED

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS SPECIFIC TO THE EUROPE REGION
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Advocacy & EU Matters Working Group

This document contains terms used by the Europe Region in their documents and policy work that is not already included in the World Physiotherapy Glossary (<https://world.physio/resources/glossary>).

The terms are referenced to the original source. Where terms have been or are developed by the Europe Region they should be referenced to this document:

Europe Region of World Physiotherapy. Glossary of terms specific to the Europe Region of World Physiotherapy. 3rd Edition. Belgium, Brussels: Europe Region of World Physiotherapy; 2024.

TERM	DEFINITION
Bologna process	<p>The Bologna Process seeks to bring more coherence to higher education systems across Europe. It established the European Higher Education Area to facilitate student and staff mobility, to make higher education more inclusive and accessible, and to make higher education in Europe more attractive and competitive worldwide.</p> <p><i>More information: The Bologna process</i></p>
Competent authority for professional qualifications	<p>Competent authority for professional qualifications — any authority or body empowered by an EU Member State specifically to issue or receive training diplomas and other documents or information, and to receive the applications and take the decisions, referred to in the Directive of recognition of professional qualifications. They also may regulate or control the practice of health care workers. Countries refer to organisations that control the practice of health care workers by different terms. They include: Boards, Government Departments, Central and Local Licensing Authorities and Regulators.</p> <p><i>More information: Directive 2005/36/EC</i></p>
European Economic Area (EEA)	<p>The EEA is an economic zone encompassing the member countries of the European Union (EU) and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Established in 1992 by the "Agreement on the European Economic Area", the EEA established a free trade relationship between the European Union and three member countries of the EFTA, effectively making the EFTA countries part of the EU's collective "internal market" and enabling free movement of the "four freedoms": goods, capital, services, and people.</p> <p><i>More information: European Economic Area</i></p>

TERM	DEFINITION
<p>European Free Trade Association (EFTA)</p>	<p>EFTA is an intergovernmental organisation set up for the promotion of free trade and economic integration to the benefit of its four Member States – Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland – and the benefit of their trading partners around the globe. <i>More information: European Free Trade Association</i></p>
<p>European Higher Education Area (EHEA)</p>	<p>EHEA is the result of the political will of 48 countries, which have built an area using common tools. These 48 countries implement reforms on higher education on the basis of common key values such as freedom of expression, autonomy for institutions, independent student's unions, academic freedom, free movement of students and staff. Through this process countries, institutions and stakeholders of the European area continuously adapt their higher education systems making them more compatible and strengthening their quality assurance mechanisms. For all these countries, the main goal is to increase staff and students' mobility and to facilitate employability. Its essential parameters were established in the Bologna Declaration signed by 29 European States on 19 June 1999. <i>More information: European Higher Education Area</i></p>
<p>European Professional Card (EPC)</p>	<p>The EPC is not a physical card, but an electronic certificate issued via the first EU-wide fully online procedure for the recognition of qualifications. This digital procedure is based on the well-established Internal Market Information System (IMI) and allows professionals to communicate with the relevant authorities inside a secure network. The IMI also provides for an official, multilingual communication channel between the regulating authorities for professionals in EU countries to facilitate their co-operation and enhance mutual trust. The EPC does not replace the 'traditional' recognition procedures under the Professional Qualifications Directive, but it does offer an advantageous option for professionals who wish to work either temporarily or permanently in another EU country. <i>More information: European Professional Card</i></p>
<p>European Qualifications Framework (EQF)</p>	<p>The EQF is an 8-level, learning outcomes-based framework for all types of qualifications that serves as a translation tool between different national qualifications frameworks. This framework helps improve transparency, comparability and portability of people's qualifications and makes it possible to compare qualifications from different countries and institutions. The EQF covers all types and all levels of qualifications and the use of learning outcomes makes it clear what a person knows, understands and is able to do. The level increases according to the level of proficiency, level 1 is the lowest and 8 is the highest level. Most importantly the EQF is closely linked to national qualifications frameworks, this way it can provide a comprehensive map of all types and levels of qualifications in Europe, which are increasingly accessible through qualification databases. <i>More information: European Qualifications Framework</i></p>

TERM	DEFINITION
<p>European Research Area (ERA)</p>	<p>The European Research Area (ERA) is the ambition to create a single, borderless market for research, innovation and technology across the EU. It helps countries be more effective together, by strongly aligning their research policies and programmes. The free circulation of researchers and knowledge enables better cross-border co-operation, building of critical mass, and continent-wide competition. <i>More information: European Research Area</i></p>
<p>European Single Market</p>	<p>The EU aims to enable EU citizens to trade and do business, study, live, shop, work and retire in any EU country and enjoy products from all over Europe. To do this, it ensures free movement of goods, services, capital and persons in a single EU internal market by removing technical, legal and bureaucratic barriers. <i>More information: European Single Market</i></p>
<p>General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)</p>	<p>The GDPR is the toughest privacy and security law in the world. Though it was drafted and passed by the European Union (EU), it imposes obligations on organisations anywhere, so long as they target or collect data related to people in the EU. The regulation was put into effect on May 25, 2018. <i>More information: General Data Protection Regulation</i></p>
<p>Internal Market Information System (IMI)</p>	<p>Under EU single Market laws, the IMI enables certain rights for people and businesses to move around the European Economic Area for work, study, trade, etc. If your authority is involved in implementing these laws on the ground, you may need to exchange information with similar bodies in other countries. The IMI is a secure online application developed by the European Commission that allows national, regional and local authorities to communicate quickly and easily with their counterparts abroad. It is designed as a flexible system that can be used for many pieces of single market legislation. It is used by competent authorities at national, regional and local level in the European Union (EU), Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway who deal with the specific legislation supported by it. Currently, it covers the following directives: Professional Qualifications Directive (2005/36/EC) and Services Directive (2006/123/EC). <i>More information: Internal Market Information System</i></p>

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Tim Németh (Chair)